ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ENSLAVED CHILDREN IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA
	Samantha Jane Lee, Doctor of Philosophy, 2024
Dissertation directed by:	Distinguished University Professor Dr. Mark P. Leone, Department of Anthropology

This dissertation is the first archaeological study that centers on the lives and experiences of enslaved children in the nineteenth century United States. I utilize a combination of archival research, oral histories and nineteenth-century slave narratives, as well as an archaeological artifact analysis component to provide innovative and necessary ways to understand how children experienced enslavement and how they may be represented archaeologically. This dissertation addresses the ways in which faunal and plant remains may be representative of the hunting, fishing, and foraging activities of enslaved children. A comprehensive summary of the work and labor that enslaved children were responsible for at early ages highlights the abundance of possibilities for artifact interpretations. Additionally, a critical analysis of archival documents and slave narratives demonstrates that not only were enslaved children considered a staple of the domestic slave trade, they were raised in virtually the same way and according to the same methods across the American Lower South, suggesting a childrearing protocol widely shared both publicly and privately between enslavers.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ENSLAVED CHILDREN IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2024

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Dedication

To my grandparents, Robert and Doris Lee. Thank you for everything.

Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation was an immense challenge, and one that would not have been accomplished without the support of my mentors, friends, and family. I am incredibly grateful to have them in my life. First, I owe a great deal to my advisor Dr. Mark Leone, who has stood by me every step of the way for the past six and a half years. He has constantly encouraged me and never doubted me. He has taught me to stand by my convictions and to back myself. He has shown me how to be a serious scholar. Additionally, he has dealt with years of grumbling and complaining with an astonishing amount of patience. I'm very lucky to have an advisor who understands me. Thank you.

Because nobody had ever attempted a project like this before, I knew that I needed a truly exceptional archaeologist to help me figure it out. Dr. Dennis Pogue was integral to this dissertation. He spent many hours with me discussing the archaeological questions that I was trying to answer and was always honest about what he thought of my ideas. In short, Dennis taught me how to make the project archaeologically feasible, and in doing so, made me a better archaeologist. I want to thank him for his contributions to the dissertation but also for the numerous preservation fieldwork outings and barbecue lunches when morale was low.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee members, Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson, Dr. Barnet Pavão-Zuckerman, and Dr. Elsa Barkley Brown. Their feedback and guidance have been invaluable to this project. Dr. Williams-Forson has shaped this project from the very beginning and taught me how to properly approach and articulate the originality of it. Thank you for the many discussions that were essential to creating this dissertation. I could not have written Chapter 3 without Barney's expertise and guidance. Our conversations made me excited to write about the topic and her advice made the chapter infinitely stronger. Dr. Barkley

Brown's insightful suggestions taught me how to improve the dissertation by narrowing the focus. Thank you to each of my committee members for their time and effort in making this dissertation better.

There are many individuals in the UMD Department of Anthropology who have helped me over the past six and a half years, but in particular, three women have always been there for me. A tremendous thank you to Miss Sybil Paige for being my constant cheerleader. You have always uplifted me when I needed it the most and I am so very blessed to know you. Thank you to Nadine Dangerfield for always going above and beyond to help me and for all of your sound advice. To Umai Habibah, thank you for being a good friend and listener. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to each of you for your unflagging kindness and support.

Archaeology is a team effort. I am grateful to Stefan Woehlke, Eleanor Breen, Ben Skolnik, and Camille Westmont, who were always willing to talk through ideas, give their advice, and remind me that eventually, I would actually finish writing. I also want to thank my fellow archaeologists and PhD program commiserators, Liz McCague and Mike Betsinger. Liz also deserves my thanks for helping me in the monumental task of hunting down a ton of thimbles and providing me with access to Montpelier's artifact collections. Without Liz's help, there would be no discussions of artifacts from Montpelier included in the dissertation. It is also good to have anthropologist friends who understand what you are going through but who are not archaeologists. I want to thank Sammy Primiano for being my comrade in this journey from the first day that we started the program. She is an extraordinary person without whom I would not have finished the dissertation. To my friends Emiliano Campos and Silvana Montañola, thank you for helping me to cross the finish line. I appreciate you both.

Thank you to my friends John Green, Sam McFadden, Kate Howard, Paul Bothwell, Ned Curry, Caitlyn Pitchford, Cara Christie, Dylan Reddick, Ann Lipscombe, Matt Dubow, and Elliot Greiner for sticking with me. The past two years have been exceptionally difficult for a number of reasons, and there were many times when I doubted whether I would be able to finish writing the dissertation. I met Jordan Griffin during this time, and she has been one of my main pillars of support ever since. I am deeply appreciative of her thoughtfulness and ability to see the silver linings in dark situations. Her friendship has been essential to this project.

I would never have been able to complete this dissertation without the love and support of my family. My grandparents, Bob and Doris Lee, have never stopped showing up for me. They are the hardest working people I know, and they have given me the gift and taught me the value of education. They are the reason why pursuing a PhD was a possibility to begin with, and their constant encouragement and unfailing belief that I could achieve my goals gave me the motivation to finish writing. I will never be able to express how grateful I am. I must also thank my parents, Jonathan and Belinda Lee. My dad taught me to think independently. He has read every piece of writing that I've ever sent him and attended every lecture that I've given. My mom has never wavered in her confidence in my ability to succeed. She has always been my biggest fan and my most enthusiastic advocate. She makes sure to celebrate every one of my accomplishments, no matter how small, and she is always there for me when I need her. She is my hero. To my sisters and my brother – Jenny, Libby, and Joey, thanks for being my built-in best friends and for giving me the gift of humility. I love you all very much. It feels strange to finish this dissertation without my Uncle Ray, who was involved in almost every academic project that my siblings and I ever created. I wish that he could have been here to see the final product, but I continue to feel his support daily.

I also owe a great deal to my new family members. John and Helen Sahi are the most giving people, and I am enormously fortunate to have them as my future in-laws. Their generosity has allowed me to focus solely on writing the dissertation this past year. Thank you for your love and support and thank you for the TV mysteries and the spontaneous dessert baking. It all means so much to me. I am also grateful to my future sister-in-law, Dr. Catherine Sahi, and her husband, Martin Schreiber. They have always been quick to provide reassurance and helpful advice, and I am thankful for their many acts of kindness during this stressful process.

Finally, I did not begin or finish this dissertation project on my own. Alex Sahi was holding my hand the entire way (minus roughly one month before we started dating). It would be embarrassing to describe how much he means to me, so I will not. He has accompanied me to so many archives, museums, and lectures over the past six and a half years. He has seen me at my absolute worst and remained undaunted. He even asked me to marry him, after all that. Alex, you deserve the most thanks. Without you, this dissertation truly would never have been finished. I love you forever.

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Introduction

In the early hours of February 4th, 1854, a fire broke out on the steamer the *Charles Belcher*, docked in New Orleans at the steamboat levee located at the foot of Julia and St. Joseph streets. The fire, no doubt fueled by the 155 bales of cotton that the boat was transporting, quickly spread to nearby steamboats, including the *Mohican*, the *Natchez*, the *Liah Tuna*, the *Crescent*, the *Saxon*, the *Grand Turk*, and the *Sultana* (*The Daily Picayune* 4 February 1854). Passengers and enslaved workers aboard the boats attempted to escape, with some jumping onto adjacent boats and others diving into the water. The massive fire took many lives that morning, with estimates of up to forty individuals perishing in the flames.[1] A twelve-year-old boy named Andy managed to escape from the conflagration of the *Charles Belcher*. Andy was enslaved – possibly hired out by his enslaver to work as a cabin boy on the steamboat. He was last seen standing on the levee while the steamboats were consumed by the growing flames.

The information about Andy's last known whereabouts comes from an advertisement in *The Daily Picayune*, placed by his enslaver, a man named J. J. Cannon, about a week after the fire. The ad reads:

> One Hundred Dollars Reward.
> LOST – On the night of the 3d Inst. I lost off the
> steamer Charles Belcher three negro boys –
> JIM, a griff, 12 years old, with a tooth on the inside of his front teeth.
> BEN, a griff, 12 years old, straight hair, with a black spot under one of his eyes.
> ANDY, 12 years old, black, square built. The last named boy was seen on the Levee at the time the boats were burning.
> I will pay the above reward for all three, or $30 for either one.
> Apply to R. H. Short & Co., 42 Poydras street.
> J. J. CANNON.

[1] One source claimed that the incident "was the largest steamboat fire that ever occurred in this city [New Orleans]" and estimated that losses amounted to one million dollars (Dana 1858:134).

Cannon's advertisement includes information about two other twelve-year-old boys whom he enslaved, named Jim and Ben (*The Daily Picayune* 12 February 1854). Presumably, Jim and Ben were also hired out to work as cabin boys on the steamer. If this were the case, one wonders whether Jim and Ben were able to escape from the *Charles Belcher*, as Andy potentially did. That Cannon bothered to take out an ad in the newspaper which ran for a number of days suggests that he believed it was feasible for all three boys to have survived the disaster.

The ad raises a number of questions. Did Andy survive, and if so, did he successfully escape his enslaver? Did Jim and Ben survive? Would Andy have waited for the other boys before leaving the levee? Jim, Ben, and Andy were all the same age and were enslaved by the same man. Were they friends? Were they able to take advantage of the chaotic situation to slip away, unnoticed? The article published in *The Daily Picayune* stated, in reference to the enslaved individuals aboard the *Charles Belcher*, "We have good reason to hope, however, that some of those have been found to have escaped, and others may have been equally fortunate" (*The Daily Picayune* 4 February 1854). It is possible then that Jim, Ben, and Andy may have not only escaped from the burning ship, but also from their enslaver. However, the true fate of the boys is currently unknown.

The motivations of children are often impossible to know, but what is clear is that by a certain age they will begin to exercise their own agency, despite the potentially negative consequences of their actions. Although the ad reads "LOST," it is unclear whether Jim, Ben, and Andy were actually lost or if they had purposefully run, utilizing the distraction of the confusion. Though less frequent than attempts made by enslaved adult men and women, it was not totally unheard of for enslaved children as young as ten or eleven years old to attempt self-emancipation. Numerous newspaper ads demonstrate this fact. For example, in October of 1799

a nine-year-old enslaved boy named Dick ran away from his enslaver in Norfolk, Virginia. His enslaver believed that Dick may have gone to Hampton, where he had previously lived – located at least 17 miles away from Norfolk (*Norfolk Herald* 31 October 1799). The ad notes that the current enslaver had recently purchased Dick from that city. Was Dick returning to Hampton because his family still lived there? Was he able to complete the journey to Hampton on his own? At nine years old Dick was quite young, and it would have taken him around five or six hours to reach his destination on foot. Regardless, Dick felt strongly enough about his circumstances to leave.

Although the runaway advertisements were more common for boys than girls, there are still multiple examples of enslaved girls escaping from their enslavers. In July of 1801, a twelve-year-old enslaved girl named Phebe ran away from the man who hired her out from her enslaver in Alexandria, Virginia (*Alexandria Daily Advertiser* 14 July 1801). What was Phebe's situation? Did she return to her enslaver, a woman identified as Mrs. Brooks? Did she leave because the man hiring her was dangerous? It is not possible to know, but asking these questions provides multiple possibilities to consider. Another advertisement from two years later describes Ailcey, a twelve-year-old enslaved girl who had run from her enslaver exactly a year prior. "It is more than probable that she is now lurking in the neighborhood of Alexandria, as her mother lives with the Major Wm. Reily of that place" (*Alexandria Daily Advertiser* 28 July 1803). At the time that the advertisement was placed, Ailcey had been missing for one year, meaning that she probably ran from her enslaver when she was eleven years old. This ad about Ailcey provides a probable reason as to why she decided to run – she wanted to be with her mother, whom she had been separated from.

Runaway (or sometimes "lost") advertisements for enslaved children are significant because they demonstrate how much children are capable of achieving on their own. They indicate that (by a certain age) enslaved children recognized their own agency and acted upon their desires, even if those desires directly contradicted the instructions or expectations of their enslavers. By running away, the enslaved children featured in these ads were actively resisting oppression and resisting their enslavers. They made clear choices to leave the situations which were unacceptable to them. Sometimes their motivations were more evident, as with the case of Ailcey, who most likely escaped from her enslaver in order to find her mother. At other times, the ads do not give any indication of where a child intended to go. One can only assume that in those cases, the child may have gone to places where someone that they trusted lived, but ultimately it is impossible to know where those children actually went.

I began this dissertation with a discussion of the advertisement for Jim, Ben, and Andy because it compels one to start thinking about children, specifically enslaved children, in a way that is different from how one typically thinks about children today.[2] These runaway advertisements are reminders that attitudes toward children and childhood during the nineteenth century differ greatly from modern, Western perceptions of childhood. "Children are commonly envisioned as dependent beings who must be controlled, cared for, and kept secure and happy, and childhood is viewed as a somewhat liminal state between birth and full societal participation as an adult" (Kamp 2001:3). Unlike most children today, enslaved children (as well as working-class free children) were not considered to be largely dependent on adults for the majority of their childhoods and were expected to begin working and contributing at an early age. The

[2] In this dissertation, I define an enslaved child as any individual aged fourteen years or under – the same parameters that Tadman (1996) utilized in his study of the domestic slave trade in the United States.

perhaps subconscious projection of modern ideologies regarding children and childhood onto children in the past is one of the major reasons as to why the presence of children is largely ignored or misinterpreted within the archaeological record. The concept of childhood is culturally contingent. Therefore, in order to be as accurate as possible, the archaeological study of children in the past must be conducted according to the specific ideologies relating to that time period and culture.

A comprehensive study of the archaeology of enslaved children has never been conducted before. My dissertation is the first to consider how the experiences of childhood under enslavement in the nineteenth-century United States may be represented in the archaeological record and why this is a necessary enterprise. I first became interested in this topic during my undergraduate field school. We were excavating a late-eighteenth/early-nineteenth century laundry building that may have also functioned as housing for the enslaved workers on the plantation. I cannot remember now exactly what artifact sparked my initial interest, but I recall finding an object that made me curious about what life was like for children who were enslaved. Upon reviewing the literature, I realized that children were conspicuously missing from the discourse and scholarship on the archaeology of North American chattel slavery. I wanted to learn how enslaved children were represented in the archaeological record, but very little information on the topic existed. This dissertation answers many of the initial questions that I had as an undergraduate at field school. Additionally, I propose a number of different methods for identifying the potential presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record.

Put simply, my intention with this dissertation project is to introduce children as serious cultural actors within the archaeology of American slavery. Enslaved children were active members of their communities in the past, yet this is not reflected in archaeological

interpretations of sites of enslavement. They are noticeably missing from the stories that archaeologists tell about the enslaved individuals who lived and worked at the sites they excavate. At the start of this project, one of my main research questions was concerned with the lack of artifacts that could be associated with enslaved children – how can the limitations of archaeological evidence regarding enslaved children provide a contribution to the understanding of American slavery? Throughout the course of the research I began to think about this question differently. I was looking at the problem from the wrong angle. Instead, I asked, how does one push the existing evidence in ways that demonstrate the complexity of the lives of enslaved children? How can we use archaeology to understand the impact that enslaved children had on the material record? I sought to provide practical solutions to these questions.

One way to consider the archaeological presence of enslaved children is through the manner in which many were raised as a group. After the end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808, children became an important category of the domestic slave trade, especially for enslavers in the cotton-producing states of the Lower South. I posit that the measures that these enslavers utilized in order to raise groups of enslaved children may be understood as a set of protocols, and that these protocols had material correlates which may survive in the archaeological record. For example, enslavers on large plantations in the Lower South constructed nursery buildings solely for the purpose of sheltering enslaved young children and their nurses during the day. Although a nursery building has not yet been identified archaeologically, it is feasible that some nursery buildings have been excavated but may have been mistaken for regular housing for the enslaved workers or for other structures. In the future, archaeologists may be able to positively identify nursery sites which may provide a greater knowledge of the lives of enslaved children raised on plantations in the Lower South and Lowcountry.

Another method for identifying enslaved children in the archaeological record is through faunal remains. Inspired by Laurie Wilkie's and Jillian Galle's respective research regarding enslaved children's shellfish foraging techniques on plantations in the Caribbean, I considered ways to understand how enslaved children in the Upper South may have contributed to a rationed diet through subsistence hunting, fishing, and foraging activities. Using faunal collections from Mount Vernon, Montpelier, and Monticello, respectively, I created a model to predict the likelihood of a child being able (both physically and in terms of access) to hunt or trap certain taxa. An evaluation of the behavioral and ecological attributes of each species allowed me to establish which characteristics make an animal more or less likely to be caught by children. I then compared my predictions to accounts of childhood hunting and fishing as told by formerly enslaved individuals to determine whether my predictions were successful or not. This method can be applied to other archaeological sites (including those unassociated with enslavement) in order to gauge the likelihood of children's hunting efforts as an explanation for the presence of certain faunal remains.

Enslaved children began working at extremely young ages, which is to say that their labor was exploited as soon as they were physically capable of performing it. Labor, then, is another approach to considering the activities of enslaved children, archaeologically. Children who were enslaved performed a variety of different tasks and duties, and each of these assignments required them to interact with numerous types of material culture. Many of these objects that survive archaeologically are utilitarian in nature and are considered inconsequential – they are simply common work tools. However, these artifacts represent opportunities to demonstrate the realities of daily life for children who were enslaved. Children can now be included in the discussions surrounding these artifacts. I suggest that Saidiya Hartman's concept

of critical fabulation offers a framework for archaeologists to begin imagining the full range of possibilities for interpretation, particularly in regard to the representation of enslaved children. This is a very simple and practical way to intentionally shift change how one thinks about children, the activities that they are involved in, and the things that they are capable of accomplishing. It becomes much easier to "find" children in the archaeological record after one realizes the numerous environments in which they were present and active cultural actors.

Finally, this dissertation project contributes to the understanding of American chattel slavery through the use of critical theory. I posit that the majority of Americans today have a very vague and inaccurate understanding of the institution of slavery, and that this belief is intentionally maintained by those in power as ideology. This ideology hides the truth about American slavery by diminishing its role in the founding of the country and presenting misinformation as a way to further mask the realities of enslavement. The intentional misinformation regarding enslaved children, in particular, implies that if children were never sold away from their parents, slavery was not so bad after all. It serves to conceal the hundreds of years of pain and suffering that is synonymous with American chattel slavery. Ideology functions to preserve the status quo, so that the ruling class may continue the exploitation of the working class. I believe that if Americans knew the actual truth about the institution of American slavery, they would realize that the inequalities of the past persist today, and that many of these injustices stem directly from slavery. It is the job of archaeologists to expose ideology and in doing so, enlighten others and free them from coercion. My dissertation argues that the archaeological study of enslaved children is vital to a more accurate archaeology of slavery, which in turn affects our understanding of American slavery in general. A realization of this goal may result in the enlightenment of others, which may then lead to meaningful social change.

Background

The institution of slavery in the United States was unique from slavery in all other places because American slavery reproduced itself – its most distinctive feature (King 2011:xvii). After the United States banned the importation of enslaved persons in 1808, enslavers relied solely on the existing enslaved population to birth more children, and thus more workers, maintaining the population of enslaved laborers. By 1860, the enslaved population had risen to nearly four million people, with more than two-fifths of the enslaved population under the age of fifteen and one-third under the age of ten years old – a significant part of the population (Schwartz 2001:5). Historian Wilma King claims that "Children have received little attention because they, more than other enslaved persons, were "silent and invisible." This enormous population did not write or speak for itself and was often ignored by others" (King 2011:xix). Despite the fact that children made up such a large part of the enslaved population, there has been a distinct lack of research regarding them.[3] Specifically, within the field of archaeology, discussions regarding enslaved children are few and far between, though the topic of enslaved children is relevant to both the archaeology of slavery and the archaeology of childhood. Only a handful of archaeologists (notably, all women) have seriously acknowledged the presence of enslaved children in the material record and recognized the potential for further research focused on the subject (Wilkie 2000; Galle 2020; Betti 2017, 2022).

In many cultures, children are active members of society who contribute significant amounts of labor. And in a number of societies, this labor is integral to the survival of the family unit or community. Given this information, the exclusion of enslaved children in archaeological

[3] Exceptions include Wilma King's *Stolen Childhood*, first published in 1995, and Marie Jenkins Schwartz's *Born in Bondage* (2001).

interpretations results in inaccurate interpretations and understandings of American slavery in general. Archaeologists studying childhood have stated that "the archaeological record cannot be interpreted accurately without children as cultural actors" (Baxter 2008:172). Examining toys is one of the few approaches that archaeologists have utilized to identify the presence of children in the material record. However, the identification of enslaved children solely through the presence of toys portrays enslaved children as relatively carefree individuals who spent much of their time playing or engaging in other leisurely pursuits. This is inaccurate. Enslaved children were active contributors to their families and communities as well as to the American economy. They deserve to be recognized and acknowledged as such.

Enslaved children were exposed to undue amounts of hardship and violence that impacted them for the rest of their lives. King argues that these children did not have a childhood "because they entered the workplace early and were subjected to arbitrary authority, punishment, and separation, just as adults were. These experiences made them grow old before their time" (King 2011:xxii). In this way, enslaved children represent an enigma – they were children without childhoods. They were not allowed the privilege of having a distinctive period of youth, yet they still exhibited behavior typical of children – participating in games, telling ghost stories, and playing with toys – while at the same time undergoing the trauma, pain, and violence that accompanied their status as enslaved persons. Additionally, because the exploitation of labor began very early for enslaved children, they were frequently assigned tasks or jobs that forced them to become familiar with types of material culture that are not typically associated with children. Therefore, I posit that their status as both children and as enslaved persons is reflected in the archaeological record.

The experience of being enslaved directly influenced the way that children interacted with material culture and the way that they might be represented in the archaeological record. Enslaved children occupied a complex role due to their positions as both children and enslaved persons. The ways in which they were treated and the jobs that they were responsible for differed widely depending on their specific situations. This complexity is something that is often overlooked by historical archaeologists, who continue to identify enslaved children archaeologically through artifacts traditionally associated with free upper or middle-class children, such as toys. The archaeological impact of enslaved children is different from that of free children and is something that should be considered in archaeological interpretations. In order to comprehend the significance of the role that enslaved children held on the plantation and in the quarters, one must interrogate the archives and ask more questions to produce more potentialities – possible situations that occurred which may shed light on how enslaved children are represented in the material record.

The historian Willie Lee Rose noted, "The disturbing truth is that we know much less than we ought to know about childhood in slavery…In spite of the significance psychologists and sociologists attribute to experiences of infancy and youth in development of personality, few historians have stressed this aspect of slavery, or described it accurately" (Rose 1982:39). Four out of five enslaved individuals who ever lived in the United States were either born or taken to the U.S. during the nineteenth century (Hacker 2020:848). Given that the transatlantic slave trade was abolished in 1808, the majority of enslaved individuals living in the nineteenth century were born in the United States and would have experienced their childhoods under enslavement. Therefore, by illuminating children in the archaeological record, it is possible to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the lives and experiences of the enslaved population in the

United States. Additionally, this may provide more information about the institution of American chattel slavery at large.

Much of the information discussed in this dissertation comes from the narratives and interviews of formerly enslaved individuals. John Little is one such person. He was born and enslaved in North Carolina and was eventually sold to an enslaver in Tennessee. There, he met his wife, and the two of them self-emancipated from their enslaver in 1841. They settled in Canada. In an interview with the journalist and abolitionist Benjamin Drew, John Little told him, "What I tell you now, I would tell at the judgment, if I were required.'Tisn't he who has stood and looked on that can tell you what slavery is, 'tis he who has endured" (Drew 1856:201). This dissertation would not be possible without the numerous accounts and personal stories of those individuals who endured slavery. They shared their stories because they wanted people to know the truth about American chattel slavery. Their names, as well as the names of those mentioned in account books and newspaper advertisements, can be found in Appendix A, in the order that they appear in this dissertation.

Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter of this dissertation begins with the ramifications of the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, which went into effect on January 1, 1808. While the level of impact varied widely across the American South, I argue that this law was the impetus for enslavers in the Lower South to begin raising enslaved children for profit on a large scale. No longer able to rely on enslaved captives acquired through the transatlantic slave trade, enslavers forced enslaved men and women to reproduce as frequently as possible, utilizing incentives and sometimes resorting to physical violence including rape. I go on to discuss how infants were enslaved immediately after birth and how they were reared from that point forward. On smaller

farms with fewer enslaved laborers, enslaved children were required to take care of any younger enslaved children on the property, if a superannuated enslaved individual was not present. However, on plantations with a significant enslaved population, children were reared according to a specific set of practices that was primarily utilized by enslavers in the Lowcountry and Lower South.[4] I posit that on those large plantations, enslavers adhered to a protocol for raising enslaved children for profit.

This protocol was shared publicly through agricultural publications and privately through personal correspondence or private conversations. Three aspects of this protocol were publicly discussed – nursery buildings, clothing, and diet. Enslavers published their advice concerning the "management" of their enslaved children and editors of these journals visited large, wealthy plantations in order to share the latest innovations and techniques for raising healthy enslaved workers. One aspect of the protocol was never published in print but is widely mentioned by formerly enslaved individuals in interviews and narratives – the method that enslavers utilized to feed the children in groups. Children were forced to eat from a trough on the ground in the same manner as livestock. Enslavers utilized this protocol in order to strip the children of both their humanity and their dignity. By treating them as livestock that was raised for the market, enslavers attempted to convince the children that they were slaves. They transformed childrearing into a science, designed to raise enslaved children with the least expense for the highest profit. The protocol was a standardized way to make torture more efficient.

Chapter Two provides an explanation of what occurred once an enslaved child was sold into the domestic slave trade. It directly addresses and disproves the claim that enslaved children

[4] Both the diet and the specific method for serving meals has been documented in every Confederate state as well as three border states.

were rarely sold separately from their parents, instead demonstrating that the sale of enslaved children sold singly was both "frequent and notorious" (Bancroft 1996:208). Within the interregional slave trade, enslaved children from infancy to fourteen years old, sold without either parent, constituted nearly one-quarter of individuals sold within the trade between 1830 and 1850 (Tadman 1996:151). In this chapter, I discuss newspaper advertisements for the sale of children, documents including price circulars from slave traders, and firsthand accounts from formerly enslaved individuals to understand how children were sold and the methods that were implemented to calculate their value within the market. Enslaved children were priced differently from enslaved adults, either by height, typically starting at four feet tall and then increasing in three-inch increments; or by weight, wherein they were placed upon a scale and priced by the pound. Additionally, I consider the practice of hiring children out, the efficacy of laws prohibiting the sale of children under a certain age, the question of slave traders specializing in the sale of children, and individual experiences of being sold and their significance.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the idea of enslaved children as "garden hunters" contributing to the survival of their families and communities through subsistence hunting. "Garden hunting" is an ecological concept developed by archaeologist Olga Linares (1976) to describe the higher biomass of terrestrial mammals at a site. She posited that the faunal remains from the site had a higher biomass than remains of the same species excavated at other sites because the animals were living in close proximity to the settlement and feeding off of crops from cultivated fields and domestic gardens (Linares 1976). Therefore, the individuals living at the site engaged in "garden hunting" rather than hunting possibly larger animals that inhabited areas farther from the site. As garden hunters, enslaved children would have focused hunting efforts on small game that occupied areas on or near the plantation accessible to children.

Ethnoarchaeological and ethnographic research on children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies provide evidence for children as capable subsistence hunters, fishers, and foragers, with children as young as five- and six-years older hand-line fishing and foraging for shellfish independently from adults. These studies demonstrate the physical capabilities of young children in regard to subsistence practices, supporting the high likelihood of enslaved children as active contributors to their family's diet.[5] By utilizing these sources of information, a potential list of taxa (including behavioral and ecological attributes) can be created to predict what kinds of prey children are most capable of acquiring. This ecological model can then be applied to taxa identified at sites of enslavement in order to hypothesize which, if any, faunal remains may be attributed to the subsistence activities of enslaved children.

Drawing from faunal remains identified at sites of enslavement at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon, respectively, I discuss the behavioral and ecological attributes of each species identified and consider the feasibility of children acquiring the specimen. Additionally, I provide a chart detailing each species and including the categories of Nocturnal/Diurnal, Habitat, Diet, Size, and Behavior in order to ascertain which characteristics make an animal more or less likely to be caught by a child. Finally, I consider recollections of hunting, fishing, and plant foraging from the interviews and narratives of formerly enslaved individuals to discuss the importance of subsistence activities not only as food acquisition methods but also as opportunities for teaching, bonding, and empowerment through self-sufficiency.

[5] This method of identifying the activities of enslaved children in the material record has previously been conducted by Wilkie (2000), Wilkie and Farnsworth (2005) and Galle (2020).

Chapter Four is an explanation of the theoretical framework behind this research, mainly critical theory. Here, I describe the motivations behind this project and the ways in which to understand it. I also discuss why the archaeology of enslaved children is particularly relevant in the context of the current American political climate. The ultimate goal of critical theorists is emancipation through enlightenment, or the exposure of ideology, in order to enact social change to remedy the inequalities present in society. Ideology here should be understood as the ideas of the ruling class which function to keep the ruling class at the top of the hierarchy by concealing the true relations of production, or the exploitation of the working class.

Next, I consider how rewritten history becomes ideology and how Lost Cause propaganda may be a major factor in the way that many Americans today perceive American slavery. I discuss the multiple reasons as to why members of the American government and elite (which frequently overlap) benefit from the dominant ideology – one which coerces individuals into dismissing, minimizing, or justifying the history of American slavery. I also discuss how the American government (as the Repressive State Apparatus) benefits from this ideology and propose various potential scenarios which might occur if the government were to directly address the country's history of enslavement, and which explain why the government will never do this. The numerous institutions that are considered Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) propagate the dominant ideology to ensure that all citizens (including young children) are properly indoctrinated, thereby maintaining the status quo and guaranteeing the continued exploitation of the people. I suggest that the increase in educational gag orders which restrict teaching about race (which includes the history of chattel slavery in the United States) demonstrates attempts from the far right to utilize the Educational ISA as an instrument to inculcate K-12 students with a more extreme ideology. Finally, I explain how the history regarding enslaved children relates

to the dominant ideology and how this dissertation research serves the goal of critical archaeologists by exposing the ideology about American slavery.

Chapter Five focuses on the topic of enslaved children and labor. In this chapter I rely heavily on interviews and narratives by formerly enslaved individuals in order to adequately represent the wide range of jobs, tasks, and chores that enslaved children were assigned and which sometimes varied according to the region, farm/plantation size, and the number of individuals enslaved at the location. I also address how labor was sometimes dependent on age, gender, attitude or demeanor, physical strength, and other factors. This chapter is essential for understanding how enslaved children experienced their daily lives, what environments they occupied, and what kinds of material culture they interacted with regularly. Utilitarian artifacts are typically not associated with the activities of enslaved children, but adults. However, a close examination of the childhood memories of formerly enslaved people informs one that children were responsible for all kinds of work that may not be immediately obvious to archaeologists.

I suggest that Saidiya Hartman's concept of critical fabulation provides an extremely useful framework for this approach. Critical fabulation involves an interrogation of the archives to create a line of questioning which enables one to create a narrative that may or may not have occurred. "The intention here," she writes, "isn't anything as miraculous as recovering the lives of the enslaved or redeeming the dead, but rather laboring to paint as full a picture of the lives of the captives as possible" (Hartman 2008:11). By employing critical fabulation, the presence of children can become more visible within the archaeological record. Cooking utensils previously attributed to enslaved adult cooks may now be interpreted more broadly to include enslaved children working as kitchen scullions. The purpose of critical fabulation is to recognize possibilities for interpretation based on the archive but that cannot be verified. Artifact

interpretations are rarely able to be verified in the first place. Critical fabulation demonstrates that the presence of children in the material record is just as visible as the presence of adults, who are always assumed to be a given. Paired with a critical reading of interviews and narratives by people who were once enslaved, the use of critical fabulation results in a multitude of possibilities for interpretation.

The chapter concludes with a case study on thimbles excavated from sites with enslaved contexts at James Madison's Montpelier. Thimbles are one type of artifact that can be very obviously associated with children based on the diameter of the thimble opening. Currently, there are no standard measurements for thimble diameters that archaeologists can use to potentially determine the age range of the specific thimble owner. By comparing the diameters of thimbles found at Montpelier, it is possible to see the range of measurements and to ascertain which thimbles may have been worn by children. Because the sample size is quite small, the results of this case study are limited. However, a statistical analysis of a larger dataset comprised of thimbles recovered from other late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth sites of enslavement could result in the identification of standard thimble sizes. This work may be pursued in the future.

Chapter Six is the final chapter of this dissertation and examines the concept of childhood joy as resilience. While enslavers and overseers generally did not view or treat enslaved children as children, enslaved family and community members endeavored to preserve some sort of childhood for their children. Enslaved children brought joy to their families and their parents and grandparents sought to provide them with happy experiences where they could simply exist as children. I argue that seeking and creating moments of joy and love to allow children to be children can be considered as resiliency and, at times, resistance to oppression. By recognizing an enslaved child as a child, rather than a laborer, enslaved adults were demonstrating to their

children that they were humans who were enslaved, not slaves. They instilled children with a sense of identity and hope that aided them in survival.

Archaeologically, the childhood joy of enslaved children may be represented through artifacts such as toys. However, in terms of material culture, these aspects of childhood were largely either intangible or ephemeral – they are represented largely through toys and games, through religious rituals or herbal remedies, and through oral histories and folktales. The intangible cultural heritage passed down from enslaved adults to children gave them a history, a culture, and an identity. I posit that by intentionally creating and preserving a childhood for their children, enslaved adults provided them with a distinct and unique identity which built resilience and ensured their survival as individuals.

Chapter 1: A Protocol for Raising Enslaved Children

During the nineteenth century, the institution of American chattel slavery created a system that produced children for sale on the market. Therefore, in order to begin to understand what childhood was like for an enslaved person, one must first understand the system that relied on the constant production, rearing, and sale of children in order to maintain and further the domestic slave trade and the institution of slavery. In 1807, the United States Congress passed the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, and the law went into effect on January 1, 1808. This Act, suggested and promoted by then President Thomas Jefferson, banned the importation of enslaved individuals to the United States, and effectively abolished the transatlantic slave trade, legally.[6]

However, the law did not affect the sale and purchase of enslaved people within the United States. The domestic slave trade was still legal. Enslavers and slave traders now had to operate within the confines of this system and relied more heavily on the existing enslaved population than they had before. The only way to maintain or grow the American enslaved workforce was through the reproduction of the current population, and the natural growth of this population was not occurring quickly enough for some enslavers. Therefore, many enslavers turned to new methods, including forced or incentivized reproduction, and developed a specialized system for the production and rearing of enslaved children for labor or for sale within the domestic slave trade. This American system was efficient, highly effective, and widely utilized across the Lower South, but the enslavers who created this system may have borrowed

[6] The transatlantic slave trade in the United States continued, illegally, until 1860. The schooner *Clotilda* was the last known slave ship to bring enslaved people from Africa to the United States. It landed in Mobile Bay, Alabama in either 1859 or 1860.

some of their methods and techniques from the Danish West Indies, where the transatlantic slave trade was gradually abolished beginning in 1792 until 1803.

In this chapter, I propose the idea that beginning in the nineteenth century, enslavers began raising groups of enslaved children according to a shared set of protocols or standardized methods. Some of these methods were nothing new, and in fact had been utilized by enslavers in the Chesapeake for some time (Dennis Pogue, personal communication, February 26, 2024). Enslavers such as Thomas Jefferson were aware that constant reproduction was essential for maintaining or expanding their enslaved populations, thus increasing their own profits. Therefore, tactics such as incentivized reproduction were common among enslavers in the Upper South well before the ban on importing enslaved people was implemented. Additionally, the practice of clothing enslaved children of both genders in the same way and only providing shoes to children who were old enough for formal work had been conducted in the region for some time, as it was more cost-effective for enslavers.

The impact of the 1808 Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves varied across the south. By that time, Virginia's enslaved population was already self-sustaining and continued to grow due to natural increase, rather than the importation of enslaved Africans, which had ceased by 1780 (Morgan 1998:59). "On the eve of the Revolution… in Virginia more than nine of ten slaves were American-born" (Morgan 1998:62). Although Maryland had largely ceased importing enslaved Africans by 1775, state lawmakers officially outlawed the importation of enslaved individuals from foreign countries in 1783 (Bogen 1990:388). As with Virginia's enslaved population, by the American Revolution, 90 percent of Maryland's enslaved population was born in America (MSA & UMD 2008:6). Therefore, enslavers in the Chesapeake largely did not utilize the protocols for raising enslaved children that were utilized in the Lower South, as they

had little need for these methods – the enslaved populations in Virginia and Maryland were stable and increased naturally. The practices that I consider to be a part of the protocol for raising enslaved children include the use of troughs for feeding the children in groups, a similar diet consisting of high amounts of carbohydrates and starches and extremely low amounts of protein, the implementation of purpose-built nursery buildings, and the distribution of unisex and uniform clothing. This protocol was primarily adopted by enslavers in the Lower South or Lowcountry, where substantial plantations with large enslaved populations were more prevalent. This does not mean that nursery buildings and troughs were not used in the Upper South at all (there is documented evidence for both in Virginia and Maryland) but they were certainly much less common than in the Lower South.

The Danish West Indies: A Blueprint for Increasing the Enslaved Population

In 1787, the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in England. The abolitionist movement was becoming stronger, and politicians from other countries began to take notice, including Count Ernst von Schimmelman, the Finance Minister of Denmark, Chairman of the Board of Trade and Board of Finance, and Chief Financial Officer of Denmark. Schimmelman believed that if a powerful country like England was considering the abolition of the slave trade, smaller countries like Denmark would soon have to abolish it as well. However, sugar production in the Danish West Indies relied entirely on the importation of enslaved workers for slave labor. Because of this, Schimmelman devised a plan that would eventually abolish the slave trade in Denmark and its colonies, but only after the enslaved population in the Danish West Indies was large enough to be maintained, ensuring the continued production of sugar after the slave trade was officially abolished. He believed that if conditions of the enslaved population in the Danish West Indies were improved, there would be virtually no need for the

slave trade (Loftin Jr. 1977:82). Schimmelman's main question involved reproduction. He wrote, "Is it possible to establish on all the plantations the correct ratio of male to female slaves necessary for propagation, without importing more slaves?" (Loftin Jr. 1977:77).

In 1791 the Great Committee on the Slave Trade (den store Negerhandels Kommission) was established with the purpose of considering the future of the slave trade (Loftin Jr. 1977:87). The committee, which included Schimmelman, created a plan to increase the enslaved population. After studying data on the enslaved population, the committee found that a low birth rate (rather than a high death rate) was the cause for the decrease in the population, but also that the mortality rate for young children was much higher than it was for adults (Loftin Jr. 1977:103-104). They decided that the ratio of females to males was inadequate for the purposes of child production, and asked the Danish king, Christian VII, to loan funds to those enslaver-planters who could not afford to buy more female slaves, with the promise that ten years after the plan was implemented, the slave trade would become unnecessary to the Danish (Donoghue 2008:354). According to Donoghue (2008:355), increasing the number of enslaved women in the Danish West Indies was the "foundation stone of the blueprint," as well as creating "conditions conducive to breeding." The committee recommended marriage for the enslaved men and women to encourage the production of children, keep families together, and to avoid venereal diseases (caused by "promiscuity") that often resulted in sterility (Loftin Jr. 1977:107).

The Governor General of the Danish West Indies, Ernst von Walterstoff, believed that the loans from the king could create opportunities that would encourage enslavers to treat their enslaved workers better. The committee recommended more hospitals, as well as nurseries for enslaved infants and young children. Enslaved mothers would be allowed to visit the nurseries multiple times a day, in order to breastfeed. Walterstoff suggested an award of 200 rigsdaler for

the best sketch of a hospital and nursery, and 50 to 100 rigsdaler granted to enslavers who modeled their hospitals and nurseries on the award-winning sketches (Loftin Jr. 1977:166). He also believed in offering financial incentives to enslaved women. Enslaved mothers would be paid two rigsdaler when their infants reached six weeks, six months, and twelve months old, to encourage them to take better care of their children (Loftin Jr. 1977:166).

The committee claimed that it would be economically advantageous for enslaver-planters to maintain their enslaved population through these means, rather than purchasing new enslaved laborers, whose prices began to increase (Loftin Jr. 1977: 126). "The cost of providing for slave children in their earliest years was small; and as the children grew older, they could be used for a variety of tasks, such as gathering hay by the time they were six, so that the planter got some material benefit from feeding and clothing them" (Loftin Jr. 1977:126). However, ultimately no money was saved from the abolition of the slave trade due to the cost of purchasing more enslaved women, improving living conditions, and providing healthcare to enslaved women and children (Donoghue 2008:359). Although the conditions of the enslaved population in the Danish West Indies differed from those in the United States, it is clear that some of the methods from the Danish blueprint were replicated or refined by enslavers in the United States, most notably through the implementation of nurseries (and the practice of allowing breastfeeding mothers to visit the nursery during the day) and hospitals.

Forced & Incentivized Reproduction within the Domestic Slave Trade

The Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves resulted in a revitalization of the domestic slave trade, as it was now the only legal market where enslavers and traders could purchase and

sell enslaved individuals.[7] Enslaved children were now considered more valuable than they had been before the Act took effect, as were enslaved women of a childbearing age. Prior to 1808, it was not uncommon for enslavers to sell or hire out enslaved women specifically because of their pregnant condition, especially in the northern or middle colonies. In these places, there was no need for surplus labor, and pregnant women or mothers of young children were considered a burden, rather than a benefit (Berry 2017:20-21). Historian Deborah Gray White (1999:67) notes, "Surprisingly, enslavers were slow to appreciate the economic value of the slave woman's procreative ability, but by the middle of the eighteenth century most slave owners, especially those with twenty or more slaves, had come to realize the potential benefits." By 1808, what enslavers had once considered to be "potential benefits" had now become the essential factor in ensuring the growth of the enslaved population and the American economy in general. Enslavers realized that their economic success depended on the growth of the existing enslaved population, and that they had the power to control this growth:

> They did not have to depend on the market to purchase human property. Instead, by making calculated choices about their enslaved population, they could, in fact, grow their own. Enslaved women's bodies were catalysts of nineteenth-century economic development, distinguishing US slavery from bondage in other parts of the world. (Berry 2017:14)

This realization is reflected in the prices of enslaved women of childbearing age (fifteen to thirty-five) during the Early National Period (1789-1830). Enslaved women of childbearing age (often known as "breeding wenches") had higher financial values than younger girls or older

[7] Tadman (1996:12) asserts that the prime period of the domestic slave trade began in the period after 1807, but that "it is clear from scattered, unsystematic evidence that a professional traffic in slaves dated back to at least the 1780s."

women across the South, specifically in Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia (Berry 2017:15).[8]

As enslaved women were valued for their fecundity and their likelihood of bearing more children, their "childbearing capacity became a commodity that could be traded in the market for profit" (Schwartz 2006:10). A woman's ability to bear children often and without difficulty or complications became a kind of skill that was advertised by slave traders or auctioneers at slave markets and auction houses, no different than advertising that a woman was a skilled cook or talented seamstress. Slave traders would advertise enslaved women as "fecund," "fertile," or "a good breeder," and these women were often significantly more expensive than other enslaved individuals.[9] "Fecundity at an early age was considered a great virtue, and actual or prospective infants increased the market value of slave mothers" (Bancroft 1996:82). Purchasing a "fertile" enslaved woman ensured the production of more workers, and thus more free labor. According to an enslaver who wrote to Frederick Law Olmsted in 1856, "I have known a great many negro girls to be sold off, because they did not have children. A breeding woman is worth from one-sixth to one-fourth more than one that does not breed" (Olmsted 1856:55). For example, at a

[8] It is important to note that terms like "breeder" or "breeding wench" signified different meanings throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the terms simply signified pregnant or nursing women, while during the mid- to late nineteenth century, the terms "regarded breeding as reproduction for profit" (Berry 2017:21).

[9] Throughout this dissertation and especially within this chapter, the terms "breeding" or "breeders" appear in quotes from enslavers and formerly enslaved persons to describe the practice of forced or incentivized reproduction in the context of mid- to late-nineteenth century American slavery. I use these quotes to demonstrate the ubiquity of both the terms and the practice during that time, and because direct quotes from those individuals who were present are integral to the understanding of the institution of American slavery. However, the terms (which were meant to be dehumanizing) only serve to continue violence and hatred against enslaved or formerly enslaved individuals, and I prefer to use the terms forced reproduction or incentivized reproduction instead.

Georgia auction in January 1860, "the best field hand," who was a 21-year-old man, sold for $1,900 while a 17-year-old woman with her 9-month-old infant sold for $2,150 (Phillips 1909:73). The benefits of such a woman outweighed the exorbitant cost.

In an 1819 letter to his overseer, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I consider the labor of a breeding woman of no object, and that a child raised every two years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man" (Jefferson 1819). One year later, Jefferson repeated this sentiment in a letter to his son-in-law John Wayles Eppes. He wrote:

> I know no error more consuming to an estate than that of stocking farms with men almost exclusively. I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man of the farm. What she produces is an addition to the capital, while his labors disappear in mere consumption. (Jefferson 1820)

Jefferson shared this opinion with both his overseer and his son-in-law, presumably so that they might take his advice. Enslavers shared their advice and recommendations on this topic in agricultural periodicals and journals like *Southern Agriculturist, Southern Cultivator,* and *De Bow's Review*. Wealthy enslavers commissioned essays and held prize competitions for essays discussing the ideals of slave management so that other planters could also utilize these successful management methods (Breeden 1980). Additionally, like Jefferson, they shared their suggestions and experiences privately through personal correspondence and also documented them in plantation manuals. Enslavers influenced the growth of their enslaved laborers primarily through the use of two methods: forced reproduction or incentivized reproduction.[10]

[10] The reliance on enslaved women to reproduce for the benefit of the enslaver highlights what Orlando Patterson calls "the gendered nature of slavery" (Patterson 2012:3). For more in-depth studies regarding the experience of enslaved women in the United States, see Davis 1972; White 1999; Morgan 2004; Schwartz 2006; and Jones 2010.

Forced reproduction may be defined as any interference with natural reproduction from the enslaver, slave trader, or other individuals who held power over enslaved individuals. Forced reproduction includes rape and other acts of physical violence or threats. Both enslaved men and women were forced to reproduce in order to ensure the growth of the enslaved population. Enslavers and overseers did not explicitly publish advice regarding forced reproduction because of its obvious violence, but interviews from the Federal Writers' Project *Slave Narratives* mention instances of forced reproduction or forced pairings under the guise of marriage. Sam and Louisa Everett were formerly enslaved near Norfolk, Virginia by "Big Jim" McClain. McClain would frequently force enslaved men and women on his plantation to have intercourse in order to produce children, and if there were any reluctance, he would force them to "consummate this relationship in his presence," and would invite guests to watch and "engage in these debaucheries" (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:127). Sam and Louisa were forced to perform in front of McClain. "Well, he told us what we must git busy and do in his presence, and we had to do it. After that we were considered man and wife. Me and Sam was a healthy pair and had fine, big babies, so I never had another man forced on me, thank God. Sam was kind to me and I learnt to love him" (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:128). Louisa's words implied that if she and Sam had not produced "fine, big babies," she would have been forced to couple with another man until she had delivered the desired outcome for McClain, as he would force pairings between enslaved individuals regardless of their marriage status.

Not only were young, enslaved women valued for their child birthing capabilities, healthy men were also sought after in the market for similar purposes. Emma Barr, who was formerly enslaved in Arkansas, remembered such a man. "Dr. Ware had a fine man he bred his colored house women to. They didn't plough and do heavy work. He was a hostler, looked after the stock

and got in wood. The women hated him, and the men on the place done as well. They hated him too" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 1 1936:119). Ida Blackshear Hutchinson said that her grandfather Luke Blackshear, who was enslaved in Alabama, was a "stock Negro," and the father of fifty-six children. He was known as the "giant breeder" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 3 1936:370). Enslavers who owned "stock men" would rent them to other plantation owners, and these enslavers would only be paid for the "services" of the men if they engaged in intercourse (Schwartz 2006:23). Enslavers who rented such men did so with the intention of creating healthy, strong offspring for sale. William Maddox, an enslaver from Louisiana, often forced one man to procreate with multiple women (of Maddox's choosing) and hired a doctor to examine them to determine their health beforehand. "His goal was physically fit children who might be sold for a good price" (Schwartz 2006:24). In this way, by picking and choosing the most suitable enslaved men and women and forcing them to couple, many enslavers were practicing eugenics in an attempt to create the most healthy and strong babies who would fetch the highest prices on the market.

Enslavers also utilized incentivized reproduction as a way to increase their enslaved populations, and it seems that this practice was more common than forced reproduction. Incentivized reproduction included the offer of clothing, food, time off, or other benefits conditionally given based on the success of childbirth. Unlike with forced reproduction, advice on incentivized reproduction was freely shared and widely available in agricultural journals and periodicals, as well as in plantation manuals and farm books. Enslavers would offer rewards to enslaved women for marrying enslaved men on the same plantation, but they would also offer rewards to enslaved women when and after they had given birth. "The economic inducements for marriage generally included a house, a private plot of land which the family could work on its

own, and, frequently, a bounty either in cash or in household goods" (Fogel and Engerman 1989:84).

South Carolina enslaver James Henry Hammond wrote, "Marriage is to be encouraged, as it adds to the comfort, happiness and health of those who enter upon it, *besides ensuring a greater increase* [emphasis added]" (Hammond 1858:21). Hammond required that enslaved couples ask his permission before getting married, and marriages outside of his plantations were forbidden. He provided married couples with "a bounty of $5.00, to be invested in household articles, or an equivalent of articles" and if either person had been previously married, the bounty was reduced to $2.50 (Hammond 1858:21). At Poplar Forest, his plantation in Bedford County, Virginia, Thomas Jefferson rewarded enslaved women who chose spouses from the plantation with a cooking pot, a bed, and whenever possible, a house (Heath 1999:13). Because Jefferson documented these rewards in his farm book, it is sometimes possible to ascertain marriages amongst his enslaved population. On May 28, 1811 he gave a sifter, a pot, and a bed to Bedford John and his wife Virginia (Jefferson 1976:137). Following their marriage, Bedford John and Amanda had at least two children – Robert (b. 1811) and Amanda (b. 1815). By providing material incentives for marriage to couples on the same plantation, Jefferson ensured that any offspring born to the couple would also belong to him and would guarantee an economic profit.

Enslavers would also offer incentives to women who were pregnant, who had successfully given birth, and who had taken good care of their children. By their fifth month of pregnancy, pregnant women were usually given a lighter workload, such as spinning or sewing, and did not have to continue arduous work in the fields. At this point in their pregnancy (the midpoint of their second trimester), they were sometimes placed in what was called the "Suckler's gang," along with women who were still nursing, the ill or elderly, and sometimes

young children. An 1851 Georgia planter-prize essayist recommended the following treatment for pregnant women:

> The females, during a state of pregnancy should be exempt from all labor that would have a tendency to injure them, such as lifting heavy burdens, fencing, plowing and &c., and for several weeks previous to confinement they should be kept within doors for five or six weeks, and such attention paid them and their offspring as their circumstances require. (Bass 1846-1851:195)

In 1857, an Alabama enslaver published his recommendations for the treatment of enslaved women in *The American Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*:

> *No inconsiderable part of a farmer's profits being in the little negroes he succeeds in raising*; the breeding women, when lusty [fertile], are allowed a great many privileges and required to work pretty much as they please. When they come out of the straw, a nice calico dress is presented each one as a reward and inducement to take care of their children. To allow them the better to do so, they are excused from night duties of every sort. [emphasis added] (Rusticus 1857:372).

South Carolina enslaver James Henry Hammond offered similar advice, instead offering the reward of a "muslin or calico frock" to mothers of infants "13 months old and in sound health, that [have] been properly attended to" each year on Christmas day, as incentives to keep their children healthy (Hammond 1858:28). Nursing mothers were often given extra rations or nourishment. Hammond gave new mothers a bundle containing clothing for the infant, pieces of cloth and rags, and extra food including sugar, coffee, rice, and flour (Hammond 1858:17). Thomas Jefferson stipulated that nursing mothers were allowed an extra quarter-peck of cornmeal in the weekly ration (Jefferson 1976:156).

Agricultural magazines were full of detailed advice regarding nursing women and the frequency with which they should be allowed to visit and nurse their infants, ranging from two to four times per day. This amount of nursing was probably not enough to provide adequate nutrition – enslaved field workers could work anywhere from eight to fourteen hours per day, depending on the season, and modern medical guidelines suggest that infants under six months of age should breastfeed about eight to twelve times within a 24-hour period (CDC 2022). This probability was confirmed by Louis Hughes, who was enslaved in Mississippi and wrote about the babies in the nursery. "Sometimes the little things would seem starved, for the mothers could only stop their toil three times a day to care for them…The cries of these little ones, who were cut off almost entirely from motherly care and protection, were heart-rending" (Hughes 1897:43).

Women who had already given birth to children were given further incentives to take care of their children and to have more children. In 1831, a Georgia planter wrote in *Southern Agriculturist*, "I give to families having six children living one cow with the male issue, reserving the heifer calves. When the family increases to ten children living, I require no other labour from the mother than to attend to her children" (Hazzard 1831:350). In the January 1857 issue of *De Bow's Review*, a South Carolina enslaver wrote that "women with six children alive at any one time are allowed all Saturday to themselves" (Weston 1857:44). These rewards for mothers of multiple children are confirmed in interviews from the *Slave Narratives*. Peter Brown, who was enslaved in Arkansas, recalled that his mother was a "fast breeder" who had ten children, three pairs of twins. She did not have to do any work other than taking care of children, as "they prized fast breeders" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 1 1936:312). Similarly, Martha Jackson, who was enslaved in Alabama, said that her aunt was a "breeder woman" who had a

child every twelve months, and that the enslaver ordered that she could not be put under any strain because she was valuable to him (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936-1937:222).

The institution of slavery was inherently violent, and the threat of violence always existed, even if it was not explicitly made. Therefore, it is possible that some enslaved people had children because they knew that they were expected to have them and feared the repercussions of remaining childless. Enslaved women who would not or could not have children were often punished. These women were either relegated to work in the fields doing intense manual labor or sold to other plantations because they were not able to have children, and thus increase profits for the enslaver. "Childless women could not expect any of the rewards or concessions available to mothers. Single women without children lived with parents or other enslaved families, dependent on them not only for shelter but also for a share of the family's food, clothing, and other resources" (Schwartz 2006:19). In this way, women who demonstrated that they were able to give birth to healthy children who lived through infancy were at less risk of being sold away from their families due to their high value to the enslaver.

Finally, enslaved individuals did not always have children as a result of forced or incentivized reproduction. Many enslaved women conceived children naturally (meaning without any sort of involvement or influence from a third party) because (like free women) they wanted to be mothers. "Family life offered a welcome respite from the dehumanizing slave regime. Children especially represented a chance to love and be loved in return" (Schwartz 2006:11). However, under slavery, there was no guarantee that anyone was safe. It is well documented that enslaved mothers and children were separated not infrequently and whether they stayed together was almost entirely dependent on the whims of the enslaver or the enslaver's family. Michael

Tadman (1996:151) estimates that by the 1850s, around 23% percent of the interregional slave trade was made up of children aged 0-14 years old forcibly separated from their parents.[11]

Raising Children for Profit

After enslavers had determined the ways to ensure the constant growth of their enslaved populations through forced or incentivized reproduction, they implemented a specific protocol for raising those enslaved children. This protocol was largely used by wealthy enslavers with significant landholdings in the Lower South and Lowcountry and would have been uncommon in the Chesapeake and other areas of the Upper South. Before this possible protocol is discussed, it is necessary to understand that enslavers were purposefully endeavoring to create a system designed to manage childrearing in the cheapest and most efficient ways possible, for the goal of raising children for profit (either for eventual labor or for sale within the domestic slave trade). For enslavers, enslaved children were first and foremost an investment. This sentiment was no secret, as evidenced by the ways in which enslavers publicly wrote about the management of enslaved children.

According to a Georgia enslaver in his *Essay on the Treatment and Management of Slaves*, "Children, of course, must be fed and attended as their wants require: they are not likely to be neglected, *as they pay a good interest upon the amount of care and expense bestowed upon them*" [emphasis added] (Collins 1853:8). An overseer on a Mississippi plantation echoed those sentiments in *The American Cotton Planter* magazine, stating that his employer "wanted the negroes taken care of, and especially the young negroes. His motto was, *to take care of what he*

[11] The percentage of children aged 0-14 sold without either parent (but not forcibly separated) is 2% or less. "Not forcibly separated" refers to children who were already orphans when sold, but statistics indicate that no more than 1% of children under 14 years old would have lost both parents through death (Tadman 1996:151). This 2% increases the total number of children sold without either parent to around 25% of the total trade (Tadman 1996:150).

had as the surest way of getting rich" [emphasis original] (Cook 1858:112). The overseer then changed his business model from an emphasis on cotton to an emphasis on raising enslaved children:

> For the last six years I have been trying to be a *farmer.* I had to turn my attention to corn, hogs, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, and garden vegetables; to take care of and raise little negroes. We have women to cook and wash for them, and due attention is given to their cleanliness and comfort. Under this treatment we seldom lose one, and have nearly as many about the houses as in the field; always providing them with plenty to eat – bread, meat, vegetables and molasses. (Cook 1858:113)

The language of this article and the periodical where it was published warrant further analysis. The overseer, Cook, chose to publish this article in *The American Cotton Planter,* a "monthly Southern Rural Magazine, Devoted to Improved Plantation Economy, the Advancement of Southern Horticulture, Manufactures, and the Domestic and Mechanic Arts." Cook's article is found on the same page as the instructions for how to properly plant clover. One can also see how overseers and planters compared young children to animals. "Under this treatment we seldom lose one" is a phrase a farmer might use for raising cows or horses, not children. Advice for how to care for enslaved children was commonly shared in journals and magazines geared toward enslavers with large plantations – these children were as much of an agricultural product as cotton and rice and were regarded as crops to be raised for sale at the market.

Plantation Nurseries, Day Nurseries, and Children's Houses

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries featured the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin in 1793 and the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves in 1807. It was at this time that states in the Upper South became known as "selling" states, selling the excess of enslaved

laborers that were not needed further south, to the "buying" states. Between 1820 and 1860, an average of 200,000 enslaved individuals (or exactly 10 percent of the Upper South's enslaved population) were sold further south *each decade* [emphasis added] (Tadman 1996:5). From 1820-1829, the net exporting states were comprised of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina (Tadman 1996:6). Net importing states from the same period included Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, and expanded to include Texas by 1850-1859 (Tadman 1996:7).

Large plantations in the Lowcountry and Lower South required an immense number of enslaved workers in order to grow the labor-intensive crops of rice and cotton. It is at these plantations that enslavers utilized nurseries, sometimes referred to as "day" nurseries, because enslaved mothers would drop their young children off at the nursery in the morning and retrieve them at night after working a day in the fields. The use of plantation nurseries "grew in the antebellum years among the South's largest planters, who hoped to make infant care more efficient and less costly" (Schwartz 2001:69). The plantation nursery was usually managed by a superannuated enslaved woman who could no longer work in the fields. "The designation of one slave to care for infants of working mothers in a day nursery offered a solution to the problem of supervising infants when mothers worked at some distance from their cabins. Enslavers adopted this practice only if a slave marginal to the production process was able to assume this chore, however" (Schwartz 2001:69). Enslavers recognized that these individuals who were too elderly or infirm for other work could still perform the labor of caring for young children, although this labor was by no means easy.

In general, the day nursery was a nondescript building located in the slave quarters of a plantation and would have resembled the slave cabins nearby, as shown in an 1862 photograph taken by Henry Moore at Elliott's Plantation in Hilton Head, South Carolina (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Photograph of the nursery building at Elliott's Plantation.

Courtesy of the Gladstone Collection of African American Photographs, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Frederick Law Olmsted, when visiting a South Carolina rice plantation, wrote that "the cabin nearest the overseer's house was used as a nursery," implying that the nursery building was not easily distinguishable from the other cabins (Olmsted 1856:423). Olmsted drew a sketch of the nursery, which appeared to be a one-story wooden building with a front porch, side-gable roof, and two center chimneys (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Olmsted's 1856 sketch of a nursery.

Courtesy of DocSouth, the University Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In 1853, Thomas Thorpe described a nursery on a Louisiana sugarcane plantation as being "fifty feet square" (Thorpe 1853:759). Most nurseries were outfitted with homemade cradles or pallets, and on some rice plantations, "fanner-baskets" normally used to separate rice from the husks functioned as cradles (Schwartz 2001:71). Solon Robinson, writing for *De Bow's Review* in 1849, described a

Mississippi nursery as having "more than a dozen cradles, and on the neat, green, grassy village common, were sporting more than 40 negro children…" (Robinson 1849:381).

Descriptions of nursery buildings also come from the narratives of formerly enslaved people. Estella Jones, who was enslaved in Georgia, remembered the nurse's house at Powers Pond Place as a wooden house near the big house, with "two great big rooms" – a sleeping room with bunk beds set three or four feet apart, and another room that was used as a playroom and a dining room. The floor was bare, and the seats and benches were built from undressed lumber (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:346). In his narrative, Louis Hughes described the nursery at Edmund McGehee's plantation in Mississippi:

> The cabin used for the infants during the day was a double one, that is, double the usual size, and was located near the great house. The cradles were made of boards, and were not more than two by three feet in size. The women carried their babies in the cradles to the baby cabin in the morning, taking them to their own cabins at night. The children ranging in age from one to seven years were numerous, and the old woman had them to look after as well as the babies. This was indeed a task, and might well have taxed the strength of a younger woman. They were always from eight to a dozen infants in the cabin. (Hughes 1897:44)

Teshan Young, who was enslaved on a plantation in Harrison County, Texas, remembered that there was a house for a nursery, with a big yard that had swings for the children (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4 1936:235). It seems that most nursery buildings were constructed in the same way as other cabins in the quarters but were used singularly for the purpose of housing enslaved children and their nurse(s) during the day and were generally located near the enslaver's residence. Architecturally, nursery buildings may not have had any distinguishing features to set

them apart from other buildings in the quarters, other than perhaps being slightly larger, depending on the size of the plantation.

However, there are some accounts that suggest that nurseries on particularly wealthy plantations were specially constructed with the health of young children in mind. In 1832 the editors of *Southern Agriculturist* visited James Hamilton Couper's Georgia plantation, Hopeton. The nursery building was described as "remarkably neat and clean, well ventilated, and heated altogether by steam" (Legare 1833:574). A steam-heating system replaced the need for fireplaces, which required constant tending to, and allowed the nurse to better focus her attention on cooking and caring for the children. Additionally, Susan Eppes described the day nursery at Horseshoe plantation in Leon County, Florida as "a 4-roomed house with a broad passage running north and south and wide piazzas all around; the rooms were well lighted; generous sized fireplaces heated them in winter and a 'lightwood blaze' could always be found there on chilly, rainy days in summer" (Eppes 1925:41). These descriptions of technologically advanced nurseries suggest that enslavers on those plantations were willing to spend more money to ensure the health (and eventual profit) of their enslaved children.

Plantations located in the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia were highly susceptible to disease, especially during the summer months. The mortality rates of enslaved children on rice plantations often rose during this time, and although planters did not understand the cause of malaria, they knew enough to move their families away from the coast during the summer. Wealthy rice planters sent young enslaved children to "pineland camps" that they rented or owned for weeks or months at a time in order to avoid disease and death. "Toward the end of the antebellum period, they sometimes sent children away to the pinelands for as long as five or six months – a period that corresponded to the time they sent their own families to

Savannah and Charleston to avoid contagion on the plantation" (Schwartz 2001:85). Enslaved parents were not allowed to accompany their children to these camps but were sometimes allowed to visit them during free time on the weekends, as the camps were usually not far.

Nursery buildings were typically uncommon in the Upper South, though there is evidence that some did exist on larger plantations. Instead, enslaved children in the Upper South or at smaller farms in the Lowcountry and Lower South were cared for by superannuated enslaved people either in their own cabins or outdoors, near the big house or within the quarters. Abram Sells, who was enslaved in Texas, remembered that his great-grandfather was tasked with watching all of the children on the plantation, including the white children. They would stay outside during the day, close to the big house, while they completed chores such as bringing in wood, kindling fires, toting water, and feeding the pigs and chickens (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4 1936:9). At his Virginia plantation, Monticello, Thomas Jefferson stipulated that workers should "build the Negro houses together that the fewer nurses may serve & that the children may be more easily attended to by the superannuated women" (Jefferson 1976:77). Utilizing elderly enslaved workers for childcare purposes was a cheap and effective way to ensure the safety of the children while extracting more free labor from those who would otherwise be excused from fieldwork. Additionally, older children (usually under the age of ten) would often aid the elderly nurses in helping to care for the younger children and babies. When there were no elderly enslaved people available to watch the children, it was customary to leave young children under the care of older children (who had not yet started routinized work) during the day. John Brown wrote of his experiences as an enslaved child in Southampton County, Virginia. "Almost all slave children have to do the nursing; the big taking care of the small, who often come poorly off in consequence" (Brown 1855:3-4).

In extremely unusual cases, children were sometimes placed under the care of the enslaved cook. This probably meant that some of the kitchen helpers were tasked with minding the children as well as with aiding the cook in the preparation of meals. Even so, multiple interviews from the *Slave Narratives* confirm that the enslaved cook was sometimes responsible for watching and feeding the children outside during mealtimes, especially on plantations or farms without nursery buildings. Finally, some formerly enslaved individuals remember being watched by a white woman on the plantation, either the enslaver's wife or another female relative. Millie Evans grew up as an enslaved child in North Carolina and recalled that the enslaver's wife would call the children up to the big house yard and feed them between meals, and every evening at three o'clock she would call them in to sleep on pallets, presumably before their mothers brought them back to the quarters at the end of the day. Evans said, "I stayed with my ma every night but my mistress raised me," implying that the mistress was responsible for the primary care of the children during the day (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:240-241).

Charlotte Beverly was enslaved in Texas and had similar memories. The enslaver's wife had no children of her own and took care of all the infants on the plantation with the help of a young enslaved girl. Charlotte said that sometimes there were as many as fifty cradles with babies in them, and the enslaver's wife would look after them, "she turn them and dry them herself" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:86). Charlotte would blow the horn every morning and afternoon for the mothers to come from the fields and nurse the babies, and the enslaver's wife would feed the children who were old enough for solid food. However, interviews from the *Slave Narratives* suggest that this level of involvement from the enslaver's wife was atypical. Many of the people who were interviewed stated that the enslaver's wife would bring them to the yard around the big house to give them medicine each morning, feed them between meals daily, or

invite them for a special meal once each week. On certain days (usually Sundays) the children had to be presented in clean clothing so that the enslaver and his wife might inspect them. While the enslaver's wife may have had some daily involvement with the enslaved children on the plantation, she was typically not their primary caregiver.

Insurance Policies for Nursery Buildings

Although nursery buildings were generally uncommon in the Upper South, insurance policies from Virginia indicate that some did exist and were valuable enough to be insured by the owner. The Mutual Assurance Society was a fire insurance company for the state of Virginia, incorporated by the General Assembly in 1794. Between 1809 and 1837, five individuals purchased insurance covering nursery buildings on their properties. These buildings were listed as KNU (kitchen/nursery), NUH (nurse's house), and NUS (nursery).[12] These buildings were probably associated with nurseries for rearing and housing enslaved children, as buildings utilized for growing plants were marked as GRE (green house), KGH (kitchen/ green house), KLG (kitchen/laundry/green house), and GRH (garden house). At least two of the insurance policies covering nursery buildings were purchased by wealthy men who owned large plantations – John Harris of Viewmont and Rawleigh Downman of Belle Isle.

Captain John Harris lived at Viewmont, a 1,500-acre estate in Albemarle County, Virginia. By the time that he died in 1832, he was the wealthiest man in the county, owning seven estates and more than two hundred enslaved people (Looney 2009:482). Harris purchased an insurance policy in 1809 which was revaluated in 1816 (revaluations occurred every seven

[12] Interviews from the FWP *Slave Narratives* indicate that the building where enslaved children were kept during the day was generally referred to as the nursery or day nursery, nurse's house or building, and/or the children's house or home. It is unlikely that the nurse's house would refer to anything other than a nursery, as structures built for the care of the sick were usually called hospitals or infirmaries.

years or when additions were made). In 1809, his nursery building was valued at 100 dollars, and was described as a wooden nursery, one story tall, with a wood roof, measuring 24 by 16 feet (MAS Declaration 366). Harris only purchased this policy for his outbuildings, so it is unclear where the nursery building was located in relation to the main dwelling house. When the policy was revaluated in 1816, it included multiple new buildings, including the dwelling house. The dwelling house sat symmetrically between the kitchen building (24 x 16 feet) and the new nursery building (24 x 16 feet), with a distance of 60 feet on either side. The nursery, built of wood, was valued at 250 dollars, 150 dollars more than its value in 1809 (MAS Revaluation 2268).

Rawleigh W. Downman purchased an insurance policy in 1818 for multiple buildings at Belle Isle, his 924-acre plantation on the Rappahannock River in Lancaster County, Virginia. Belle Isle was a large plantation with many outbuildings, including a kitchen, dairy, smokehouse, spinning house, schoolhouse, granary, stable, laundry, shoemaker's shop, and nurse's house (MAS Declaration 574). The nurse's house at Belle Isle was valued at five hundred dollars and was built of wood with a wooden roof. It was one story high and measured 20 x 18 feet. It is unclear how many enslaved workers lived at Belle Isle in 1818, but the number of outbuildings and the existence of a nurse's house suggest that there were a large number few enslaved laborers living there at the time that the insurance policy was created. According to his estate records, Downman owned 68 enslaved individuals at the time of his death in 1838 (Kilby and Langloh 2010).

Protocol for Raising Enslaved Children: Diet and Methods

While enslavers widely shared similar advice regarding nursery buildings and the appointment of superannuated enslaved persons as primary caregivers, the bulk of the protocol

for raising enslaved children was related to the specific diet and the methods in which the children were fed and clothed.[13] Published narratives and autobiographies from formerly enslaved individuals as well as interviews from the Federal Writers' Project *Slave Narratives* demonstrate that during the antebellum period, enslaved children living on large landholdings in the Lower South and Lowcountry were raised using the same diet and the same methods despite regional differences in agriculture or climate. Both the particular diet and the method for serving meals appear in all of the Confederate states – Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia; and in three of the border states – Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri. However, as with the construction of nursery buildings, the diet and method of feeding associated with the protocol was not normally practiced in the Upper South.

The utilization of the protocol is particularly significant when one considers that although enslavers often shared advice regarding the recommended diet for enslaved children in various publications, the main method of feeding is never explicitly mentioned in any of those publications – the use of troughs instead of plates or bowls. The purposeful omission of this method from periodicals and magazines is most likely due to the brutal and inhumane nature of such treatment. Although enslavers shamelessly admitted to raising enslaved children for profit, the public admission of using such a technique was clearly too distasteful to put in writing. The fact remains that this method was utilized regularly in the majority of slave states at the time and had such a strong impact on formerly enslaved persons that they were able to share vivid

[13] The protocol for raising enslaved children only pertains to instances where children were being raised and fed communally, in a group. The data in this chapter comes from interviews and narratives where it is explicitly mentioned that this was the situation. The protocol does not apply to other farms or plantations where children were raised separately by a family member and fed at home – their diets and the manner in which they ate varied greatly.

memories of the practice with interviewers more than seventy years after emancipation.[14] The protocol for raising enslaved children in the United States was shared both publicly, through agricultural journals and magazines, and privately, through personal correspondence.

The protocol was purposefully designed to be the most economically efficient way to rear children for market and the use of dehumanizing methods was completely intentional. By forcing small children to eat from troughs like animals, enslavers endeavored to divorce the children from their humanity. The results of this were two-fold; if enslavers managed to convince the children that they were not human, but something more akin to livestock, then a child might eventually believe this and accept his or her subordinate status as a piece of property, rather than a person. In this way, the enslaver attempted to create a slave. The other intended result of this treatment was to convince the enslavers themselves that the children were not children, but animals meant to be raised and sold at market. If an enslaver were to recognize the children as human, then he would be forced to confront the reality of the despicable situation that he himself had created. Therefore, dehumanization was absolutely essential to the institution of slavery:

> If this market in human capital was to work efficiently and smoothly, the goods traded had to be divorced from their humanity. Only when the black man became regarded as subhuman could the white man treat him as a simple physical asset without troubling his conscience. (Sutch 1975:174)

Enslavers constantly utilized methods intended to dehumanize their enslaved workers in order to maintain power over them and to continuously reassure themselves that what they were doing

[14] It is unclear whether the method of using troughs for feeding enslaved children was ever practiced in Delaware, as there is a distinct lack of first-hand accounts regarding slavery in Delaware during the antebellum period. By 1860, the enslaved population of Delaware was much smaller than those in the other slave states – around 1,800 people.

was not inherently wrong or evil. The entire system of slavery was dependent on the erroneous notion that treating humans like animals would truly make them animals, justifying the behavior of enslavers and slave traders.

Children under enslavement had a deep and thorough understanding of their enslaver's intentions and attempts to dehumanize them. Interviews from the *Slave Narratives* and other first-person accounts are filled with countless examples comparing the treatment of enslaved children in particular to the treatment of livestock animals. Henry Blake, who was enslaved as a child in Arkansas, summed up the institution of slavery succinctly. "In slavery time they would raise children just like you would raise colts to a mare or calves to a cow or pigs to a sow. It was just a business. It was a bad thing" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 1 1936:177). Harriett Hill still remembered being sold away from her mother in Georgia, even though she was only three years old at the time. "I was sold away from my dear old mammy at three years old but I can remember it. I remembers it! It [was like] selling a calf from the cow. Exactly, but we are human beings and ought to be better than do [such]" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 3 1936:258). While enslavers may have been able to convince themselves that enslaved people were subhuman, they were not able to successfully convince enslaved people of this. Additionally, enslavers were never secretive regarding their goals to raise children for sale, and openly mentioned the fact when speaking to the enslaved children. John Brown, who was enslaved as a child in Virginia, wrote that his enslaver would call all of the children up to the big house each morning for a dose of garlic and rue, "to keep us 'wholesome,' as she said, and make us 'grow likely for market'" (Brown 1855:3). Brown's enslaver made it clear to the children that she was keeping them healthy for her own interests, not because she personally cared about their well-being for their own sakes. James O. Breeden makes this point in *Advice Among Masters*. "… The chief

motivation was economic: a sick slave was unprofitable and a potential financial liability" (Breeden 1980:163).

The use of troughs and other methods for feeding children during enslavement are an important part of the protocol, but before continuing a discussion on these techniques, an understanding of the diet is necessary. As with advice regarding reproduction, the treatment of pregnant and nursing women, and nurseries, enslavers also published essays on the topic of the recommended diet for enslaved children. P. C. Weston owned a rice plantation in South Carolina and published an extremely detailed "Schedule of Allowance" in the January 1857 issue of *De Bow's Review*, stipulating the exact amount of food each child on the plantation should receive, and at what time (Weston 1857:39). Every day (except Sunday) during "Potato-time" each child was to receive two quarts of potatoes, and one pint of grits during "Grits-time." On every Tuesday and Friday, children were to receive an unspecified amount of meat, and on every Tuesday and Friday from April 1st to October 1st, each child would receive one-half of a pint of small rice instead of grits. On every Thursday throughout the year, children would receive an unspecified amount of molasses, and three pints of flour each. On Christmas, each child received one and a half pounds of fresh meat, one and a half pounds of salt, one pint of molasses, and two quarts of small rice. Breaking this complicated schedule down, depending on the season, it seems that each child on Weston's plantation received a good amount of either potatoes, grits, or rice each day. They might eat a small amount of meat on Tuesdays and Fridays, and it seems that the molasses and three pints of flour allotted each Thursday was meant to last for a week. Therefore, the diet for children on Weston's plantation consisted of mainly starches (potatoes, grits, or rice) with a small amount of meat twice a week, and some molasses. It is unclear what the flour was used for, or if the children's parents or cook provided vegetables or milk with their meals.

Another example of the allowance for enslaved children comes from enslaver James Henry Hammond's plantation manual. Each day, children were to receive one-third of the meal and meat given to work-hands. "An abundant supply of vegetables should be always at hand, in a garden cultivated for the especial purpose, to be cooked with their meat" (Hammond 1858:10). Each child received one pint of skimmed milk and a roasted sweet potato per day and their food was cooked by their nurse. For breakfast and supper, the children ate hominy, milk, and cold corn bread. For dinner, they ate "vegetable soup – usually pot liquor or okra soup" and dumplings or bread (Hammond 1858:10). In between meals, children were allowed to have cold bread or potatoes. The only meat they received was beef bones for soup, and they were allowed to have molasses once or twice a week. The diet for children on Hammond's plantation consisted mainly of starches (potatoes, hominy, dumplings, and cornbread) as well as milk. They ate a vegetable soup each night but had very little meat, as their meat came in the form of soup bones.

Other enslavers shared similar advice, specifying that children were to have their own nurse to cook for them. "The nurse cooks for them three times a day; and she always has some little meat to dress for them, or the clabber or sour milk from the dairy to mix with their food," wrote another South Carolina enslaver (A Planter 1836:494). "My little negroes are consequently very healthy; and from nursing the plan I have laid down, I am confident that I raise more of them than where a different system is followed" (A Planter 1836:494). A enslaver in Georgia claimed that, "no diet suits them better than milk and bread, with meat and vegetables once per day" (Turner 1857:140). Additionally, a Mississippi enslaver recommended "meat, bread, vegetables, and broth, molasses and buttermilk" (A Planter 1859:579). Less frequently, enslavers advocated for diets based almost entirely on starch and dairy. A South Carolina enslaver writing in *Farmer and Planter* stated, "No better diet can be provided for little negroes than sweet

potatoes – as the common adage runs, they are milk, bread and meat for them," and went on to suggest milk with "molasses now and then" (Gage 1857:25). Enslaved children at a Mississippi nursery were fed "upon corn bread and fat, and hominy and molasses" (Robinson 1849:381).

It is interesting that while so many enslavers claimed to include meat as a part of their enslaved children's diets, the individuals interviewed in the *Slave Narratives* rarely mentioned meat when discussing the food that they ate as children. Based on the *Slave Narrative* interviews, meals were generally made up of three components – a starch, a dairy product, and a vegetable (Table 1). These three components were generally mixed together to form a sort of thick soup or stew, and sometimes molasses or honey was added in, or served separately. For example, Anne Maddox, who was enslaved in Virginia, remembered that the children were called up to the big yard where the cook served them ash cake crumbled in milk and pot liquor in "a long wooden trough," and the children would use shells or their hands to eat (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936-1937:273). Across regions, there appears to be very little change or variation in the food served, and in the way it was served.

Starch	**Dairy Product**	**Vegetable**	**Miscellaneous**
Bread	Milk	Greens (collard or turnip)	Molasses
Cornbread or Corn Pone	Skimmed Milk	Pot Liquor (from greens, beans, cabbage, or turnips)	Honey
Johnnycake	Buttermilk	Green Peas	
Ash cake	Clabber (soured milk)	Beans	
Mush (boiled cornmeal)		Pumpkins	
Hominy		Poke Salad	
Rice		Potatoes (Irish or Sweet)	
Grits		Cabbage	
Corn meal dumplings		Black-eyed Peas	

Table 1. Most frequently mentioned food components in communal childhood meals

Generally, formerly enslaved individuals remembered that the same meal was served three times a day, for breakfast, dinner (lunch) and supper (dinner). However, some individuals did recall that their meals varied slightly, depending on the time of day (similar to James Henry Hammond's schedule). Mollie Malone, who was enslaved in Georgia, remembered that children were fed cornbread and milk for breakfast and supper, and cornbread with pot liquor for dinner (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:104).

Less frequently, people remembered certain combinations of food being served in different vessels, as was the case with Millie Evans, who grew up enslaved in North Carolina. In between meals, the enslaver's wife would call all of the children to the big house and serve them buttermilk and johnny cakes. Millie said that they drank the buttermilk from the trough with their mouths but held the johnny cake in their hands. At other times, greens were cooked in a "big black washpot" and bread was crumbled into the pot liquor, and the children would stand around the pot and eat directly from it using spoons. Millie said that for "regular meals" they ate outside at a table under a chinaberry tree, where they ate out of gourds with homemade wooden spoons (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:240-241). Although there was some variation in the exact combination of foods that enslaved children ate, meals always followed the same pattern – a starch, a dairy product, and a vegetable, served only to children, communally. These meals were not very nutritious and were extremely high in carbohydrates. This kept the children full for some time (though some were also fed between meals) but probably did not contain the adequate amount of protein, fiber, or vitamins necessary for young children.

The use of troughs for feeding enslaved children is well-documented. These troughs were usually described as long and made of wood or hewn from an old log. Some formerly enslaved people remembered that their troughs were made of Poplar, Cedar, Magnolia, or Cyprus wood,

and that they ranged in size from ten to twenty feet long. Cull Taylor, who grew up enslaved in Alabama, remembered that in the nursery there were multiple wooden troughs of different heights to accommodate for the varying ages of the children, and they would crumble cornbread with pot liquor (or milk, for the youngest children) and feed them from the troughs (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936-1937:364). Talitha Island was enslaved in Louisiana and remembered that the troughs used to feed children doubled as washbasins for dirty laundry. "They'd take a log and hollow it out and make three tubs in a row and put peg legs on it and a hole in the bottom of each one with a pin in it," and would use this trough to wash clothing. When they were finished washing the clothes, they would pull the plugs up to drain the dirty water. After that, they would clean them out and fill them with bread and pot liquor or bread milk to feed the children (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 3 1936:386). Talitha's account highlights the issue of hygiene. While she did say that they would clean out the trough before the children were fed from it, eating from the same vessel that was previously used to clean dirty laundry was in no way sanitary.

Robert Shepherd was enslaved as a child in Georgia and remembered how dirty the troughs would be after the children ate. He said that sometimes the trough "would be a sight," because the children never stopped to wash their hands before eating and were not given utensils. Within a minute or two, the trough would be filled with the red mud that had come off of their hands (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:249). This was probably a common occurrence for children who were forced to eat from a trough without utensils, and was at best unsanitary and at worst, dangerous. The transfer of dirt and bacteria that would have occurred at the troughs could have easily caused the children to become very ill.

Although troughs were the most commonly listed vessel, other formerly enslaved individuals remember eating communally from big wooden trays, big wooden bowls, pans, big

pots, washtubs, boxes, and tin cans.[15] At some plantations, children who ate from troughs were provided with benches or low stools. More commonly, children simply ate from the troughs, trays, or bowls on the ground. Multiple people remembered that they had to lay on their stomachs in order to eat, while others recall eating with wooden spoons, gourds, oyster or mussel shells, or simply their hands. In his 1845 narrative, Frederick Douglass stated that as a young enslaved boy at Wye House, he and the other children were fed boiled cornmeal mush from "a large wooden tray or trough" that was placed on the ground (Douglass 1845:27). Some children had oyster shells, some used pieces of shingle, and some ate "with naked hands," but none were given spoons. "He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied" (Douglass 1845:27). This sentiment is echoed in interviews from the *Slave Narratives* – enslaved children who were fed communally did not always get enough to eat and some remember always feeling hungry. In reality, the conditions in which children were fed were often unsanitary and the food was inadequate in both quality and quantity, a stark difference from the allegedly successful diets and allowance schedules that enslavers proudly published in agricultural journals.

Enslaved children usually ate their meals outdoors or sometimes in the kitchen outbuilding, as it was common for the enslaved cook or the children's nurse to supervise the children at mealtimes. Occasionally, the enslaver and/or his wife would come to check in on the children. This also occurred on Sundays, when enslaved mothers were tasked with presenting their children in clean clothes to the enslaver and his wife for inspection. Some individuals who were enslaved as children remember these Sunday inspections as also having a religious

[15] Some individuals who remembered wooden trays, pans, or bowls sometimes alternately referred to them as "troughs" later in their interviews.

component – on certain plantations, the enslaver's wife held a mandatory Sunday School, where she would read to the children from the Bible and would sometimes give the children a special breakfast or treats afterward. Sunday inspections were a way for the enslaver to ensure that the enslaved children on the plantation were healthy and growing at a satisfactory rate.

Additionally, as mentioned before, the enslaver's wife was sometimes in charge of giving the enslaved children a daily dose of whatever medicines they believed were conducive to health, including oil and turpentine. While the enslaver (or his wife) may not have raised the enslaved children on the plantation themselves, they remained a constant presence in their lives, nonetheless. Through the supervision of mealtimes or feeding children between meals, Sunday inspections, and the daily distribution of "medicines," enslavers made it clear that the health of the children they enslaved was a top priority to them. In fact, some enslavers inoculated the enslaved children (and adults) on their plantations against certain diseases, such as smallpox. Thomas Jefferson inoculated "70. or 80." enslaved people at Monticello with smallpox "vaccine matter" in 1801, to immunize them from the disease (Jefferson 1801). And an 1859 letter from enslaver Robert Lancaster to James Burr Ely mentions inoculating enslaved children, specifically – "I enclose a very small piece of the scab from the arm of one of the children, with which you might vaccinate one or two of the little negroes" (Lancaster 1859). Enslavers considered enslaved children their biggest investments – "the surest way of getting rich" (Cook 1858:112).

Children during enslavement ceased eating from troughs when they were deemed old enough to perform the labor of an enslaved adult. Willis Cofer, who was enslaved in Georgia, said that boys stopped eating from the trough and started drawing rations when they were old enough to wear pants and to work in the fields, at age twelve (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:203). Benny Dillard was also enslaved in Georgia and remembered that children were not

allowed to eat meat until they were big enough to work in the fields (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:291). The rule on Benny's plantation was most likely the same at other plantations, as other formerly enslaved individuals explicitly mentioned that they never ate meat. Sallie Crane was enslaved as a child in Arkansas, and said that back then, she "didn't know what meat was," and Israel Jackson, who was enslaved in Mississippi, also stated "as for meat, we didn't know what [that] was" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:54; FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 4 1936:5). Enslavers did not want to serve meat to young enslaved children, as they were not performing the same amount of labor as older children or adults, and thus (in the enslaver's perspective) did not require a protein like meat, which was much more expensive to provide than the mix of dairy and starch that made up the bulk of their diet.

Enslaved children did not perform enough work (and thus increase the enslaver's net earnings or profit) to cover more than their maintenance costs until they were around ten years old (Fogel and Engerman 1989:76). According to economist Richard Steckel, providing meat to enslaved children would have been an investment with a negative net income during the early years of the investment period because meat was expensive, and children did not work (Steckel 1986a:736). However, because the investment strategy of most enslavers was one that excluded meat from a child's diet before age ten (or before they entered the labor force), enslaved individuals experienced delayed growth spurts and were unable to achieve modern standards as adolescents and adults due to being underfed as children (Steckel 1986a:737).

Health and Mortality Rates of Enslaved Children

A substantial amount of research has been conducted regarding the health and mortality rates of enslaved children in the antebellum United States (Kiple and Kiple 1977; Steckel 1986a; Steckel 1986b; Coelho and McGuire 2000). During the antebellum period, enslaved infants and

young children had much higher mortality rates compared to white infants and children, with the enslaved infant mortality rate equal to around 350 deaths per thousand births and nearly 50 percent of babies dying before the end of their first year (including stillbirths and infant deaths) (Steckel 1986b:427). The mortality rate for enslaved infants was around 17 percentage points higher than the rate for the entire antebellum population in the U.S. (Steckel 1986b:427). Possible factors for this excess in infant mortality rates relate to prenatal conditions and the health of enslaved mothers, and include work intensity, poor diet, maternal diseases, and childbearing at a young age (Steckel 1986b). Extremely low birth birthweight was also an important factor in infant mortality.

Steckel posits that enslaved mothers lost around 54 percent of their pregnancies to stillbirths, infant mortality, and early childhood mortality (Steckel 1986b:452). Infants receive the majority of their nutrition from breast milk, and as mentioned earlier, enslaved mothers were not given the adequate amount of time to breastfeed their infants, meaning that the infants did not receive the adequate amount of nutrition necessary. Additionally, Steckel observed that on cotton plantations, the number of pounds of cotton picked by enslaved mothers per day reached normal levels within three months after delivery, meaning that breast milk was supplemented by other foods earlier than three months after delivery (Steckel 1986a:732). Ironically, on larger plantations equipped with nursery buildings where superannuated enslaved individuals or enslaved children provided childcare, the health of infants may have deteriorated because it allowed for the supplementation of foods to replace breastfeeding (Steckel 1986b:433).

The transition from breast milk to solid foods and manual feeding “introduced unsanitary implements and contaminated food or liquid” and was “accompanied by elevated rates of illness and mortality” (Steckel 1986a:733). As evidenced in the narratives of formerly enslaved

individuals, troughs were often dirty and children did not wash their hands, so the food being consumed was also unhygienic. The starch-based diet also lacked sufficient protein and "was probably deficient in iron and calcium" (Steckel 1986a:733). Other scholars, operating under the notion that the core of the diet was composed of fat pork and cornmeal, claim that the amount of phosphorus in this core was "overwhelmingly high" when related to the low amount of calcium in the diet (Kiple and Kiple 1977:287). Enslaved children who were lactose intolerant would have received very little calcium from the dairy products in their diet, and while vegetables like greens and sweet potatoes offered some calcium, it would not have been enough to overcome the year-round imbalance because they were only grown seasonally (Kiple and Kiple 1977:287). The extremely high amount of phosphorus in their diet would have created issues with the absorption of calcium and magnesium, as would the fatty acids from fat pork and the oxalic acids from the greens (Kiple and Kiple 1977:287). The diet of enslaved children also lacked high quality protein and was an insufficient source of iron, meaning that their diet overall was extremely nutrient deficient (Kiple and Kiple 1977:287).

The mortality rates for enslaved children aged one to four years old were also quite high – 201 deaths per thousand, compared to 93 deaths per thousand for the entirety of the U.S. antebellum population (Steckel 1986b:428). After the age of five years old the mortality rates of enslaved children declined sharply and changed very little after they reached seven years of age (Steckel 1986a:732-734). Utilizing data from coastwise slave manifests between 1820 and 1860, and the relationship between height and weight for age of twentieth-century populations, Steckel found that the heights of enslaved children were extraordinarily short – "the stature of young slave children would trigger alarm in a modern pediatrician's office" (Steckel 1986a:727). Between the ages of four-and-a-half years old and ten-and-a-half years old, enslaved boys were

on average, 5.42 inches shorter than the standard for boys of the same age during the 20th century (Steckel 1986a:724). For enslaved girls in this age range, on average, they were 5.17 inches shorter than the standard for girls of the same age during the 20th century (Steckel 1986a:725). This means that seven-and-a-half-year-old enslaved boys and girls would have been around the same height as five-and-a-half-year-old boys and girls in the 20th century. The reason for such small statures is likely due to the nutritional inadequacy of the diet for enslaved children. Nutritional requirements for growth increase substantially during the period of adolescence, and "growth may be retarded at these ages depending upon the nature and extent of deprivation during adolescence and during earlier years" (Steckel 1986a:724).

Evidence of the malnourishment of enslaved children also comes from enslavers themselves, who would often describe their enslaved children with adjectives like "plump," "sleek," or "shiny," believing that plumpness and shininess were indicators of good health (Kiple and Kiple 1977:289). In actuality, the opposite was true, as round and shiny bellies are usually indicators of poor nutrition. "Indeed, a regimen high in carbohydrates and low in proteins will produce precisely this kind of physical appearance" and indicates "protein-calorie malnutrition" (Kiple and Kiple 1977:289).[16] Additionally, there is a significant amount of evidence that nutrition can influence personality development. "Moderately malnourished children are apathetic, emotionally withdrawn, less aggressive, and more dependent" (Steckel 1986a:740). Given that enslaved children were typically malnourished, they might have also displayed the personality characteristics linked to malnourishment in children. They may have been less

[16] Protein-calorie malnutrition can present in two forms: kwashiorkor and marasmus, and both forms produce a variety of dangerous and harmful symptoms. Diseases like pica and worms can also result from malnutrition. The high mortality rates among enslaved children can be attributed to multiple diseases and factors, rather than just one (Kiple and Kiple 1977; Coelho and McGuire 2000).

aggressive and more dependent, and they also might have lacked energy or frequently tired very easily due to their diet that was inadequate in both calories and vitamins essential to growth. These personality characteristics would have been seen as positive or beneficial to enslavers, who preferred enslaved individuals to be docile or easily controlled.

Protocol for Raising Enslaved Children: Clothing and Dress

The clothing of enslaved children was uniform across the slave states. In general, children of both sexes wore shifts or slips (also called shirttails) made of homespun fabric that was cheap and easy to produce. The shifts were one-piece and were usually long enough to cover a child's knees. Often, the cheaply made fabric was rough and uncomfortable to wear. Booker T. Washington wrote about the flax shirt that he was forced to wear as a young enslaved boy in Virginia. "It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pin-points, in contact with his flesh" (Washington 1900:11). Washington's older brother, John, agreed to wear the flax shirt for many days until it was "broken in" and more comfortable to wear. Washington claimed that it was "one of the most generous acts that I ever heard of one slave relative doing for another" (Washington 1900:12). The painful flax shirt was the only clothing provided to Washington, and if his brother had not offered to wear the shirt until it was softer, he would have had no choice but to go without any clothing at all.

Depending on the enslaver, a child would usually receive two pieces of clothing per year – one shirt made of lighter fabric for summer, and another made of heavier fabric for winter. A enslaver in Georgia addressed the clothing of enslaved children in *American Cotton Planter and Soil of the South,* writing that:

> Many people seem to think that little negroes need little or no clothing, but this is a great mistake…Negro children may fan about in their shirt tails during the warm weather of mid-summer; or they may even go without any clothing at all, as we frequently see, and all this without injury; but in the winter season, and in the cool and variable weather of spring and autumn they should be clad in woolen garments. (A Planter 1860:79)

It was not uncommon for enslaved children to be naked, especially during the summer months or if their allotted clothing was worn out or ruined. According to Frederick Douglass, at Wye House the children who were unable to work in the field were given two coarse linen shirts each year. "When these failed them, they went naked until the next allowance-day. Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year" (Douglass 1845:10). The widespread use of unisex clothing for young enslaved children (and the casual attitudes toward their nakedness) further confirm that young children under enslavement were not seen as individuals with differing genders and identities, but as a unisex group of beings who were not given identities until they were sexually mature or could provide a substantial economic profit to the enslaver.

In his plantation manual, enslaver James Henry Hammond stipulated that each child received two shirts of cotton drilling every fall, and two of shirting in the spring, "made very long" (Hammond 1858:12). Hammond wrote that girls received two frocks and the boys received two pairs of pants "reaching the neck + with sleeves" in the fall, and one each in the spring "of lighter woolens in the fall than that given to the work hands" (Hammond 1858:12). This suggests that there was a certain age when children were given gendered clothing and stopped wearing the long one-piece shirts. However, this age was widely varied and was also dependent on whether a child worked in the Big House or outdoors, in the fields or elsewhere. According to interviews

from the *Slave Narratives*, a male or female child might receive gendered clothing between the ages of ten and sixteen. For boys, the change from unisex to gendered clothing was often associated with a change in work, when they were big enough to work in the fields (and also draw rations instead of eating from a trough) or start formalized work in the Big House. Multiple interviews from the *Slave Narratives* include men's memories of when they first received pants, as it marked an important occasion for them – receiving gendered clothing was an affirmation of male identity. Girls also received gendered clothing (dresses or frocks instead of the unisex shift) when they began work in the Big House or the fields. Unlike boys, the change in a girl's clothing might also occur when she began menstruating, thus tying gendered clothing to reproductive labor (Knowles 2014:180).

On most plantations, enslaved children generally did not wear shoes until they were old enough to receive gendered clothing and thus perform more formalized work. Shoes, which were called brogans and were made of leather (and sometimes had a brass toe), were considered too expensive to make for children who were unable to work in the fields or in the Big House. Many individuals who were enslaved as children mentioned how their feet were often cracked and how unpleasant it was to go without shoes in the winter. Frederick Douglass wrote about the pain of going barefoot as a young child. "My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes" (Douglass 1855:132). When he was around eight years old, Douglass went to live with the Auld family in Baltimore, and it was at this time that he received his first pair of pants. Lucretia Auld told Douglass that he had to wash himself clean before they left Wye House for Baltimore, otherwise he would not be given a pair of trousers. Douglass recalled, "The thought of owning a pair of trousers was great indeed!" and wrote that scrubbing himself clean in the creek was "working for the first time with the hope of reward"

(Douglass 1845:28). Douglass' move from a plantation to a city suggests that enslaved children in urban environments may have received gendered clothing earlier than children in rural locations.

Clothing was used as both a reward and a punishment. Enslaved mothers were rewarded with new dresses when they gave birth, and enslaved boys and girls were rewarded with gendered clothing when they reached the age for formalized labor. Enslaved children who wore through their clothing before the set date that new clothes were annually allotted may have been punished through the withholding of new clothes. On other plantations, it was not uncommon for a enslaver to be too cheap or miserly to give out new clothing. In either of these situations, enslaved children were forced to either go without clothing entirely (and be naked) or continue to wear the inadequate and worn-out clothing.

The sight of completely nude enslaved children was one that often disturbed Northern travelers visiting Southern plantations. At one Virginia plantation, boys as old as fourteen or fifteen years old (and who would today be considered teenagers or young men) walked around totally naked (King 2011:65). In *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave,* Bibb wrote that he was "without clothes enough to hide my nakedness" (Bibb 1849:15). Historian Wilma King notes that Bibb's words "suggest an encroachment upon both his physical and psychological well-being" (King 2011:382). Enslavers provided clothing that was frequently painful or uncomfortable to wear as well as insufficient for completely covering a person's body. As evidenced by many narratives from formerly enslaved individuals, older enslaved children who were closer to the age of a teenager often felt shame and embarrassment when forced to walk around in clothing that did not adequately cover their bodies. Clothing, then, served as yet another tool that enslavers used to humiliate and dehumanize enslaved

children and teenagers. By denying these individuals the dignity of properly covering their bodies, enslavers utilized clothing as a method of subjugation.

The Protocol for Raising Enslaved Children as Material Culture

Enslavers across the Lower South and Lowcountry utilized a set of specific practices which they shared both publicly and privately in order to raise enslaved children for eventual sale within the domestic slave trade. These shared methods and techniques were so similar and widely used that they can be understood as a standardized set of practices, or a protocol. This protocol can be broken down into three separate parts: childcare (including the use of nursery buildings); diet and feeding methods; and uniform clothing. All parts of the protocol served two purposes. The first purpose was to raise enslaved children as a unit in the most economical and efficient ways possible. The second purpose was to dehumanize enslaved individuals from the time they were born until adulthood in an attempt to convince them that they were not humans, but property similar to livestock.

According to the historical archaeologist Jim Deetz, material culture can be considered as "that segment of a man's physical environment which is purposely shaped by him according to culturally dictated plans" (Deetz 1977:10). By this definition, the protocol for raising enslaved children can be represented by and interpreted as a distinctive material culture purposely shaped by enslavers according to the culturally dictated plan ubiquitous in the American slave states – the system of buying and selling enslaved humans for profit. By interpreting the protocol through the lens of material culture, one can imagine how the objects that enslavers used to raise enslaved children may be represented in the archaeological record, and how an assemblage of these artifacts may be interpreted as evidence of the protocol. Part 1 of the protocol includes childcare, including the use of nursery buildings. Firsthand accounts demonstrate that generally,

nursery buildings did not differ much in appearance when compared to the cabins or other buildings found in slave quarters, but that they were separate buildings specifically used for housing enslaved children during the day. Archaeologically, nursery buildings may only be distinguished from other buildings used for enslaved housing through the artifacts present. These objects might primarily include cradles (made of wood or fanner baskets), glass medicine bottles, children's toys like clay marbles or miniature ceramics, and cooking or serving implements including metal pots, metal or wooden spoons, tin cups, mussel or oyster shells, and wooden troughs (as some formerly enslaved individuals remember eating meals in the nursery building).

The second part of the protocol, diet and feeding methods, may be found archaeologically in the yards around kitchen outbuildings or the plantation house. Evidence of the diet of enslaved children may be discoverable through botanical analysis of plant remains or by analyzing unglazed potsherds that may contain food residue. Cooking implements and eating utensils like those mentioned in the previous paragraph have a greater likelihood of being uncovered in yard areas, as the majority of narratives specifically mention that enslaved children typically ate outdoors, and that their food was also cooked or prepared for them outside. The third part of the protocol includes uniform clothing and may be found archaeologically in quarter sites.

Although it is clear that a material culture related to the protocol for raising enslaved children existed, the objects and artifacts related to the protocol are extremely difficult if not impossible to discover archaeologically. Almost all of the material culture was organic and ephemeral. Food rots within days. Objects like cradles, troughs, and utensils including wooden spoons and hollowed-out gourds generally disintegrate soon after being buried, and it is rare for wooden buildings such as nursery buildings to last for very long without regular maintenance. Additionally, the organic fabric of the children's shifts is also unlikely to survive

archaeologically. The artifacts that are most likely to have survived in the material record include glass bottles, oyster and mussel shells, and metal pots, spoons, and cups, though these objects are commonly found in quarter sites and are not exclusive to the rearing of enslaved children.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that a standardized protocol for raising enslaved children did exist and was regularly practiced by enslavers in the Lower South and Lowcountry. The material culture of the protocol should be understood as separate and distinct from the material culture of American slavery in general, as the protocol and its associated objects were purposefully utilized for the goal of raising enslaved children for profit. The nursery buildings, diet, feeding methods, and clothing were exclusively related to the rearing of children under enslavement. While much of the material culture related to this protocol does not survive in the archaeological record, historical archaeologists may be able to use this information to better understand slavery-related sites and may even be able to distinguish nursery buildings from other buildings at quarter sites in the future.

Chapter 2: Trading in Children

In his 1853 autobiography, *Twelve Years a Slave*, Solomon Northup shared the story of Eliza Berry and her two children, Randall and Emily. After being kidnapped in the spring of 1841, Northup was imprisoned in the slave trader William H. Williams' slave jail, also known as the Yellow House, in Washington, D.C. There, Northup first met Randall, a ten-year-old enslaved boy. For Randall, "his mother's absence seemed to be the great and only grief in his little heart" (Northup 1853:49). Randall's mother, Eliza, and his younger half-sister Emily soon joined him at the Yellow House. Their enslaver, Elisha Berry, had promised Eliza that she and her children would one day be emancipated if she agreed to live with him after his separation from his wife. Eliza agreed, and soon after gave birth to his daughter, Emily, whom he also enslaved. They lived with him for some years, until Berry's son-in-law tricked Eliza and Emily into leaving Berry's home under the guise of acquiring freedom papers. Instead, he took them to Williams' jail and sold them.

Eliza, Randall, and Emily (along with Northup and others) were eventually taken to Theophilus Freeman's slave pen in New Orleans. Soon after, Randall was sold. Eliza begged his purchaser to buy herself and Emily as well, but the man could not afford them. As he left, Randall consoled his mother, saying "Don't cry, mama. I will be a good boy. Don't cry," (Northup 1853:82). Northup wrote, "It was a mournful scene indeed. I would have cried myself if I had dared" (Northup 1853:82). A few weeks later, Eliza and Northup were sold to William Ford. Again, Eliza begged her purchaser to buy her daughter, but the slave trader Freeman refused to sell her, revealing that he intended to keep Emily (who was seven or eight years old at the time) until she was old enough to be sold as a fancy girl and could be sold for the price of up to five thousand dollars. Eliza and Emily were separated by force, and Eliza was taken away by

her new enslaver. As they left, Emily screamed, "Don't leave me – come back, mama," she still cried, stretching forth her little arms imploringly. But she cried in vain" (Northup 1853:87). Eliza never saw Randall or Emily ever again. "Day nor night, however, were they ever absent from her memory. In the cotton field, in the cabin, always and everywhere, she was talking of them – often *to* them, as if they were actually present" (Northup 1853:88). The trauma of being separated from both of her children caused Eliza to waste away, eventually dying from her grief. Family separations like that of Eliza, Randall, and Emily were not uncommon within the interregional slave trade – in fact, they happened often. By the 1850s, it is estimated that children from infancy to fourteen years of age sold without either parent accounted for about twenty-five percent of the interregional slave trade, with twenty-three percent of those children being forcibly separated from their parents (Tadman 1996:150).[17] Enslaved children like Randall and Emily, sold without either parent, accounted for one quarter of those sold within the domestic slave trade.

The belief that young enslaved children were not frequently separated and sold away from their mothers is a common misconception. "On the contrary, they were hardly less than a staple in the trade. The selling singly of young children privately and publicly was frequent and notorious" (Bancroft 1996:208). During the antebellum period, enslaved children from eight (or ten) to fifteen years were "regularly quoted as a staple of the trade" (Tadman 1996:141). Additionally, "the vast majority of slaves traded and aged eight to fourteen or fifteen years were

[17] As observed above, according to Michael Tadman (1996:150), less than one percent of enslaved children under the age of 13 or 14 years old would have lost both parents through death. The 2% difference between the total percentage of children sold separately versus those "forcibly separated" is to account for the children who were orphans (although one could argue that orphaned children were still forcibly separated from their caregivers or relatives when sold into the domestic slave trade).

purchased alone, and were bought as very deliberately considered acquisitions (Tadman 1996:141). Clearly, enslaved children (sold without either parent) constituted a significant part of the trade. But why were they referred to as "very deliberately considered acquisitions?" What were the reasons behind the sale and purchase of young children? And why does the opinion that enslaved children were never (or very infrequently) sold away from their parents persist today? This chapter will address enslaved children sold in the domestic slave trade (interregional and local), including newspaper advertisements for the sale of children, individual experiences and memories of being sold, how children were sold and the methods for their valuation, children for hire, state laws against the sale of children under a certain age and their efficacy, and slave traders who specialized in purchasing and selling enslaved children.

A Staple of the Trade

Slave traders regularly posted public notices advertising the sale of enslaved people in newspapers and included details such as their ages and other physical characteristics. On February 1, 1805, an ad printed in the Richmond *Enquirer* stated, "CASH WILL be given for 12 or 15 BOYS, from 7 to 15 years old. Enquire of the printers" (Bancroft 1996:22). In May of 1828, the infamous slave trading firm of Franklin & Armfield advertised in Alexandria's *Phenix Gazette* for "150 likely young negroes of both sexes between the ages of 8 and 25 years" (Bancroft 1996:58). Hope H. Slatter, a slave trader operating out of Baltimore, Maryland wanted "to purchase from 75 to 100 Negroes, of both sexes, from 8 to 25 years" and "particularly to purchase several small seamstresses and fancy girls for nurses" (Bancroft 1996:38). An 1836 ad placed by Colonel Allen Rogers was printed in the Raleigh *Standard* and asked exclusively for young children, "from 8 to 12 years old" (Bancroft 1996:209). Slave traders openly stated that they wished to purchase (or sell) children as young as seven and eight years old, though many

often bought and sold children who were even younger. In advertisements for specific sales or auctions, it was common for children who were toddlers to be sold separately from their mothers or sold singly, their parents having been previously sold or taken elsewhere.

As with enslaved adults, enslavers sometimes advertised children who had special skills. An 1825 notice printed in the Charleston *City Gazette* advertised "a Girl of 5 that sews" for sale (Phillips 1909:58). At an 1853 private sale in Charleston, the slave trader Z. B. Oakes advertised "a single girl" named Martha, "about 10 years old, very likely and handy about the house" (Bancroft 1996:208). Patty and Lot, who were fourteen and nine years old respectively, were advertised as "raised in the country" and sold at an 1859 auction, and eleven-year-old Ben, who was "a very active, smart and intelligent house-boy" was sold at an auction in 1860 (Bancroft 1996:208-209). The ad may have implied that enslaved children who were "raised in the country" would be suitable for labor as field hands, while other advertisements explicitly mentioned children who were already trained as domestic house servants or who would be suitable for other work, such as the five-year-old girl who was adept at sewing. Frederic Bancroft wrote that "the prices obtained for small children demonstrate that the sales were very numerous" (Bancroft 1996:208). The prices for young enslaved children who were sold singly fluctuated during the antebellum period, though in the years before the Civil War the prices could be quite high.

Additionally, at slave auctions and markets, it was not uncommon for infants less than one year old to be sold. In his 1836 book, *Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States*, Professor Ethan Allen Andrews visited multiple slave trading establishments in the Southern U.S. and interviewed a number of slave traders. Andrews interviewed a trader working for the firm Neal & Company, whom he identified as "Mr. N.," while on a Potomac steamboat in

1835. Mr. N. told Andrews that he often purchased wives without their husbands, and that he "frequently" purchased mothers without their children. "*I have often known them to take away the infant from its mother's breast and keep it, while they sold her*" [emphasis original] (Andrews 1836:147). Mr. N then went on to say that children from one year old to 18 months old were worth around one hundred dollars (Andrews 1836:147). Enslaved infants who were not sold singly but who were sold with their mothers were also known to increase the price of a sale. Between the years of 1830 and 1860, each infant added from one hundred to two hundred dollars or more to the value of an enslaved mother (Bancroft 1996:78).

Another visitor from the Northern U.S., Reverend Nehemiah Adams, also wrote about the selling of single infants in his account of his tour of the South. Adams spoke to an enslaved man who was holding an infant on the courthouse steps, and learned that the baby, named Rachel, was about a year old and was going to be sold. Adams learned that Rachel's mother was sold while she was pregnant, but that her previous enslaver claimed ownership rights to her unborn fetus (Rachel). After a legal dispute, it was decided that Rachel would be sold away from her mother, and not returned to her previous owner. However, the enslaver of Rachel's mother decided to purchase Rachel, and she was ultimately reunited with her mother. Daina Ramey Berry notes that "Rachel's monetary value and her status as fiscally separate from her mother were discussed even before she was born. Once born, the commodification continued, and she was sold" (Berry 2017:34). Therefore, within the domestic slave trade, it was possible for an unborn fetus to have a monetary value separate from the pregnant mother. Additionally, enslavers made ownership claims on unborn fetuses, meaning that a pregnant mother may be enslaved by one person, with another enslaver making claims on her child who was yet to be born.

Reverend Nehemiah Adams was extremely upset at witnessing this scene. After this happened, he wrote that "three or four gentlemen" each told him privately, "We are very sorry that you happened to see it. Nothing of the kind ever took place before to our knowledge, and we all feared that it would make an unhappy impression on you" (Adams 1854:68). Assurances like these, made by southern enslavers to northern visitors, may be part of the reason as to why so many people today believe that young enslaved children were not often sold separately or singly within the slave trade. Enslavers knew that the sale of infants and small children was particularly distressing and distasteful to those who were less familiar with the inner workings of the trade and purposefully went out of their way to claim that these instances were rare and uncommon in an attempt to paint slavery as less cruel than it truly was.

The reasons as to why enslavers would prefer to purchase young children were numerous. As discussed in the previous chapter, enslaved children were relatively cheap to feed and clothe, could take on a variety of different tasks and forms of labor, and would eventually bring enslavers a profit by the time they reached adulthood (either through sale, hiring out, more appreciable labor, or their ability to have children). In 1823, President James Madison wrote, "The annual expense of food and raiment in rearing a child, may be stated at about 8, 9, or 10 dollars; and the age at which it begins to be gainful to its owner, about 9 or 10 years" (Madison 1921 [1823]:89).[18] Many enslavers preferred to purchase young enslaved children, who were less costly than enslaved adults, because they knew that their eventual profit would be greater than the cost of their initial purchase. Additionally, children were less likely to run away than enslaved adults, especially if they had been separated from their parents and were unfamiliar with their settings. However, the widespread availability of enslaved children on the market begs

[18] Notice that Madison refers to a child as an "it," and not as a "he" or "she."

the question: how did so many children come to be in the domestic slave trade? Enslaved children arrived at slave markets for numerous reasons – many were orphaned after their mothers or fathers were sold away or had died and a vast number of children were sold singly to pay off debts. Many children were sold with larger groups of enslaved people when their enslavers died in large amounts of debt, as was the case when Thomas Jefferson died, and his heirs sold off over 130 enslaved individuals within a few years of his death. Additionally, the frequency with which children were sold into the slave trade varied by region.

Between 1820 and 1860, children born in the Upper South or on the Eastern Seaboard had a thirty percent chance of being sold away from their parents before the age of ten (Blight 2008). Michael Tadman estimates that for enslaved children aged fourteen and under living in the Upper South, one in three children were separated from one or both parents due to the interregional slave trade, and local sales and non-market transactions may have raised this number to almost one in two children (Tadman 1996:171-172). Enslaved children born in the Upper South had a significant likelihood of being sold to the Lower South because the shift to less labor-intensive crops meant that enslavers did not require as many enslaved laborers as they once did in order to produce the agricultural products. Therefore, they sold off children and other enslaved individuals in order to keep their enslaved population smaller (and to reduce the cost of feeding, clothing, and housing enslaved individuals) and to continue making a profit through such sales. Slave traders and trading firms operating in the Upper South, including Franklin & Armfield, Austin Woolfolk, and Hope Slatter made their businesses purchasing, delivering, and selling enslaved individuals from the region to the Lower South states of Louisiana and Mississippi.

Enslaved Children's Experiences of Sale in the Interregional Slave Trade

The experience of being sold, especially for the first time, was extremely traumatic. Many formerly enslaved individuals remember being sold for the first time, even as very young children, because of the life-changing nature of the incident. For some people, the experience of being sold was also the first time that they realized that they were enslaved, or what it meant to be enslaved. Chaney Spell, who was enslaved in North Carolina, said that she was sold for the first time in her mother's arms. They were sold together to a man from Carteret County and then Chaney was separated from her mother and sold to a Mr. McKee in Franklin County. She said that being sold from her mother was the first thing that she could remember (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:307). Chaney Spell never mentioned how old she was when she was sold away from her mother, but she must have been very young because she remembered being in her mother's arms. She never saw her mother again.

Mingo White, who was formerly enslaved in Alabama, also remembered when he was sold away from his parents in South Carolina. When he was about four or five years old, he was loaded onto a wagon with other enslaved people. He remembered that he was taken up on a stand, and many people came around and felt his arms and legs and chest and asked him many questions. Mingo's former enslaver told him that if anyone asked, he should tell them that he had never been sick a day in his life. If he didn't lie, he would have been beaten. "I was jes' a li'l thang; tooked away from my mammy an' pappy, jes' when I needed 'em mos'" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936-1937:413). Mingo said that the only care he ever had or had ever known was given to him by John White, a friend of his father's. John White was sold with Mingo and took care of him when they came to their new enslaver's home. Mingo did not see his mother until he was a "great big boy," and when he met her, he didn't recognize her, because he believed that

Selina White, the woman everyone called mammy, was his mother. After Selina informed him that she was not his mother, Mingo was able to reconnect with his birth mother, who had come to live on the plantation after her previous enslaver had died. She told Mingo that she had not seen his father since they were sold before, at the same time that Mingo was sold away from them. Mingo's mother was a personal domestic servant, a cook for all of the field hands, was responsible for spinning and carding thread, and was also tasked with the laundry. Her tasks were "too hard for any one person" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936-1937:416). If she didn't complete all of her tasks, she was beaten with fifty lashes at night. Mingo helped her to finish her work so that she would not be punished. Family separations were extremely common, but it was rare for enslaved family members to be reunited after being separated. Mingo and his mother were reunited, but they never saw his father again.

When he was about ten years old, John Brown was sold away from his mother, never to see her again. Brown, who was born and enslaved in Virginia, was sold to a slave trader named Starling Finney because his enslaver needed money to build a new house (Brown 1855:13). He was purchased by the pound, which was not an uncommon way to price enslaved children for sale. Here, again, one sees that traders treated enslaved humans as chattel, purchasing a child by the pound in the same way that one would purchase livestock. Brown was placed in a loop and weighed on a stilyard balance hung from a ladder. "I do not recollect what I weighed, but the price I was sold for amounted to three hundred and ten dollars" (Brown 1855:15). Once Finney paid the money, Brown's mother begged to be able to kiss him for one last time and to tell him goodbye, but Finney would not let her. "I was so stupefied with grief and fright that I could not shed a tear, though my heart was bursting" (Brown 1855:15). After leaving the property, Brown was led to Finney's coffle of enslaved people who were walking to Georgia to be sold to new

enslavers. Upon arrival in Georgia, Brown was given a new pair of pantaloons and a new shirt and taken with other boys to an auction in Milledgeville. The auctioneer told Finney that Brown would not "fetch a price" due to his appearance. "I was worn down by fatigue and poor living till my bones stuck up almost through my skin, and my hair was burnt to a brown red from exposure to the sun" (Brown 1855:20). Eventually, John Brown was sold to Thomas Stevens for three hundred and fifty dollars, and taken to Stevens' plantation in Baldwin County, Georgia.

In her 1868 narrative, Elizabeth Keckley discussed the first time she witnessed the sale of a human being. Keckley was seven years old, and her enslaver had purchased hogs for winter but was unable to pay for them in full. She wrote that "to escape from his embarrassment" he decided to sell one of his enslaved individuals, and chose Little Joe, the son of the enslaved cook, as his "victim." "His mother was ordered to dress him up in his Sunday clothes, and send him to the house. He came in with a bright face, was placed in the scales, and was sold, like the hogs, at so much per pound" (Keckley 1868:28). His mother, the cook, was not told about the sale, and when she asked about Little Joe, her enslaver told her that he would be back in the morning. Little Joe never came back. Like John Brown, Little Joe was placed on a scale and weighed so that he could be purchased by the pound, just like the hogs that his enslaver was selling him in order to pay for. At seven years old, Keckley realized that Little Joe was treated and sold in the same manner as the livestock. Presumably, it was at this time that she may have also realized what her own status as enslaved meant, and the precarity of her situation. Keckley's story about Little Joe and John Brown's experience being sold highlight the fact that enslavers often chose to sell young children when in need of a ready source of cash. Little Joe was sold because his enslaver needed a certain amount of extra money to pay for the hogs, and John Brown was sold because his enslaver was in need of money to finish building his new house. To enslavers, selling

an enslaved child was a reliable way to immediately pay off a small amount of debt or to quickly acquire some extra cash.

The historian Walter Johnson wrote, "Whether by care or coercion… enslaved children were taught to experience their bodies twice at once, to move through the world as both child and slave, person and property" (Johnson 1999:22). Enslaved children who experienced sale at a young age almost certainly learned that they were treated as property, rather than as humans. One will recall that John Brown, who was sold by the pound at age ten, was being prepared for sale long before that sale took place. As mentioned in the previous chapter, his enslaver Betty Moore would feed the enslaved children on her property a dose of garlic and rue every morning, to keep them "wholesome" and make them "grow likely for market" (Brown 1855:3). After this, Moore would also force them to run around a large tree in the yard, "and if we did not run fast enough to please her, she used to make us nimbler by laying about us with a cow-hide" (Brown 1855:3). Betty Moore was preparing the children for sale on the market, dosing them with certain treatments and forcing them to run, to make them "nimbler," anticipating which attributes would ensure a higher price within the slave market. When they arrived at an auction or at the slave market, enslaved individuals were further dehumanized – they were poked, prodded, and thoroughly inspected, as Mingo White mentioned in his narrative, when prospective buyers touched his arms, legs, and chest and asked him a series of questions while he was put up on a stand at just four or five years old. Randall, the ten-year-old enslaved boy whom Solomon Northup met while imprisoned at the Yellow House, also received such treatment. At Theophilus Freeman's pen in New Orleans, Randall "was made to jump, and run across the floor, and perform many other feats, exhibiting his activity and condition" before he was sold away from his mother and sister (Northup 1853:80). Through these actions, enslavers attempted to persuade

enslaved children that they were property by allowing and encouraging strangers to touch and inspect their bodies, ask personal questions, and demand that they perform a series of feats to demonstrate their abilities.

Walter Johnson describes this treatment of enslaved individuals as "slave making," or "turning people into products" (Johnson 1999:118). Johnson discusses how traders began preparing enslaved people for market before they arrived at the slave pens. When they were close to their destination, traders would remove the chains and fetters and allow the enslaved people to wash and rest, giving their wounds time to heal before an auction (Johnson 1999:119). Enslaved adults were forced to dye any of their gray hairs black, and the women and girls were made to rub their hair with tallow to make it shiny while men had to shave their beards. Once they arrived at the slave pen, they received "rations of bacon, milk, and butter, a fattening diet one trader referred to as 'feeding up'" (Johnson 1999:119). They were then forced to perform daily exercises in order to tone their muscles, and their skin was rubbed with sweet oil or greasy water in order to mimic the appearance of a healthy person (Johnson 1999:119). They were also given new clothes, to suggest "cleanliness and chastity" (Johnson 1999:121). These tactics were employed in order to hide any evidence of injuries and poor diet that enslaved people experienced when marched to the Lower South in coffles. Walter Johnson suggests that this preparation and "packaging" was also done to hide the true nature of American slavery. "None of the poverty and toil that characterized the daily life of American slaves, none of the bareness that contributed to powerfully to the historical sexualization of black bodies, was immediately apparent in the slave market" (Johnson 1999:121). In this way, enslavers attempted to turn people into products, presenting them as clean, able-bodied, healthy products available for purchase, and concealing the truth – that they were people who had undergone an inordinate

amount of hardship and suffering at the hands of the slave traders and other enslavers. “These people were dressed as ideal slaves, exaggerated in the typicality of their appearance, too uniform, too healthy, too clean” (Johnson 1999:121). Johnson asserts that “through the daily practice of the pens, individual slaves were turned into physical symbols of their own salability” (Johnson 1999:121).

Henry Watson was formerly enslaved in Virginia. When he was eight years old, his mother was sold away from him, and a few months later he was taken to the slave market in Richmond. He was first sold at the Eagle Hotel to a trader named Denton, who kept him at his private slave jail in Richmond before taking him in a coffle down to Natchez, Mississippi. When they arrived at the rented pen in Natchez, Watson said that Denton took the irons off of the enslaved people and gave them new clothes, “for Mr. Denton was expecting visitors to examine the flock, as he would sometimes term us” (Watson 1848:10). He wrote about the way that enslaved individuals were treated at the pen, describing how Denton would use a paddle with holes bored through it in order to beat the individuals who “displeased him” (Watson 1848:12). Watson considered the paddle the “most cruel” mode of punishment “ever invented,” and wrote that the paddle was used on parts of the body that potential buyers were unlikely to examine, and that the punishment was “generally inflicted in the morning, before visitors come to examine to slaves” (Watson 1848:12). Watson also mentioned the tactic of using grease as a way to make people into products and to create the illusion of good health. “Just before the doors are opened, it is usual for the keeper to grease the mouths of the slaves, so as to make it appear that they are well and heart, and have just done eating fat meat; though they seldom, if ever, while in the custody of the keeper, taste a morsel of meat of any kind” (Watson 1848:12). At the pen in Natchez, Watson was sold within a few weeks to the slave trader Alexander McNeill, of the

slave trading firm McNeill, Fiske, & Co. “He said he wanted a boy to bring up to suit himself” and purchased Henry Watson for five hundred dollars, telling Watson that his “duty for the future would be, to wait on him, -- ‘to jump when I was spoken to, run when sent upon errands, and if I did not mind my P’s and Q’s, I should be flogged like h—l’” (Watson 1848:13). Watson was forced to leave with McNeill, and he was eventually taken to McNeill’s farm near Vicksburg, Mississippi.

John Parker’s narrative provides another account of the experience of being sold into the slave trade as a young child. Parker was also enslaved in Virginia and sold when he was eight years old. He remembered being chained to an elderly man while being marched in a coffle from Norfolk to Richmond. “This old man was kind to me, he made my weight of the chain as light as he could. He talked to me kindly, because I was brokenhearted at leaving my mother. He was the only human being who was interested in me then” (Parker 1998:26). After reaching Richmond, Parker and the man were sold to different buyers, and Parker was marched in another coffle to Alabama. During this journey, Parker was chained to another boy, named Jeff. “He was even smaller than I was, had never been away from his mother, blubbered and cried, until I kicked him to make him keep still” (Parker 1998:28). Parker stopped cuffing the boy when he realized it only made him cry more. One night, another boy stole Jeff’s dinner. This boy was bigger than both John Parker and Jeff, but Parker attacked the boy until he gave back Jeff’s dinner (Parker 1998:29). From then on, Parker defended and protected Jeff, and on one occasion saved him from drowning in a river, and in the process, almost drowned himself. After completing their journey, John Parker was eventually sold to a doctor in Mobile, Alabama.

Henry Watson’s and John Parker’s accounts are incredibly valuable for understanding the ways in which enslaved children experienced being sold within the interregional slave trade.

Both boys were first sold away from their mothers when they were eight years old. They had to quickly learn to fend for themselves, surrounded by other enslaved adults and children who were strangers to them. And as John Parker's account demonstrated, not all children reacted the same way to being sold. Parker's narrative characterizes the larger boy who stole Jeff's dinner as a bully who stole the food just because he could, because he was bigger than Jeff. But that boy, though larger, was still only a child as well, one who had presumably been sold alone, separated from his family and forced into a coffle full of strangers to an unknown fate. Additionally, Parker himself lashed out at Jeff when he first met him, upset that the smaller boy was crying and making their journey more difficult. Marching in a coffle to the Lower South as an eight-year-old would have been traumatic and distressing, and the fact that Parker mentioned the elderly man chained to him in Norfolk as "the only human being who was interested in me then" meant that this man's kindness was one of the only kind interactions that he had while in the coffle. Other individuals may have been too consumed by their own misery and situations to offer comfort to a young child.

While visiting the slave market in Augusta, Georgia, the Swedish author Fredrika Bremer noticed a little boy who was much younger than the other enslaved individuals who were presented for sale that day. "There was one little boy, however, who was only six: he belonged to no one there. He attached himself to the slave-keeper. Poor little fellow! Who was his mother? Who his sister or brother?" (Bremer 1853:373). The six-year-old boy was all alone, and was much younger than the other enslaved individuals, who ranged in age from twelve to twenty years old. He must have been so afraid and lonely, surrounded by complete strangers, that he chose to stay close to the slave trader, possibly for protection, or possibly because the trader was the one person in the group that he had known the longest. Regardless, Bremer's brief note about

the little boy highlights the vulnerability of especially young enslaved children in the domestic slave trade.

Another insight into the experiences of enslaved children within the interregional slave trade comes from the point of view of a slave trader. In a letter to fellow slave trader Rice Ballard, James Franklin, of the slave trading firm Franklin & Armfield, wrote about the enslaved children he was holding at the firm's slave pen in Natchez, Mississippi. "The small fry look at me as if they were alarmed and I suppose they will have some cause when F & A's lot arrives as I am daily looking for them" (James Franklin to Messrs. R. C. Ballard & Co., March 4, 1832, folder 5, Ballard Papers, cited in Baptist 2001:1636). Historian Edward Baptist wrote that "Small children would be caged with strange adults whom they had never seen before. Some would be kind, some would be indifferent, and a few might be brutal," noting that James Franklin "seemed to enjoy imagining their terror" (Baptist 2001:1636). The children, whom Franklin referred to as "small fry" were probably extremely alarmed. They were in a new place, having been taken from their homes in the Upper South to Natchez, and were clearly separated from their parents or any other adults they may have known. They were most likely frightened, and Franklin's implication that the children were worried about the arrival of a group of enslaved adults suggests that some of the children had previously experienced being hurt by these adult strangers, otherwise they would have no cause to look so alarmed.

Enslaved children who were sold into the interregional slave trade were the most vulnerable members of the enslaved population, being exposed to new enslavers in the form of traders, to enslaved adults whom they did not know and could not trust, and to prospective buyers, whom they had never met before. After being sold, these children would continue to navigate their current situations, being forced to leave with new enslavers of varying degrees of

cruelty and arriving at destinations where they had no prior knowledge of the enslaved community living there. This was the experience of a ten-year-old enslaved boy named Ben. Ben came to New Orleans from Charleston through the coastwise trade, aboard a ship called the *Chapman* in October of 1834 (Williams 2020:215). Ben was kept for four months in the trader John Hagan's jail on Moreau Street before he was sold to Theodule Fazende for 390 dollars in January of 1835 (Williams 2020:215). Ben was described as an "orphan" on the record of sale, though this may or may not have been true, as a Louisiana law prohibited traders from selling young children without their mothers unless they were orphans (Williams 2020:216). Three weeks after Ben was sold, he ran away from Fazende's plantation in Jefferson Parish. He came back to Hagan's slave jail, where he was probably "looking for the last people he had known, and the last people who had known him. Those people may have been kin, or they may have been compassionate strangers. Either way, they could not offer the protection Ben sought" (Williams 2020:216). Fazende soon came to retrieve Ben and take him back to his plantation. A couple of weeks later, Ben attempted to run away again, but when he was pursued, he "plunged into the river and drowned himself" (*Fazende v. Hagan*, Louisiana Supreme Court Case No. 4824, 9 Rob. 306 (1844), in Williams 2020). After spending four months at John Hagan's slave jail in New Orleans, Ben must have met certain individuals whom he cared for and who cared for him. His experience at Thedodule Fazende's plantation must have been truly horrible for him to run away, back to the slave jail. Children like Ben who were labeled orphans and then sold alone did not have many people whom they could trust, and it is a sign of how bad things must have been that Ben ran back to the jail. After being forced to return to Fazende's plantation, things may have gotten worse for Ben, and he chose to run away again. Whether Ben's drowning was accidental or purposeful, he must have been suffering quite a lot before he decided to jump into

the river. Ultimately, Ben chose to try to escape rather than to continue enduring the misery of life at Fazende's plantation.

Methods of Valuation

Slave traders utilized various methods of valuation in order to evaluate the prices for enslaved children within the market. Tracking a child's age against his or her size was one way that enslavers valued children (Johnson 1999:140). Another, as described by formerly enslaved individuals John Brown and Elizabeth Keckley, was to price children by the pound. Walter Johnson wrote that the slave trader Tyre Glen paid for young boys by the pound, pricing plow boys at $600 (five to six dollars per pound), but "if the boy is very likely and ways [weighs] 60 to 90 or even 100 [pounds], seven [dollars per pound] may be given" (Johnson 1999:141). William Chambers, who was a northerner visiting the Richmond slave market, received a price-current which listed the prices for children according to their height (Johnson 1999:140). The slave trader William Finney sketched his own list on the back of a Dickinson and Hill price circular, writing the prices that he would pay for boys who were five feet tall and under – "three-inch increments matched by hundred-dollar increases" (Johnson 1999:140). An August 1852 circular letter from slave trader James B. Hargrove lists the prices for enslaved children at his Richmond auction room under the St. Charles Hotel by height, starting at four feet tall and ending at five feet, six inches tall, in increments of three inches. For every three inches, the price increased by twenty-five dollars. Boys who were four feet tall were priced at $425, while girls who were the same height were priced slightly lower, at $375 (James B. Hargrove, "Circular Letter from James B. Hargrove, Richmond.," Library of Virginia). In this way, evaluated primarily according to their height and or weight, enslaved children were valued and priced differently than enslaved adults within the domestic slave trade.

As stated previously, enslaved children, like adults, were also valued according to any skills or talents they may have had, including a familiarity with or knowledge of domestic housework or field labor. Additionally, like adults, children were placed into racial categories describing their skin color – using words like "Negro, Griffe, Mulatto, or Quadroon" in order to further "package" them into "salable lots" (Johnson 1999:123). Traders would use different traits including age, height, weight, skin color, and skill in order to create "commodity categories" through which they could "envision, track, communicate, and respond to subtle shifts in demand that occurred hundreds of miles from the places they did their buying" (Johnson 1999:59). By categorizing enslaved individuals according to certain traits, slave traders were able to anticipate which individuals would garner the highest prices, and enslaved children were not exempt from these commodity categories. Prospective buyers preferred to purchase individuals with darker skin to work as field laborers and preferred those with lighter skin to work as skilled laborers or domestic servants. These preferences were applied to enslaved children as well as to enslaved adults.

An 1860 advertisement in the *Mobile Advertiser* placed by the slave trading and auctioneering firm B. Tardy & Co. noted that a "Negro Boy, 13 years old, mulatto, a smart, intelligent, capable fellow, good at House Work, or as Waiter" would be available for purchase at a private sale (Bancroft 1996:299). Here, the individual (whose name is not mentioned) is described according to his age, skin color, and skills. He is characterized as a mulatto, and then is advertised as being good at housework or as a waiter, two jobs that clearly categorize him as suited for domestic labor. However, in the same sale, another young man whose name is not mentioned is advertised as "a prime Negro Boy, 19 years old, black, has worked 5 years at Bakery business, and would also make a No. 1 Field Hand, being willing to go at any

occupation" (Bancroft 1996:299). Although this individual had worked for five years in a bakery business, the ad also claimed that he would make a "No. 1 Field Hand." The ad may have suggested this second option as a field hand due to the man's skin color – Black. If he had worked for five years in a commercial bakery, one might assume that he started work there at the age of fourteen years old, meaning that it is probably unlikely that he was working in the fields before age fourteen, and if he was, it was probably not for very long. He may not have had any experience doing field labor at all, though to the slave traders advertising his sale, his skin color suggested to them (and to prospective buyers) that he would make a good field hand. The traders presented this young man as a potential field hand according to the racial category that they placed him in, packaging him into a new commodity category which aligned with the beliefs of their customers and that they believed would result in the best price.

Finally, young enslaved girls who had lighter colored skin were sometimes sold into the "fancy trade" – a subset of the domestic slave trade which specialized in the buying and selling of light-skinned enslaved girls and women who were termed "fancy girls."[19] These young women were marketed towards enslavers who exploited them sexually – as their own mistresses or as prostitutes whom they hired out. "To gamblers, traders, saloonkeepers, turfmen and debauchees, owning a "fancy girl" was a luxurious ideal" (Bancroft 1996:329). The hub of the "fancy trade" was centered in New Orleans, though slave traders often sold fancy girls in a number of other Southern cities, such as Lexington, Kentucky and Richmond, Virginia. The Edmonson sisters, Mary and Emily, were fifteen and thirteen years old, respectively, when they attempted to escape from the schooner *The Pearl* in 1848. Described in an 1848 article as "two

[19] See Baptist 2001; Green 2011; Stevenson 2013; King 2014; Finley 2017; and Finley 2020 for more information discussing the "fancy trade" within the domestic slave trade and the experience of enslaved women in the fancy trade.

respectable young women of light complexion," the sisters were taken to New Orleans where traders intended to sell them as fancy girls, despite the fact that the girls were so young (*The Independent,* December 21 1848). However, Mary and Emily Edmonson were emancipated before they were sold into the fancy trade, as funds were raised by the abolitionist and pastor Henry Ward Beecher and the Congregational Plymouth Church to purchase their freedom. Although the Edmonson sisters were spared from becoming fancy girls, countless other enslaved girls and young women were not.

The seven- or eight-year-old child Emily, whom Solomon Northup wrote about in his biography, was kept by the slave trader Theophilus Freeman until she was old enough to be sold as a fancy girl for an extremely high price. "There were heaps and piles of money to be made of her, he said, when she was a few years older… She was a beauty – a picture – a doll – one of the regular bloods" (Northup 1853:87). Emily was too young to be introduced into the fancy trade at the time, though enslaved girls who were not much older than Emily were a part of the fancy trade. On a visit to the U.S. south, the Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer wrote about seeing fancy girls as young as twelve years old for sale (Bremer 1853:373). These young women were purchased and sold almost exclusively for sexual purposes, so slave traders like Freeman may have preferred to keep girls who were too young until they were old enough to be sold as fancy girls. Freeman's decision was decidedly not for altruistic purposes or because he personally cared about the sexual abuse and exploitation of a small child – he stood to make a larger profit on a girl or young woman who was sexually mature. Additionally, some newspaper advertisements used the term "fancy girl" in relation to a female domestic servant or a nurse, though the true meaning of the label was well-known, and the term was likely used purposefully in order to alert buyers who wished to purchase these women to exploit them sexually.

Sale of Children in the Local Trade

According to the most conservative estimates, at least two million enslaved people were sold in the United States between the years of 1820 and 1860, and more than two-thirds of those individuals were sold to local buyers rather than sold into the interregional or interstate trade, a factor that has generally not been included in discussions regarding the domestic slave trade (Deyle 2005:157). Enslavers participated in the local slave trade for a number of reasons. One benefit of purchasing an enslaved individual in the local trade (over the interregional trade) was that enslavers could exploit an enslaved person's labor on a trial basis before actually purchasing them (Deyle 2005:160). Additionally, enslavers could sell an individual with the option of re-purchasing them after a specified period of time (Deyle 2005:160). Enslavers in the local trade were also willing to trade their enslaved individuals for goods (like groceries) or land, rather than cash (Deyle 2005:160). Enslaved individuals could also be purchased on credit, as this allowed for the trader or seller to make more money over time (Deyle 2005:160).

Enslaved people who were sold in the local trade were also less expensive to buy than those sold in the interregional trade. In an 1824 letter from Thomas Culbreth to the Governor of Maryland, Culbreth wrote, "Slaves in this County and I beleive [sic] generally upon this Shore have always had two Prices, Viz a neighbourhood or domestic and a foreign or Southern price. The domestic Price has generally been about a third less than the foreign and sometimes the difference amounts to onehalf" (Estimates of the Value of Slaves 1815:818). Culbreth was referring to the Eastern Shore of Maryland in his letter, where a dual price structure had developed. Purchasing and selling enslaved individuals in the local trade also meant that enslavers actually knew the people whom they were buying from and selling to. This allowed prospective buyers or sellers to contact people whom they knew were looking to buy or sell

enslaved individuals, and also allowed for a greater degree of trust when completing such transactions. Purchasing an enslaved individual from a stranger was riskier than purchasing from a neighbor, as a neighbor would be less likely to sell someone who had a history of rebellious or disobedient behavior to someone that they knew or interacted with on a regular basis, while a stranger could simply leave town and the purchaser would have to find them and take them to court, should an issue arise. According to Steven Deyle, "All across the South, disgruntled buyers kept the courts busy addressing problems that resulted from the sale of slaves," including issues related to fraud, title discrepancies, health issues, and problems with character (Deyle 2005:162). Enslavers who purchased enslaved individuals from people whom they knew could more easily work out mutual settlements between themselves, rather than taking a case to court.

Children during enslavement were treated as "half-liquid capital," with their bodies "easily converted by slaveholders to cash" (O'Donovan 2009:89). Because young enslaved children were less expensive than enslaved adults, children were most often the first to be sold when their enslavers needed cash quickly. Such were the experiences of John Brown and Little Joe, whose enslavers were able to quickly sell the young boys to pay off outstanding debts, like the cost of hogs for winter or completing the construction of a new house. Oftentimes, enslavers would sell the youngest of their enslaved children in order to fulfill creditors' claims or "fi.fas." (Writ of Fieri Facias) (O'Donovan 2009:92).[20] The ease with which enslavers were able to utilize enslaved children as human forms of fast cash resulted in many enslaved children being sold within the local slave trade, rather than into the interregional slave trade (Deyle 2005:157).

[20] An ad placed in the Milledgeville, Georgia *Southern Recorder* on January 27, 1852 advertised the sale of "George, about 20 years old; Olly, about 11 years old; Elizabeth, about six years old; Nancy about six years old; [and] Francis, about two years old; levied on to satisfy three mortgage fi fas issued from the Inferior Court of Putnam county" (*Southern Recorder* 10 Feb. 1852).

Additionally, the practice of easily converting enslaved children into fast cash resulted in many children being frequently moved across the country in relatively short amounts of time. For example, Henry Goings was an enslaved man who self-emancipated in 1839, when he was around 29 years old. Goings was born c. 1810 in James City County, Virginia, and at the age of five, his enslaver died, and Goings was inherited by his enslaver's son-in-law, Pearson Piggott, who moved Goings to his home near Williamsburg, Virginia (Goings 2012:5). Piggott moved to Halifax, North Carolina in 1818, taking Goings (aged eight) and Goings' younger sister, Maria with him (Goings 2012:6). While there, Goings was hired out to a local hotel, to serve as a waiter (Goings 2012:7). During this time, Goings' younger sister Maria was mortgaged to a man from Virginia and sold for four hundred dollars to a slave trader (Goings 2012:8). Piggott was bankrupt, and Goings was then used as security for a loan of five hundred dollars and taken by a Mr. Hives, of Halifax (Goings 2012:10). Hives sold Goings to Joseph Smith for five hundred dollars, and Goings was taken to Raleigh, North Carolina (Goings 2012:11). By this time, Goings was only about ten years old, had been enslaved by three different men, hired out for two years as a hotel waiter, and had been separated from entire family – his mother, father, two brothers, and finally, his sister.

Over the next ten years, Goings moved across the South with his enslaver, Joseph Smith. In 1821, at age eleven, he was taken from Halifax to Raleigh, North Carolina, working as both a groom and a house servant (Goings 2012:11). That same year, Goings was a part of a forced migration of about 460 enslaved individuals who traveled by foot from North Carolina to Humphreys County, Tennessee, by way of Nashville (Goings 2012:15). His enslaver and his enslaver's extended family had decided to move West, in the hopes of improving their fortunes. During the next five years, Goings traveled with his enslaver from Humphreys County,

Tennessee to northern Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. By the time that Henry Goings was sixteen years old, he had moved more than eight times. The experience of Henry Goings was not unique amongst children during enslavement. On the contrary, it is likely that his experiences were normal, especially for other enslaved children born in the Upper South, who had a one in three percent chance of being separated from one or both parents (local sales and nonmarket transactions raised this percentage to one in two, or a fifty percent likelihood of separation) (Tadman 1996:171-172).

Families and communities of enslaved people could also be separated after the death of their enslaver in the event of debt. Estate auctions were held locally to sell off enslaved men, women, and children in order to pay off the debts that the deceased enslaver accrued during his or her lifetime. Former United States President Thomas Jefferson died in July of 1826. At this time, he was the enslaver of over 130 individuals, who were put up for auction in January of 1827 in order to pay off his enormous amount of debt. Pre-printed bills of sale were provided to those who purchased enslaved individuals from Monticello over the course of the five-day-long auction. Peter Fossett was one of the individuals sold at the January 1827 auction, when he was eleven years old. In his reminiscences, published almost 71 years after the auction, he wrote, "Two years after this Mr. Jefferson died. Then began our troubles. We were scattered all over the country, never to meet each other again until we meet in another world" (Fossett 1898). Peter Fossett's father, Joseph Fossett, was one of the five enslaved individuals freed in Thomas Jefferson's will. The rest of Peter's family, including his mother, Edith and eight of his siblings were all sold to various purchasers at the 1827 auction, and separated. Though Peter Fossett was eventually emancipated and able to reunite with many of his family members, it was not uncommon for enslaved individuals in these situations to be separated from their families, never

to see them again. Entire families were divided up amongst heirs and individuals were forced from their homes to live with their new enslavers in new and unfamiliar places, sometimes far across the country from their previous homes.

Enslaved Children for Hire

It was common practice for enslavers to hire out enslaved children to other farms or households in the area on a yearly basis, especially in the Upper South, where small farms required less enslaved workers than were previously needed on large tobacco plantations. At places like Wye House Plantation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, when there were more enslaved individuals than laborers needed, enslavers hired out enslaved children who could not perform as much labor as adult men and women due to their smaller size and stature. By hiring children out, enslavers could avoid feeding and clothing them, and could also make some extra money each year. The practice of hiring out was also attractive to people who did not wish to buy enslaved individuals, but who needed their labor. In 1832, Edward Lloyd V of Wye House enslaved 468 men, women, and children (Duncan-Smith 2022). Two years later, in 1834, he hired out twelve enslaved children from Wye House Farm, one of his multiple farms, as recorded in the *Book of Hands.* The twelve children who were hired out for that year were Benjamin Roberts, age nine; Beth Rose, age eleven; Ezekiel Cooper, age nine; Henry Seney, age nine; Jacob Johnson, age nine; Jake Affy, age eight; Jim Thomas, age nine; Lafetta Williams, age eight; Maria Williams, age twelve; Merena Sutton, age eleven; Sally Johnson, age eleven; and Sharlotte Johnson, age eleven (Book of Hands, 1834). All twelve children were under the age of twelve, and seven were nine years old or younger.

Generally, men or women who wished to hire an enslaved child for the year agreed to pay the child's enslaver a set price, as well as explicitly agreeing to provide the child with certain

kinds of clothing or other items. An 1851 affidavit concerning the hire of an enslaved child named James involves a valuation from Major R. F. Graves and reads, "I have seen a small negro boy named James of Judge Nash's belonging to Mr. I. M. Howmry and I think five dollars with summer and winter clothes including hat + blanket will be a fair price for the hire of said boy the present year" (VMHC Mss1N1786a). A receipt dated May 5th 1852 states that Judge Nash paid the aforementioned five dollars "for the hire of the boy above named." Similarly, a bond dated January 23rd 1835 states that Edward S. Saunders will pay Jeremiah Webb "the full sum of thirty dollars lawful money of Virginia it being for the hire of a negro boy Ben which negro is to be well and sufficiently cloathed as is usual for hirelings to have and returned at the end of the year clear of all public charges" (VMHC Mss2Sa837b). Although their ages are not stated, James is described as a "small" boy and cost five dollars (plus summer and winter clothes, a hat, and a blanket) to hire for a year, and Ben is simply described as a boy and cost thirty dollars (plus being "well and sufficiently cloathed as is usual for hirelings"). One may ascertain from the cost of hiring them that James was a younger child and Ben may have been an older child, a teenager, or even possibly a grown man, considering that enslavers often referred to enslaved adult men and woman as "boys" or "girls" despite their mature ages. Documents such as this affidavit and bond demonstrate that enslavers kept official legal records when hiring out enslaved people, and the men or women who hired these individuals agreed not only to pay a certain price for a year of labor, but also to provide enslaved people with items like clothing, hats, and blankets.

However, interviews from the *Slave Narratives* as well as accounts from other published narratives reveal that although these documents may have been legally binding, not all employers treated the enslaved children whom they hired with basic human decency, and they certainly did not always provide them with adequate food and clothing. William Wells Brown, who was

formerly enslaved in Kentucky, wrote about his experiences being hired out as a child. He was hired as a domestic servant in a public house by a man named Major Freeland, who was an abusive and violent alcoholic. Brown decided to tell his enslaver about his treatment, hoping that he might prevent Freeland from continuing his abuse. "I complained to my master of the treatment which I received from Major Freeland; but it made no difference. He cared nothing about it, so long as he received the money for my labor" (Brown 1847:22). While some enslavers may have intervened in these situations, others like Brown's enslaver did not care about the treatment of their enslaved individuals as long as they were being adequately compensated.

Enslaved children would be hired out as soon as they were capable of performing labor, so many children were quite young when they were first hired out. Mary Bell, who was formerly enslaved in Missouri, was first hired out at seven years old. She was sent to work for a Presbyterian minister, to take care of his three children for one year. Mary also completed other tasks for the family. "I was only seven years old so dey put me on a pony at meal time to ride out to de field and call de hands to dinner" (FWP Vol. 10 Missouri 1936:25-26). The next year, her enslaver hired her out to a baker named Henry Tillman, to nurse his three children for two years. Mary was forced to become a full-time nurse to multiple young children at a very young age herself. Susan Snow, who was formerly enslaved in Alabama, was also hired out for the first time at eight years old to be a nurse to white children (FWP Vol. 9 Mississippi 1936:141). William Black was formerly enslaved in Missouri and he was first hired out to a man named Sam Briggs in order to take Briggs' children to school in the morning and escort them home in the evening (FWP Vol. 10 Missouri 1936: 32). William was eight years old when he was first hired out, and although he was a boy, being hired as a nurse for white children was not a

gendered job, and both men and women interviewed in the *Slave Narratives* share stories of working as nurses when they were children.

Millie Simpkins was formerly enslaved in Tennessee and confirmed that being hired out as nurses was a common job for young enslaved children. “De young slaves wuz hired out ter nuss de white chilluns. I quz hired as nuss [nurse] girl at seven y’ars ole en started cookin’ at ten. I nebber had a chance ter go ter schul [school]” (FWP Vol. 15 Tennessee 1936:67). Eda Rains was formerly enslaved and born in Arkansas but was brought to Texas to be hired out at the age of seven. She remembered, “When I’s hired out to the Tomlins at Douglass I sho’ got lonesome for I’s just a little girl, you know, and wanted to see my mother” (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:225). The Tomlin family forced Eda to parch coffee until her arm was sore, at which point she began to cry while continuing to work. They soon made her work as a nurse for their children. Eda said, “I was fannin’ the baby with a turkey wing fan and I fell to sleep and when the missus saw me she snatched the fan and struck me in the face with it” (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:225). At the time of the interview, Eda still had a scar on her forehead from where the turkey quill became stuck in it when her enslaver hit her.

Enslaved children were not only hired out to individuals, but sometimes to factories as well. In cities like Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, where tobacco manufacturing and grain milling were popular industries, enslaved men, women, and children would frequently be hired out to manufacturers (Schermerhorn 2009:210). This type of work was particularly arduous, as children would be forced to perform repetitive tasks for fourteen to sixteen hours a day in “dark, dusty, and dangerous conditions” (Schermerhorn 2009:210). In some cases, hiring out enslaved children could be extremely profitable, making enslavers more money than hiring out enslaved adults. In the 1840s, two enslaved young brothers named Anthony and Robert were hired out to a

Richmond tobacconist and their mother and three younger siblings were hired out for domestic service. Anthony and Robert together were hired out for nine times the price of their mother and siblings (Schermerhorn 2009:210).

Additionally, enslaved children who were hired out generally did not stay in the same place for more than a few years before being hired out to another employer. Moses Grandy was formerly enslaved in North Carolina. He was first hired out at the age of eight, and by the time he was fourteen years old, he had worked for six different employers. “When I became old enough to be taken away from my mother and put to field-work, I was hired out for the year, by auction, at the Court House, every January; this is the common practice with respect to slaves belonging to persons who are under age. This continued till my master and myself were twenty-one years old” (Grandy 1843:9). The first man who hired Moses (at age eight) was named Mr. Kemp, “who used [him] pretty Well; he gave [him] plenty to eat and sufficient clothing” (Grandy 1843:10). His next employer, a man named old Jemmy Coates, whipped and beat him severely when he could not learn how to hill corn properly. The whip was made of a sapling which pierced Grandy’s side and caused a festering wound that plagued him for years afterwards (Grandy 1843:10). Grandy’s next four employers varied between extremely cruel or relatively decent men, and his jobs varied as well. When he was hired by a Mr. Enoch Sawyer, he wrote that he was “half-starved” and that the three years that he was there seemed like “very long years” (Grandy 1843:11). After his time with Sawyer, Grandy wrote of feeling “overjoyed” at his treatment with his next employer, a Mr. George Furley, as he “had plenty to eat and plenty of clothes” (Grandy 1843:11-12). Grandy wrote in his narrative that, “In being hired out, sometimes the slave gets a good home, and sometimes a bad one: when he gets a good one, he dreads to see

January come; when he has a bad one, the year seems five times as long as it is" (Grandy 1843:10).

Like enslaved adults, enslaved children who were hired out to different people each year were separated from their families and everyone whom they knew, forced to undertake new tasks and responsibilities, and were at the mercy of their new employers, who could be decent and provide them with adequate food and clothing, or who could be vicious and violent. Lizzie Baker was born during the Civil War to enslaved parents in North Carolina. She remembered stories that her mother had told her about slavery, including that enslaved people would be given a day off on Christmas, but on New Year's Day the enslaved people could be sold or hired out. "All de slaves wus scared 'cause dey didn't know who would have to go off to be sold or to work in a strange place" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:68). In her narrative, Harriet Jacobs wrote about the separations that occur on New Year's Day. "But to the slave mother New Year's day comes laden with peculiar sorrows. She sits on her cold cabin floor, watching the children who may all be torn from her the next morning; and often does she wish that she and they might die before the day dawns" (1861:26). One may argue that enslaved children who were hired out were in even more precarious and vulnerable positions than those who were not, as they were forced to navigate new enslavers, new jobs, a new group of people, and new environments without the help of their family or community. Additionally, children were "less experienced at forming supportive networks" (King 2011:243). Historian Wilma King compares the hiring out process to "displacement by war," noting that it was "virtually impossible" for enslaved people to keep in touch with the communities that they were separated from "because of obstacles to communication, lack of transportation, and their illiteracy and ignorance of geography" (King 2011:243). Though all enslaved individuals lived in varying states of precarity as they could be

sold away at any time, enslaved people who were hired out were constantly aware that their situations were not permanent or even stable, dependent on the whims of both their enslavers and the individuals to whom they were hired.

Enslaved Children as "Gifts"

Children who were enslaved could also be separated from their families and communities through non-market transactions, such as being inherited through the wills of their deceased enslavers, as was the case with Henry Goings when he was given to his enslaver's son-in-law after his enslaver died. Harriet Jacobs, author of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) was twelve years old when her enslaver died and willed Harriet to her niece Mary Matilda Norcom, who was only three years old at the time.[21] When an enslaver died and possessed multiple heirs who lived in different places, the enslaved community was torn apart. Families and friends were separated, oftentimes forever.

Besides being inherited by a new enslaver as a result of a former enslaver's will, enslaved children could also be separated from their families through a different non-market transaction – they could simply be given as "gifts." This practice was not uncommon. According to Frederic Bancroft, enslaved individuals (as property) were considered "such a token of aristocracy and

[21] This age difference between the enslaver and the enslaved reinforced the hegemonic master-servant relationship, as enslaved workers would be forced to refer to a baby or toddler with titles like "Miss," implying that "the slaves, regardless of size or age, owed deference to the toddler" (King 2011:174). Eugene Genovese echoes this assertion. "On many plantations it came at the beginning, for the black children might be commanded to call even a newly born white baby "Young Massa" or "Young Missus" (1976:516). This requirement of enslaved workers to show deference to a baby highlighted that an enslaved person's status was always lower than a white person's – even if that white person was a child. King repeats a story from a formerly enslaved woman from Juniper County, Mississippi – "When introduced to her "young mistress," the eleven-year-old Lu looked at the infant in her mother's arms and said, "I don't see no young mistress, that's a baby" (2011:174).

riches" that many people "made presents of little slaves to favorite children, godchildren, grandchildren, to newborns, and in rare instances *the unborn were devised to the unborn*" [emphasis added] (Bancroft 1996:212).[22] And when an enslaver wanted to give a "gift" of an enslaved child and they did not own one, they would purchase one for the occasion.[23] Frequently, enslavers chose to give their daughters enslaved individuals as birthday or wedding "presents," rather than gifts of land, which they reserved for their sons (Jones-Rogers 2019:2-3). Such was the case with Agnes James, who was formerly enslaved in South Carolina. Her enslaver, Hector Cameron, chose her to tend to his daughter, Miss Janie Little. Agnes remembered, "…he give all his daughters one of us to have a care for dem" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 3:8). At the time of her interview in 1937, Agnes James' age was recorded as eighty years old, meaning that she was probably born sometime in 1857. Agnes would have been extremely young when she was given to Miss Janie Little, because she would have only been five or six years old by the time she was emancipated.

Orlando Patterson includes the story of a formerly enslaved woman, Gracie Gibson, in *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) in order to illustrate his statement regarding the relationship dynamics between an enslaver and the person whom they enslaved. "Clearly, no authentic human relationship was possible where violence was the ultimate sanction. There could have

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[22] While children under enslavement were usually the individuals most often chosen to be "gifts," on occasion enslaved adults were given as "gifts" as well. Ona Judge, formerly enslaved by George and Martha Washington, fled from the president's house in Philadelphia and emancipated herself at age twenty-two after learning that she was ultimately going to be given to their granddaughter, Eliza Parke Custis Law, as a wedding gift. Law was known for having a bad temper (Dunbar 2017:95-96).

[23] In 1827, William Dillard purchased an enslaved woman, Chany, and her two children for $360, and agreed that his brother, Merritt Dillard, could pay him $100 for Chany's daughter Caroline, who was four years old, as a gift for his own five-year-old daughter. Merritt took Caroline for his daughter and moved to Mississippi, taking both girls with him (*Dillard v. Dillard* (1842) in Catterall Vol. II 1929:514).

been no trust, no genuine sympathy; and while a kind of love may sometimes have triumphed over this most perverse form of interaction, intimacy was usually calculating and sadomasochistic" (Patterson 1982:12). Gracie Gibson, who was formerly enslaved in in Florida, remembered the moment that she was presented as a birthday gift from her enslaver, John Kinsler, to his daughter Ada. "I was called up on one of her birthdays, and Marster Bob sorta looked out de corner of his eyes, first at me and then at Miss Ada, then he make a little speech. He took my hand, put it in Miss Ada's hand, and say: 'Dis your birthday present, darlin'.' I make a curtsy and Miss Ada's eyes twinkle like a star and she take me in her room and took on powerful over me" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:113).

According to scholar Sarah Winter, Gracie Gibson's memory is important for Patterson's studies on slavery because the experience of being given as a birthday "gift" makes explicit her status as enslaved and the absolute disregard of her personhood (Winter 2017:51). Additionally, as both Gracie and her new mistress, Miss Ada, were both children, the aforementioned event serves to highlight that childhood (in relation to slavery) "involves the inculcation and reproduction" of the dynamics of slavery in both the white children of enslavers and the enslaved children themselves (Winter 2017:52). Winter states that the "inferior" condition of the enslaved child was both involuted and redoubled, because their status as both vulnerable and subordinate was reinforced by becoming the "property" of an individual (a child) who was not legally capable of ownership independent from their parents' legal guardianship (Winter 2017:54). Thus, when an enslaved child is presented as a "gift" to the white child of an enslaver, the enslaved child serves as an object to be owned and is reminded or made aware of their status as enslaved, and the white child learns how to become an enslaver. Because a child is legally incapable of owning property, the "gift" and ownership of another child is exposed as

illegitimate and revealed to be "a ritual for inducting the children of slaveholders into the privileges and powers of mastery" (Winter 2017:54). The act of treating a human child as a gift to be presented to another child exemplifies "what slavery really meant: the direct and insidious violence, the namelessness and invisibility, the endless personal violation, and the chronic inalienable dishonor" (Patterson 1982:12).

Though enslaved children were frequently "gifted" to the free children of enslavers, they were also given to adult members of the family. It seems that when enslaved individuals were given as "gifts" to free adults (who were legally allowed to own property), it was always conducted through a legal transaction, as a "Deed of Gift."[24] A Deed of Gift is a signed legal document that voluntarily transfers the ownership of property (real, personal, or intellectual) from one individual to another. Through a Deed of Gift, enslaved persons were legally considered the same as any object or material that could also be gifted in the same manner.

In 1808, Robert Carter Page of Fredericksburg utilized a Deed of Gift when presenting a six-year-old enslaved boy named Daniel Baudin to his mother, Mary Tayloe Page, also "for and in consideration of the natural love and affection" which he had and bore unto his mother (VMHC Mss1P2775a). Robert Carter Page gave Daniel Baudin to his mother Mary Page and "her heirs," meaning that when Mary died, Daniel would immediately become enslaved by another family member. Additionally, in 1817, John Durburrow Blair, a clergyman from Richmond, Virginia, presented a Deed of Gift to his wife Mary Blair, "in consideration of the love and affection [he bore] to her." He did "freely give to her a female negro child named Mary, the daughter of my servant man Lewis + his wife Aggy… The child Mary, aforementioned is

[24] Enslaved children were sometimes "gifted" to free, white children through a Deed of Gift, but that was not always the case, whereas when adults "gifted" enslaved children to other adults, it was always conducted through the legal system.

supposed at this time to be about eight years old" (VMHC Mss2B5753b). Through his Deed of Gift, John Blair legally gifted eight-year-old Mary to his wife, Mary Blair, whilst he still maintained ownership of the child Mary's enslaved parents, Lewis and Aggy.

Both Robert Carter Page and John Durburrow Blair legally "gifted" two very young enslaved children (aged six years old and eight years old, respectively) to women in their lives – their mother and wife, respectively, who legally owned the children as their personal property. For adults, receiving an enslaved child as a "gift" was a matter of legal ownership of property, but for children who received enslaved children as "gifts," the transaction served a more educational purpose rather than a legal one. Of course, slave-owning parents wanted their children to also become enslavers, and "gifting" a young enslaved child was a way to accomplish that ownership. Some enslavers did make this transfer of ownership legally, through a Deed of Gift. However, one can argue that the main purpose of "gifting" one child (who was enslaved) to another child (who was free) was done more to indoctrinate young white children into the world of slave-ownership, therefore the matter of whether the child legally owned the other child was beside the point.

Can a child truly enslave another child? The "gift" of one child to another began the ritual of learning (and being taught) how to become the enslaver and the enslaved, regardless of the legality of who could and could not own property. This "gift" of a human being was instrumental in defining the roles that each child must play for the rest of their lives. The enslaved child must learn that he or she is enslaved, and how to act accordingly, and the white child must learn how to become an enslaver, and the behavior that defines such a role. Dave Taylor was formerly enslaved in Florida. In his interview with a Federal Writers' Project worker, he talks about his childhood during enslavement. Dave (called Buddy as a child) said that he "belonged" to Miss

Jessie Pinckney, who was a "couple o'years" younger than him. He recalls purposely agitating her by knocking over her toys so that she would get angry and beat him. Being a small girl, she was not capable of actually physically harming him, but he knew that he could act wounded and hurt to make her feel guilty, and then she would bring him "good things" that he was otherwise not allowed to have, such as cakes or cookies, as an apology. "'Jessie,' her ma'd say, 'you'll kill Buddy, beatin' him dat way.' 'I don't care,' she say, 'I'll beat him to death, an' git me a bettah one.'" (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:324). Although Dave's memories of his childhood with Jessie demonstrate that he knew she would not (or could not) actually harm him and that he could manipulate her in order to get what he wanted (cookies), they also highlight that Jessie understood that Dave "belonged" to her, and that she could use violence in order to punish him. In his story, Dave and Jessie were young children, but both were already learning the roles that they must play, as enslaved and enslaver, and they behaved accordingly.

Laws Against the Sale of Enslaved Children

Although enslaved children were widely regarded as a staple of the domestic slave trade, a handful of states passed laws regarding the sale of young enslaved children. At best, some of these laws created a hinderance for slave traders, though they had virtually no effect on enslavers selling their own enslaved children, and slave traders continued to bring enslaved children under the age of ten to the state in order to sell them. According to Bancroft, the age at which children were worth more sold with their mothers and those that were worth more sold without them was at around eight years of age (Bancroft 1996:197). Therefore, any slave trader who endeavored to sell an enslaved child (while adhering to the law) would have made less of a profit selling children aged eight to ten years old *with* their mothers than selling the children without them.

Louisiana

Louisiana created its *Code Noir*, or *Black Code*, encompassing its rules and conduct in respect to enslaved people in 1806. Section 9 states, "*And be it further enacted,* That every person is expressly prohibited from selling separately from their mothers, the children who shall not have attained the full age of ten years" (Louisiana 1807:154). This law, however, excluded orphans, meaning that if a child under the age of ten years old was already separated from his or her mother, or his or her mother was deceased, the law did not apply to them. In 1829, the state legislature passed an act "relative to the introduction of Slaves in this State, and for other purposes" designed to mainly target slave traders, as New Orleans was the largest center of the domestic slave trade in the Lower South (Louisiana 1829:48). Both sections 15 and 16 focused on the issue of the sale of enslaved children who were ten years old and under, as well as the enslaved mothers of those children:

> Section 15. *Be it further enacted,* That no slave child, or children, ten years of age, or under, shall be introduced into this state, unaccompanied by his, her, or their mother, if living, under the penalty prescribed in the tenth section of this act, and that in all trials for a violation of this section that the burthen of proving the age of such child or children, and that his, her, or their mother, was dead at the time of introducing them, shall be on the person accused.
>
> Section 16. *Be it further enacted,* That if any person or persons shall sell the mother of any slave child or children, under the age of ten years separate from the said child or children, or shall, the mother living, sell any child or children, of ten years of age, or under, separate from said mother, shall incur the penalty of the sixth section of this act (Louisiana 1829:48).

The penalty for violating either of these rules was a fine of 1,000 to 2,000 dollars and the forfeiture of the enslaved person involved (Bancroft 1996:197). However, it seems that the law was not very strictly enforced. According to historian Jennie Williams, the 1829 law "curtailed but did not eliminate" the importation of enslaved children under age ten to Louisiana, as slave traders were able to change the age of enslaved children to best fit their interests (Williams

2020:66). Williams' *Oceans of Kinfolk* database encompasses all surviving manifests from the coastwise trade into New Orleans, and demonstrates that before the law was passed, enslaved children under age ten represented 15 percent of captives, but just 8 percent after the law's passage (Williams 2020:66). Additionally, Williams found that in the age distribution of captives in the coastwise trade, there was artificial clustering on even and round numbers (as many enslaved individuals did not know their exact age or birthday, so their ages were estimated). However, there is no similar clustering on age ten, and there were as many eleven-year-olds as ten-year-olds present, as slave traders had an incentive to report enslaved children as being over ten years old (Williams 2020:67). This lack of clustering around the even and round number of ten is extremely unusual and therefore, telling.[25] It suggests that slave traders were deliberately recording children as older than they actually were in order to navigate around the law.

Alabama

The *Code of Alabama* (1852) also included certain laws against the sale of enslaved children under the age of ten. Section 2056 of Chapter IV, "Master and Slave," specifically states that "No execution can be levied on a child, or children, under the age of ten years, without including the mother; or upon the mother, without including the child, or children… if living, and belonging to the defendant in execution" (Alabama 1852:392). The exception to this rule claims that enslaved mothers and young children must be sold together "unless the parties in

[25] Additionally, in a study conducted by historian Judith Kelleher Schafer on New Orleans newspaper advertisements from 1850, Schafer found that approximately 21 percent of male enslaved individuals and 17 percent of the female enslaved individuals sold were children under the age of ten (Schafer 1981:36). In the classified advertisements of 1850, there were 28 sale notices for enslaved children under ten years of age, and of these, only six children were stipulated to have been orphans (meaning that their sale did not violate the 1829 law) (Schafer 1981:36). Schafer's study indicates that children under age ten were still being sold without their mothers. However, the author does not indicate whether the children were being sold by single enslavers or slave traders.

interest, or one of them, make affidavit and delivers the same to the officer, that he believes his interest will be materially prejudiced, by selling the slaves together, when they may be sold separately" (Alabama 1852:392). Therefore, if an enslaver made affidavit that selling a mother and her children under the age of ten years old together would be to his material disadvantage, the law did not apply. "Thus not humanity but expectation of profit or loss was the criterion" (Bancroft 1996:198). Finally, this section ends with the statement that "but no levy or sale shall be made, by which a child under five years of age shall be separated from its mother" (Alabama 1852:392). However, this law, and all the laws mentioned in this section, did not apply to orphans. Orphaned children could be sold at any age, and it did not matter whether their parents were dead or whether they were orphaned by separation in another state as a result of the domestic slave trade. A slave trader could simply create an orphan by selling a child's parents away in a state where separation of young children from their parents was legal, and then sell that child in another state where such a separation was illegal. Therefore, it was extremely easy for slave traders to avoid breaking the law, or to find loopholes within them.

Mississippi

The state of Mississippi included a very small mention regarding the sale of enslaved children under the age of six years old in its *Revised Code* of 1857. Under the section titled, "Personal Property exempt from Execution," article 280 includes a provision that if a debtor should "elect to retain a female slave, then all of the children of such female under the age of six years shall likewise be exempt, until such children shall respectively arrive at the age of six years." (Mississippi 1857:529). The debtor was not allowed to "sell or dispose" of the child or the children "pending a judgment of execution against said debtor" (Mississippi 1857:529).

Again, this provision was created with the interests of the debtor/enslaver in mind, not as a protection for young enslaved children or their mothers.

Georgia

Georgia was the fourth and final state to create a law specifically mentioning the sale of enslaved children in its 1861 *Code of the State of Georgia*. Section 2523 of Section 6 – "Of Administrator's Sales" stated that any "administrator, executor, guardian or other trustee" making a sale or distribution was not allowed to separate "Children, not exceeding eight years of age" from their mothers, either for the purpose of sale or distribution" (Georgia 1861:483). As with similar provisions for enslaved children in other states, these rules were beneficial to the enslaved individuals concerned, but did not affect the property rights of a living enslaver. It was entirely legal in Georgia for an enslaver to separate any enslaved children who were eight years old or younger from their mothers for the purpose of sale.

Ultimately, the laws regarding the sale of enslaved children in the four aforementioned states – Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia – were created to protect the interests of the enslaver, not the enslaved. And none of the prohibitions (except perhaps those of Louisiana) affected the "*owner of unencumbered* slave property: he might sell or pawn or mortgage or give it away according to profit or whim, regardless of age or kinship" (Bancroft 1996:199). None of the other states in the South had any rules or restrictions regarding the sale of enslaved children of any age, and separations of young children from their mothers were frequent. Daniel R. Goodloe, a lawyer and abolitionist from North Carolina, wrote about the practice in his 1852 letter detailing his opinion of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852):

> Invidious as the duty may be, I cannot withhold my testimony to the fact that families of slaves are often separated. I know not how any man can have the hardihood to deny it. The thing is notorious, and is often the subject of painful remark in the Southern States. I have often heard the practice of separating husband and wife, parent and child, defended,

> apologized for, palliated in a thousand ways, but have never heard it denied (Goodloe 1853:64).

The sale of enslaved children singly and the separation of children from their mothers (and vice versa) was an integral part of the domestic slave trade. It seems that the few laws that did exist regarding the sale and separation of enslaved children were not strictly enforced, and in many cases, it was quite easy for slave traders to lie about the age or status (orphaned or not) of enslaved children and to avoid any penalties or fines for selling them. Similarly, it would not have been difficult for an individual in Alabama to make affidavit that selling a mother and her children under the age of ten years old together would be to his material disadvantage, thus allowing him to separate enslaved children and their mothers in order to sell them separately or singly for a higher profit.

The Exclusive Sale of Children

While it is clear that enslaved children made up a significant number of the individuals sold within the domestic slave trade, less is known about slave traders who exclusively sold enslaved children. A few accounts mention slave traders who specialized in selling children exclusively. However, these accounts do not mention the names of the traders, only the locations of their establishments. Therefore, it is unclear how common it was for slave traders to only sell enslaved children. Slave traders and slave trading firms did sometimes have a special focus on selling enslaved people for specific purposes – for example, traders selling people in New Orleans or Lexington might offer "fancy girls" as a certain category, so it does not seem totally impossible that other traders might specialize in trading in children.

Frederic Bancroft mentions at least three instances of slave traders who exclusively sold children – two were located in St. Louis, Missouri; and one in Columbia, South Carolina (Bancroft 1996:144, 209-210). Galusha Anderson, an abolitionist and Baptist minister,

mentioned one such trader in his account, *The Story of a Border City During the Civil War* (1908). Anderson lived and preached in St. Louis, Missouri during the Civil War. He wrote about a slave pen located "at the corner of Fifth and Myrtle Streets, where they keep little colored boys and girls for sale" (Anderson 1908:184-185).[26] "This pen where slave children were kept was much larger than Lynch's.[27] The traffic in children seemed to be specially brisk and profitable. The inmates of this grim prison-house were from about five to sixteen years old. Both sexes were there… Every few weeks there was an auction of these black children, with all of its repulsive, heart-breaking scenes" (Anderson 1908:185). According to Anderson, when a slave trader at that pen purchased a mother and her children, she was sometimes kept at the pen with them until they were sold (separately).

Anderson recalled an incident where a ten-year-old enslaved boy was purchased in a private sale and taken from his mother. "As soon as he was taken away from the pen, he began in his grief to howl as though his heart was breaking" (Anderson 1908:186). After walking with the wailing child for two blocks, the enslaver returned to the pen and "secured the loan of his mother till he could get his tearful chattel to his home, without attracting a curious and sympathetic crowd on the street. Once there his little slave could be quieted by a sugar plum or a whip" (Anderson 1908:186). After successfully taking the child to his home, the enslaver took the child's mother back to the pen to be sold away. The name of the slave trader who operated this

[26] The slave pen was described as a two-and-a-half story brick building. It was located at Fifth and Myrtle streets, which were renamed as Broadway and Clark Avenue (Bancroft 1996:144). Today, the site is occupied by Busch Stadium and St. Louis Ballpark Village. No archaeological survey was conducted prior to its demolition in 1963 (Wright 2002:11).

[27] "Lynch's" refers to Bernard M. Lynch, a prominent slave trader operating in St. Louis throughout the 1850s. In that decade, Lynch operated his slave trading firm at three different locations in the city (Bancroft 1996:142).

enslaved children's pen is unknown, and the slave trader Bernard M. Lynch purchased the pen and operated his own slave trading business out of it beginning in 1859 (Bancroft 1996:144).

St. Louis had at least two slave trading operations that specialized in the sale of enslaved children. The second was "a house on the southwest corner of Morgan and Garrison streets in which lived a woman who bought up infants from the mothers' arms at the slave-markets of St. Louis and raised them for profit" (Trexler 1914:52). It is unclear whether this building was operated by a slave trading firm or if it was operated by a single trader who raised enslaved children for sale. Additionally, as with the previously discussed pen, the name of this woman who raised enslaved children for profit was never mentioned, and no more information has been found regarding a possible slave pen on Morgan and Garrison streets in St. Louis. It may be the case that some enslavers bought enslaved infants and then raised them for profit on a smaller scale than a slave trader or slave trading firm. Adaline Johnson, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi and North Carolina, recalled seeing people who were doing this. "I seen people sell babies out of the cradle. Poor white people buy babies and raise them" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 4 1936:52). Johnson's recollections imply that white people of lesser means (or who could not afford to purchase older enslaved individuals) were purchasing enslaved infants singly and raising them in order to sell them for a profit when they were older.

Bancroft mentions a trader in Columbia, South Carolina, "also making a specialty of little children" (Bancroft 1996:209). Unfortunately, he does not expand upon this brief acknowledgment. It has been made clear that "virtually all" slave traders purchased and sold enslaved children from around ten to twelve years of age, and that many advertised for children much younger than that (Bancroft 1996:208). Though detailed evidence for slave traders who specialized in trading enslaved children has not yet been discovered, there are a few instances

where that seems to be the case. Earlier in this chapter, an 1836 advertisement placed by Colonel Allen Rogers in the Raleigh *Standard* called specifically for "young" enslaved children "from 8 to 12 years old" (Bancroft 1996:209). Another newspaper advertisement that ran in the Alexandria, Virginia *Gazette & Daily Advertiser* in 1822 called asked for "a few likely young" enslaved children and teenagers, "male and female, from 10 to 18 years of age" (*Alexandria gazette & daily advertiser,* 16 March 1822). These advertisements for young enslaved children and teenagers differ from the advertisements posted by prominent slave traders or slave trading firms that ran year-round, as those usually called for enslaved individuals from the ages of twelve to twenty-five or thirty years old – individuals who were considered teenagers or young adults, rather than children.

Additionally, there is an observation from the letters of William Henry Seward, a staunch abolitionist and the 24th Secretary of State, which may indicate a slave trader who specialized in young children. On June 21st, 1835, Seward's carriage stopped at a country tavern just past the towns of Staunton and Lexington, in Virginia. He wrote that "a cloud of dust was seen slowly coming down the road, from which proceeded a confused noise of moaning, weeping, and shouting" (Seward 1891:271). Seward soon discovered the cause of the noise:

> Ten little naked boys, between six and twelve years old, tied together, two and two, by their wrists, were all fastened to a long rope, and followed by a tall, gaunt white man, who, with his long lash, whipped up the sad and weary little procession, drove it to the horse-trough to drink, and thence to a shed, where they lay down on the ground and sobbed and moaned themselves to sleep (Seward 1891:271).

Seward remarked that the small boys were purchased at different plantations by the "trader" and were to be "driven" down to Richmond to be sold at auction before being taken further South

(Seward 1891:217).[28] For a visitor traveling through the South, witnessing a coffle of enslaved people being driven toward a destination where they would eventually be sold was not uncommon, but the scene that Seward witnessed – a coffle made up of only very young boys – was certainly out of the ordinary.

Finally, Alexander Grigsby, a slave trader operating out of Centreville, in Fairfax County, Virginia was described as "almost certainly a slave breeder" who "actively raised children for sale" (Sweig 1983:3). A number of receipts indicate that Grigsby sold enslaved children without their mothers or fathers – in November of 1840 he sold John, a twelve-year-old enslaved boy, for $425. One month later, Grigsby sold enslaved individuals named Mary and Isaac for $425 and $465, respectively (Sweig 1983:2). The prices indicate that Mary and Isaac were most likely children. Census records from 1830 and 1840 demonstrate that Grigsby enslaved numerous enslaved women of childbearing age and only a few enslaved men. There are no enslaved children aged ten or younger in the 1830 census, and only one child is recorded in the 1840 census. Historian Donald Sweig claimed that the biased sex ratio of the individuals that Grigsby enslaved, and the distinct lack of enslaved children suggest that Grigsby was forcing enslaved women to give birth and then selling those children to other slave traders, such as Joseph Bruin, operating out of Alexandria (1983:3).

Although the documentary evidence for slave traders who specialized in purchasing and selling young enslaved children is sparse, it is nonetheless a well-established fact that enslaved

[28] Seward also observed in this part of Virginia, several places where yards "seemed to be literally swarming" with enslaved children, "naked for the most part" (Seward 1891:271). He wrote, "Virginia was then "raising" slaves for the Southern market; and these [children], as soon as they were old enough, and "likely" enough, were to be disposed of to "traders," who went about the State, very much as drovers do who gather up cattle for market" (Seward 1891:271-272).

children made up a significant part of the domestic slave trade within the United States. Enslaved children sold without either parent made up a quarter of the interregional slave trade by the 1850s (Tadman 1996:150). Young enslaved children were sold away from their mothers, fathers, and siblings from very young ages – some as young as infancy – depending on the whims of enslavers. The evidence for enslaved children sold singly is ubiquitous in newspaper advertisements beginning in the early 19th century until emancipation. They were sold suddenly to pay off small debts, hired out for extra cash, given as birthday or wedding "gifts" to young white women and girls, and purchased at young ages so that enslavers could buy them as investments that would make them a profit later.

While pursuing research regarding slave traders who dealt exclusively in enslaved children might be worthwhile, it is unnecessary considering that most, if not all, slave traders were willing to purchase and sell young children if it suited their material interests. All slave traders purchased and sold young children, a fact that has been largely forgotten or ignored due to successful deceptions and lies propagated by Southern enslavers and traders. Acknowledging the full magnitude of the significance of enslaved children sold in the domestic slave trade is extremely important in understanding what American slavery truly was. By ignoring the fact that children from infancy to fourteen years of age made up a quarter of all humans trafficked in the antebellum period, one is unable to see the full narrative. Northern and European visitors to the Southern United States may have believed or accepted the lie that enslaved children were not separated from their families or sold away at random in order to pay off debts because it was easier to believe that the peculiar institution of American slavery would spare children. In order to present the most accurate description of American slavery, one must understand the importance and significance of enslaved children within the domestic slave trade.

Chapter 3: Enslaved Children as Garden Hunters

Archaeologists who study American slavery have discussed the ways in which enslaved individuals supplemented rationed diets through various hunting, fishing, and foraging activities, understood mainly through the analysis of faunal and plant remains from sites of enslavement. Though the vast majority of the literature on this topic assumes that enslaved adults were the only ones pursuing such activities, it is clear that enslaved children were also active hunters, fishers, and foragers. Olga Linares' concept of "garden hunting," may help archaeologists to better understand how enslaved individuals acquired small game within the plantation landscape. Additionally, ethnoarchaeological and ethnographic research on children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies allows for a deeper understanding of what children in general are capable of acquiring through hunting and foraging pursuits, despite physiological constraints due to their small stature and lower muscular strength. Drawing on these various sources of information, a potential list of taxa (including behavioral and ecological attributes) can be created to predict what kinds of prey children were most capable of acquiring. This ecological model can then be applied to taxa identified in enslaved contexts in order to hypothesize which, if any, faunal remains may have been acquired by enslaved children engaged in subsistence activities. Finally, archival and documentary evidence including WPA interviews with formerly enslaved individuals and published narratives provide valuable insights regarding the hunting, fishing, and foraging activities of enslaved children in the 19th century.

Garden Hunting

Archaeologist Olga Linares developed an ecological concept she termed "garden hunting" to describe the phenomenon of a prevalence of terrestrial mammals with higher than normal (or natural) biomass excavated at the prehistoric site of Cerro Brujo in Bocas del Toro,

Panama (Linares 1976). By compiling a list of the main behavioral traits of the animals found at the site, Linares was able to make two conclusions: 1) the most abundant (or most frequently encountered) animals present were small animals that lived in burrows near the vicinity of the encampment sites or cleared fields, or 2) larger animals that were not very wary of humans and lived (or could live) in forest-edge conditions (Linares 1976:344). Animals that were not represented or represented in small numbers were more shy, faster, or inhabited areas farther away from humans (Linares 1976:344).

Additionally, Linares discovered that the biomass for every species at the site was significantly higher than what their biomass would be in nature (1976:342). She posited that the reason for the higher biomass of the animals at Cerro Brujo was due to the fact that those specific animals lived at the forest edge and frequently invaded human-made clearings, often eating crops from cultivated fields and domestic gardens (hence the term "garden hunting"). This "dual system" spatially concentrated both the animal protein as well as carbohydrates, with each system regulating the abundance of the other (Linares 1976:348). Linares argued that because the inhabitants of Cerro Brujo purposely focused their hunting efforts on these specific animals and reduced seasonality and scheduling issues, garden hunting was analogous to or may have acted as a substitute for domestication (1976:331). In this chapter, I implement Linares' concept of garden hunting as a way to understand how enslaved individuals chose prey when pursuing subsistence hunting activities.

Ethnoarchaeological and Ethnographic Studies of Contemporary Hunter-Gatherer Children

Ethnoarchaeology, a sub-field of anthropology, may be defined as "the use of ethnographic field methods and information to aid in the interpretation and explanation of archaeological data" (Stiles 1977:88). Anthropologists utilize ethnoarchaeology to understand

how archaeological sites in the past were created by studying the activities and material remains of living peoples today. The ethnoarchaeology of children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies may provide valuable insights into how children in the past may have contributed to the archaeological record through hunting and foraging activities. Children are humans who are developmentally in the stage of growth between birth and puberty. Because children in the past and in the present are defined by the fact that they are not full-grown adults, their physical limitations should be generally similar across time and place, meaning that the physical limitations of an eight-year-old child in the United States in the 19th century should be very similar to the physical limitations of an eight-year-old child in Australia today. Therefore, by understanding the physical capabilities of children today in regard to hunting and foraging activities, one may better understand what kinds of prey children in the past were potentially capable of procuring, and how these activities may be represented in the archaeological record.

Meriam Children and Marine Foraging Ventures

Anthropologists Rebecca Bliege Bird and Douglas Bird studied the fishing and foraging activities of the Meriam children in the easternmost islands in the Torres Strait, located south of Papua New Guinea (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000, 2002; Bliege Bird and Bird 2002; Bliege Bird, Bird, and Beaton 1995). The Meriam are indigenous Melanesian peoples living on the islands of Mer, Dauar, and Waier located in the Torres Strait (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:463). In contemporary Meriam society, over 600 calories per person, each day, come from marine foraging ventures including marine turtle hunting, beach and offshore fishing with handlines, shellfish collecting, and spearfishing (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:464). Meriam children participate in many of these activities, including beach fishing, shellfish collecting, and spearfishing, as well as subsistence activities that only children target, such as seasonal fruit and

nut collection and reef edge fishing (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:464). It is common throughout island and coastal societies for children to forage differently than adults, especially in regard to selectivity and processing (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:463). Bird and Bliege Bird posited that "age-linked differences in foraging may sometimes better reflect differences in foragers' physiological constraints than differences in goals," allowing for a possible explanatory framework for understanding how children may shape faunal assemblages (2000:462). They found that Meriam children (from ages 7-13 years old) forage for shellfish independently from adults and additionally, in subsistence practices, the children learn from other children, not from adults (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:464-465). Because children are smaller than adults, they walk more slowly and therefore encounter all prey (including higher ranked resources) at a lower rate, resulting in Meriam children having a quantitatively broader diet on the reef than adults (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:464, 467). Also, because children took significantly longer than adults to field process resources, some of the more difficult resources to process were transported whole by the children, rather than processed in the field (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:468).

The archaeological implications of this research are that in societies where children are participants in a subsistence economy, one would expect that their prey choice would include broader resource types compared to adults and that these resources would be of low relative profitability (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:471). In situations where the cost of processing differs significantly between adults and children, the resources that children choose to exploit will be more likely to be found in middens (rather than field processed) (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:471). Due to their physiological constraints, children are less likely to field process the less profitable resources they exploit, resulting in "exaggerated proportions of low-ranked prey

delivered whole to a residence," which can be seen in the archaeological record (Bird and Bliege Bird 2000:473).

Bird and Bliege Bird also found that Meriam children do not need much experience to become efficient reef foragers when participating in reef-flat collecting (2002:291). At the age of four years old, Meriam children are incapable of foraging, but by age six, children are "fairly efficient" foragers, foraging in groups with older children and learning how to choose prey as well as processing strategies (Bird and Bliege Bird 2002:291). Additionally, Meriam children become *as efficient* at hand-line beach fishing as adults, not long after they first begin fishing at the age of five years old (Bliege Bird and Bird 2002:261). Finally, Meriam children begin spearfishing as soon as they start walking, using toddler-sized spears to spear sardines for bait (Bliege Bird and Bird 2002:262). They later utilize their spears when they begin shellfish collection on the reef, starting at the age of six or seven, and those children who choose to practice their spearfishing more seriously become as efficient as "the most practiced adult" by the ages of ten to fourteen years old (Bliege Bird and Bird 2002:262). Bird and Bliege Bird's research on Meriam children demonstrates that despite their youth and physiological constraints, children can be as efficient as adults in certain fishing activities and are highly capable of collecting and harvesting prey when foraging for shellfish.

Children's Foraging Activities in Contemporary Hunter-Gatherer Societies

Meriam children are not the only children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies who successfully forage. Extensive ethnographic research has been conducted regarding Hadza children's foraging activities (Blurton Jones, Hawkes, and Draper 1994; Blurton Jones, Hawkes, and O'Connell 1989, 1997; Blurton Jones and Marlowe 2002; Crittenden et al. 2013; Hawkes, O'Connell, and Blurton Jones 1995). The Hadza are an indigenous ethnic group in Tanzania, and

Hadza children between the ages of five and fifteen forage actively and successfully, foraging near home and also accompanying adults to more distant resource patches (Hawkes, O'Connell, and Blurton Jones 1995). Hadza children generally forage for berries and baobab, but also hunt small game and birds with bows and arrows (Blurton Jones, Hawkes, and Draper 1994; Hawkes, O'Connell, and Blurton Jones 1995).[29] Like Meriam children, Hadza children's subsistence activities are constrained by their strength and size rather than an inability to learn adult skills (Bird and Bliege Bird 2005:131). Additionally, BaYaka hunter-gatherer children in the Republic of Congo also participate in hunting and fishing activities, including rat hunting and line and bail fishing (Hagino and Yamauchi 2016).[30] And as with Meriam children, researchers found that both Hadza children and BaYaka hunter-gatherer children (from the Republic of Congo) teach each other to forage – instances of child-to-child teaching were more frequent than adult-child teaching (Lew-Levy et al. 2020).

Most children's foraging activities include fishing as well as collecting fruits, vegetables, or nuts. However, as evidenced by Hadza and BaYaka children, they do also hunt small game animals as well, such as rats, hyrax, galago, and birds. As soon as they are able to walk, Hadza boys are given small bows and arrows for hunting and are able to fashion their own bows and arrows by the time that they are eight or ten years old (Crittenden et al. 2013:300). Mardu children ages five to fifteen years old at Parnngurr Outstation located in Australia's Western Desert are also efficient hunters (Bird and Bliege Bird 2005). Mardu children are generally left

[29] Studies have shown that Hadza children are so efficient at foraging that they are capable of foraging up to 50% of their daily energy requirement over the age of five years, depending on the season and the resources available (Crittenden et al. 2013:300).

[30] Hagino and Yamauchi's research demonstrated that BaYaka children choose prey differently than adults. Over a six-day period, *only* children hunted for (and caught) giant pouched rats and Thomas's dwarf galagos, whereas adults brought back neither, and instead focused on procuring vipers, tortoises, and snails (which children did not hunt) (Hagino and Yamauchi 2016:140).

alone with other children at temporary residential or day camps when accompanying adults on foraging trips away from the community. While the adults are away hunting or foraging, the children go off on their own to hunt for goanna lizards. After one child locates a den, other children may come to help capture the lizard, pulling it from its nest by the tail, cracking its head with a digging stick, and breaking its legs (Bird and Bliege Bird 2005:136). Children may sometimes cook and eat the lizards before adults return to the camp (Bird and Bliege Bird 2005:136). Similar to other children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies, Mardu children went off to hunt alone in small groups of other children, away from adults. They were able to catch, kill, and process the lizards, as well as cook them without the aid or supervision of adults. The small game hunting activities of Mardu children as well as those of Hadza and BaYaka children indicate that children can be capable hunters and imply that children in the past were also highly capable of procuring small game animals independently from adults, evidence of which may be present in the material record.

Background: The Diet of Enslaved Populations on Plantations

Historical archaeologists and zooarchaeologists have long studied faunal assemblages from plantation contexts in order to learn more about the diets and foodways of the individuals who lived at these sites, including both the enslavers and the enslaved populations (McKee 1987; Crader 1990; Bowen 1993; Atkins 1994; Tang 2014; Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021). Across the Upper and Lower American South, enslavers regularly provisioned their enslaved populations with weekly rations, generally consisting of some kind of corn product (such as grits or cornmeal), some kind of seasonal vegetable, lower-quality cuts of meat (either pork or beef), and

sometimes salted fish like shad or herring.[31] These rations were generally considered inadequate, both nutritionally and in the amounts distributed (Stampp 1965; Hilliard 1988; McKee 1999). Enslaved individuals supplemented their rationed diets through a combination of hunting, fishing, and foraging activities, and at some plantations were allowed a small plot of land to grow their own vegetables and raise livestock or poultry. Archaeologist Larry McKee has termed this pattern a "subsistence triangle," wherein the food supply for individuals enslaved on plantations came from three main sources: enslaver-distributed rations, personal gardens of enslaved people, and the hunting and fishing activities conducted by enslaved individuals in their leisure time (McKee 1999:222). Zooarchaeological research on faunal remains from slave quarters has confirmed that enslaved individuals on plantations engaged in some subsistence activities, as the remains of pork and beef rations are generally found in combination with a varied component of wild game (Crader 1990).

Besides growing produce and keeping poultry, enslaved individuals relied on subsistence activities like small game hunting, fishing, and foraging to supplement their provisioned diets. Evidence of these pursuits can be found in faunal assemblages and in the plant remains excavated at sites of enslavement. Zooarchaeological remains may reveal what species of animals were eaten (wild vs. domestic) and in what proportions, which cuts of meat were eaten, and the relative age of the animal being consumed (e.g., lamb vs. mutton). Butchery marks, burnt bone, and fracture patterns may indicate how an animal was processed or cooked. However,

[31] For example, Thomas Jefferson provisioned his enslaved population at Monticello with beef, pork, fish, and bread (at varying intervals). Proteins such as beef or fish were rationed based on an individual's age and the type of labor he or she performed. Children generally received less food, with the exceptions being the nail boys or the spinning girls, who performed more labor (Jefferson 1824:135). At Mount Vernon, George Washington allocated rations of cornmeal, salted fish (shad or herring), pork, and occasionally beef and mutton (Atkins 1994:64).

archaeologists can only analyze that which can be excavated – i.e., certain cuts of meat (such as bacon or preserved meats) are boneless, and therefore will not show up in the archaeological record. Screening bias can also occur, as smaller, more delicate bone fragments can easily be sifted through a ¼ inch screen and missed, whereas more robust bones belonging to larger species are less likely to be lost in the screening process. Nonetheless, analyses of faunal assemblages can provide an abundance of information regarding the diet of the occupants of a site.

Macroplant remains such as nuts, peach and cherry pits, and fruit seeds excavated at sites of enslavement may demonstrate evidence of both plant foraging and gardening activities, and pollen analysis can further elucidate the kinds of fruits, vegetables, other plants, and possible spices that enslaved individuals were consuming (Raymer 1996; Mrozowski, Franklin, and Hunt 2008; Trigg and Jacobucci 2010; Bowes 2011). Additionally, artifacts including metal fishhooks, fishing spears, fishing and seine weights, lead shot, and gunflints have been discovered in multiple enslaved contexts and may represent fishing and hunting pursuits. The presence of lead shot and gunflints may indicate that some enslaved individuals had access to firearms that were used for hunting purposes.[32] Although it may seem unusual, documentary and archaeological evidence confirm that on multiple plantations, certain enslaved individuals (usually men who were trusted by the enslaver) were allowed the use of firearms for hunting wild game, both for their own personal use and for providing their enslavers with wild game. Records demonstrate

[32] For example, excavations at Mount Vernon's House for Families revealed numerous gunflints and 124 pieces of lead shot (Pogue and White 1991:201). George Washington recorded numerous payments to an enslaved worker, Tom Davis, for waterfowl and game that Davis hunted with his dog, a Newfoundland named Gunner (Custis 1860:458). Davis clearly had access to firearms for hunting, and it is possible that other enslaved men at Mount Vernon also had access. Gunflints and lead shot have also been found at multiple sites occupied by enslaved laborers at Montpelier and Monticello.

that, at least on some plantations, enslaved men were compensated for the wild game that they procured for their enslaver's household.

Food Procurement and the Dialectics of Power on Plantations

That certain enslaved individuals had access to firearms, while others did not, highlights how power was negotiated in regard to food procurement. Enslavers used food or access to food as a way to control their enslaved population. Individuals who were allowed the time and the supplies necessary to go hunting or fishing were implicitly given these special permissions in exchange for their good behavior and their labor. The same can be said regarding the allocation of personal garden plots to enslaved people. Enslavers often discussed the merits (and disadvantages) of allowing enslaved individuals to have their own gardens in agricultural journals. Some believed that giving enslaved individuals plots of land for gardening was beneficial – it allowed them to grow their own produce, deterred them from running away and self-emancipating, and reduced the amount of food necessary for enslavers to provide through rations. It also provided enslaved laborers with a means to make money – at some plantations (including Monticello, Montpelier, and Mount Vernon) enslavers purchased vegetables, eggs, or poultry from their enslaved laborers, and sometimes allowed them to sell their produce at the local market and keep their earnings.

However, other enslavers believed that enslaved people should not be allowed to grow their own crops or sell them because they had no rights to possess property or earn money, and this would encourage a "spirit of trafficking" (*Southern Agriculturist* 1833:286). Additionally, these enslavers thought that any free time an enslaved person had should be spent resting for work the next day and allowing them a plot of land would encourage them to expend energy cultivating it (energy that could be saved for labor claimed by the enslaver). Finally, by limiting

the enslaved population's access to food sources outside of the rations he provided, the enslaver attempted to increase his own control over those he enslaved by forcing them to rely solely upon him for foodstuffs. Thus, the enslaver was able to withhold or reduce rations in order to gain more control through the threat of starvation.

Both the procurement and the consumption of food may be considered socially charged behavior (McKee 1999:227). Enslavers used food as a way to punish enslaved people, but also as a way to reward them. Food could function as a way to motivate or to subordinate (McKee 1999:233). Rations may have been reduced as a punishment for bad behavior or may have been increased as a reward or incentive for completing larger amounts labor, such as during harvest time. Increased amounts of food as well as provisions of alcohol marked the holiday week between Christmas and New Year and functioned as a way for enslavers to keep their enslaved populations from becoming too rebellious. According to Frederick Douglass, the holidays were "among the most effective means, in the hands of slaveholders, of keeping down the spirit of insurrection among the slaves" (Douglass 1855:253). He considered holidays to function as "conductors or safety valves to carry off the explosive elements inseparable from the human mind, when reduced to the condition of slavery," wherein "the slave's happiness is not the end sought, but rather, the master's safety" (Douglass 1855:254). By allowing enslaved individuals a week to feast, celebrate, and rest at the end of each year, enslavers were able to continue their system of oppression and control during the next, using the promise of the holidays to appease and placate them.

Conversely, activities related to food procurement and consumption could also be considered acts of resistance by enslaved individuals against their enslavers. For example, while enslavers may have reduced rations as a way to punish or control an enslaved person, that

enslaved person may have been able to procure food which he or she was not supposed to consume, either through hunting/foraging pursuits or by stealing food from the enslaver, therefore subverting the enslaver's attempts at control. In this way, food procurement and consumption provide an example for how the dialectics of power on the plantation functioned – the enslaver had "the power to dominate," and the enslaved people had "the power to act in the face of it" (Thomas 1998:531). Enslaved children, as well as adults, exercised their personal agency and resisted the demands of their enslavers. Children may not have consciously realized that they were actively resisting oppression by their enslavers, but they committed small acts of rebellion, nonetheless. In an interview with a Federal Writers' Project journalist, Wes Woods shared stories of his childhood during enslavement, including instances where he acted against the orders of his enslaver, a woman named Eliza Kennedy. Wes recalled:

> My mistus would not let me go fishing on Sunday, but I would slip off and go anyhow. I nearly always had a good string caught and I would tie them to a branch on the creek until the next day; then I would go fishing and in about two hours I would come back with the fish, and she would say, "Wes, you had good luck today;" and I would say, "Yes, mistus, I did," but never did I tell her when I caught the fish. (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:25-26)

Wes frequently ignored his enslaver's commands regarding fishing on Sundays and went fishing anyway. He learned that in order to do what he wanted (and to avoid punishment) he should simply stay silent. Wes never actively lied to his enslaver – he simply did not tell her the truth about when he caught the fish. As a young boy, Wes may not have been mature enough to understand that his actions constituted an act of covert resistance against his enslaver, and he may have just gone fishing on Sundays simply because he knew that he could do so without getting caught. Regardless, Wes' story illustrates how the institution of American slavery was, as John Blassingame (1972) described it, "one continual tug of war" between the enslaver and those whom they enslaved (as quoted in Thomas 1998:531). Although Eliza Kennedy attempted to

wield her power and control over Wes Woods by forbidding him from fishing on Sundays, Wes was able to resist this attempt by demonstrating his own agency in the situation and ultimately ignoring her commands.

Enslaved Children as Garden Hunters

It has now been established that children, at least by the age of five years old, are physically capable of fishing and other foraging activities, and that children over the age of five years old and under the age of fourteen years old are capable of hunting small game mammals. It has also been established, archaeologically, that enslaved individuals on plantations practiced a combination of subsistence activities including, hunting, trapping, fishing, and foraging in order to supplement their rationed diets. Much of this small mammal hunting and trapping may be considered "garden hunting," according to Linares' definition of the concept, as many of the small game mammals are animals that live in habitats near or around agricultural fields, such as woodchuck, squirrel, raccoon, and opossum.

I hypothesize that the presence of certain small game animals in faunal assemblages at sites of enslavement may be attributed to hunting and trapping activities conducted by enslaved children. Most children who were enslaved were given specific jobs and tasks by the age of three or four years old, and unless they were working in the enslaver's household, they would have had the most time available during the day to hunt, fish, and forage after completing their assigned tasks.[33] Depending on the size of the farm or plantation, the location, the labor system, and the main agricultural crops produced, enslaved children would be forced to work in the fields

[33] This hypothesis does not apply to enslaved children who were confined to a nursery building all day or who were fed communally. Rather, this hypothesis applies to enslaved children who lived on plantations or farms where there were no nursery buildings and who had a certain degree of autonomy that children living on plantations with nurseries did not.

as field hands between the ages of twelve and fourteen years old, though at some places they would begin fieldwork at eight years old or younger. Therefore, I posit that children between the ages of six and twelve years old may have been responsible for acquiring food to supplement their family's rations, and that these activities may be visible in the archaeological record.[34] I am not stating that all small game mammals or birds found in faunal assemblages within enslaved contexts should be attributed to the pursuits of enslaved children. I am, however, suggesting that archaeologists, at the very least, seriously consider the labor of enslaved children when questioning how certain wild animals were introduced to the quarter as possible food sources.

In "Food Supply and Plantation Social Order: An Archaeological Perspective," Larry McKee wrote, "Archaeology is indispensable, but it is not sufficient in itself to provide an understanding of the past…Anthropologically oriented archaeology must focus on the details of culture behavior behind these things" (1999:235). The majority of archaeologists studying plantation slavery have long ignored the impact of enslaved children on the material record, though the archival record contains a multitude of evidence that clearly demonstrates their potential impact. A thorough consideration of possible contributions that children during enslavement may have made to the plantation food supply is therefore warranted. This next section, then, is my attempt at creating a model for understanding these potential contributions. My questions include: How were children choosing which prey to pursue? What kinds of

[34] This hypothesis only applies to those situations wherein enslaved individuals or families were provided rations and were responsible for cooking their own meals. As mentioned in Chapter 2, on some large plantations, young enslaved children (and sometimes adults) had their meals prepared for them by an enslaved cook and ate communally. If that was the case, then my hypothesis here does not apply. However, on other plantations or farms, enslaved children and field hands may have had their midday meals communally, but in the evening after the workday, dinner would have been cooked and consumed with one's family, in separate cabins. In short, my hypothesis applies to situations wherein an enslaved family (or a group of individuals living together) is responsible for preparing and cooking a meal by themselves and for themselves.

animals are most likely to be captured and/or killed by children? What kinds of evidence might suggest that children were the individuals providing these sources of food, rather than enslaved adults? By asking these questions, I hope to demonstrate the myriad possibilities for how archaeologists might more seriously consider the roles of enslaved children in the interpretation of plantation archaeology and the archaeology of enslavement in the United States.

The past can never be fully understood or reconstructed by studying the artifacts and materials that are preserved in the material record, "but it is only in reaching for such a goal that we can begin to fulfill the potential of historical archaeology to provide us with a more complete view of the past" (McKee 1999:235). Obviously, I cannot prove that enslaved children were the individuals responsible for hunting the squirrels that may have provided their families with meat for stew at dinner. It is impossible for an archaeologist to state (with absolute certainty) who provided a specific animal whose remains have been excavated at a site. Archaeologists simply assume that an adult was responsible, and generally, they will assume it was a man. Why would an enslaved man have more time during the day to hunt a small creature than a woman, or a child? In other words, why is it safe to assume things were done by men, but when we assume those same things could have been done by women and children, it is suddenly controversial? Gender and age biases are often so entrenched in our culture that they are perceived as universal truths or obvious facts, but they are neither of those things. In order to pursue a more complete understanding of the past, archaeologists must be more critical of the interpretations that they create and the reasoning behind them.

The idea of interpreting faunal remains as possible archaeological evidence of children's activities is fairly recent, and the majority of archaeologists including children in their interpretations of faunal material are women (Wilkie 2000; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005; Ruttle

2010; Galle 2020). More specifically, historical archaeologists have considered the role of enslaved children in food procurement activities at plantation sites. In their work at Clifton Plantation in the Bahamas, Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth suggested that enslaved children could be understood as "economic producers," "obviously situated to be important contributors to a household's subsistence economy" (Wilkie 2000:108; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005:225). Enslaved children were not required to work at Clifton Plantation, and the archaeologists hypothesized that the small panfish remains found at the quarters as well as shellfish remains could have been attributed to children's fishing pursuits (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005:240). Ethnographic evidence supports this interpretation, as Wilkie and Farnsworth observed a group of Bahamian children (aged eight to ten years old) successfully fishing off a jetty using only a hook and line and no bait (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005:239). Similarly, Jillian Galle interpreted an abundance of shellfish remains at a quarter site at Stewart Castle Estate in Jamaica as possible evidence of children's contributions (2020). She proposed that the enslaved families mainly consumed shellfish acquired by children and sold the larger, highly sought-after fish caught by adults at the local market for cash which allowed them to purchase fashionable luxury goods. Galle noted that "children's labor was critical for household economies," and "enslaved children who survived infancy contributed to household economies through foraging and gardening activities" (2020).

The research conducted by Wilkie and Farnsworth in the Bahamas and Galle in Jamaica provides a substantial argument for considering enslaved children as contributors to their families. This previous work has focused on children's fishing and shellfish foraging activities, largely due to the location of the sites and the resources available nearby. There has not yet been a serious consideration of enslaved children as contributors at plantation sites in the United

States, where marine resources are typically less accessible and terrestrial mammals are more prevalent. The model that I create here is an endeavor to better understand the kinds of animals that enslaved children in the Upper South would have been most likely to acquire as food sources to supplement a rationed diet. Children during enslavement were active and capable individuals – they were not helpless or idle. By viewing children in this way, it becomes easier to acknowledge and identify the numerous and obvious ways in which they may have impacted the archaeological record.

Context and Methodology

In order to test the hypothesis that enslaved children between the ages of five and fourteen years old may have been responsible for the acquisition of certain animals for purposes of consumption, I will first consider the numerous species of wild animals present in faunal assemblages at three Virginia plantations: Montpelier, President James Madison's plantation located in Orange County; Monticello, President Thomas Jefferson's plantation located in Albemarle County; and Mount Vernon, President George Washington's plantation located in Fairfax County. I have chosen these three plantations specifically because they are all located in Virginia and largely because they have each had extensive zooarchaeological analysis conducted on the faunal assemblages excavated from their enslaved contexts.[35] Dates for the faunal assemblages range from the late 1750s to the early 1790s (Mount Vernon); the last quarter of the

[35] It must be noted that because these plantations were the homes of U.S. presidents who enslaved hundreds of individuals, and because of the wealth and size of each plantation, the results here may be biased toward larger plantation settings. And because of the significance of these enslavers as early U.S. presidents, there is more funding available for conducting archaeological excavations and analyses than what is available at smaller plantation or farm sites. However, I believe an analysis of the wild species represented at the enslaved quarters at these plantations and a consideration of the role of enslaved children in regard to these assemblages is still a worthwhile pursuit.

18th century to the first quarter of the 19th century (Monticello); and the late 1810s to the late 1830s (Montpelier).

The goal of this experiment is to create a model for understanding the likelihood of whether a child would be able (both physically and in terms of access and opportunity) to hunt or trap a specific animal, in order to determine which specimens in a faunal assemblage from an enslaved context may be associated with enslaved children's activities. Therefore, I aim to present this section with some general knowledge regarding life for enslaved people living on large plantations in the Upper South but will not discuss specific primary source documentation here. This model uses three sources of information: general knowledge about slavery in the Upper South; ethnographic research on children's foraging activities in contemporary society; and the behavioral and ecological traits of the specific animals identified in the faunal assemblages examined here. The animals that I discuss in this chapter were identified by zooarchaeologists conducting analyses on faunal remains at Montpelier (Copperstone 2014; Oliver 2017; Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021), Monticello (Crader 1984, 1989, 1990), and Mount Vernon (Bowen 1993; Atkins 1994; Bowen et al. 2015).[36]

Generally, enslaved field laborers at each of the three plantations worked according to the gang system, and this applies to the material from the Field Quarters Complex (including the Tobacco Barn) at Montpelier. However, the faunal assemblages from the South Yard and Stable Quarters at Montpelier would have been associated with enslaved domestic workers and enslaved skilled laborers who worked in the stable or garden, respectively. Buildings o, r, s, and t

[36] As I stated in Chapter 1, nursery buildings and the use of troughs to communally feed enslaved children were uncommon in the Upper South. Additionally, there is no evidence that these practices were ever implemented at Mount Vernon, Monticello, and Montpelier, meaning that it is likely that the enslaved children who lived at those respective places would have had greater opportunities to engage in garden hunting, fishing, and foraging activities.

on Mulberry Row at Monticello served as dwellings for enslaved domestic workers or skilled artisans, and the materials at Mount Vernon were located in the House for Families, which also housed enslaved domestic workers and craftspeople. The system of labor, the work schedules of the enslaved individuals, and the locations of the quarters are all important factors when considering which individuals were in a better position to procure certain animals for food by engaging in hunting, trapping, or fishing activities. These factors also potentially affect the capabilities and choices of the enslaved children living in each of these locations, as the occupations of their parents and the locations of the quarters would have potentially influenced the choices and actions of children.

The categories of animals that will be discussed in this chapter include wild mammals, wild birds, fish and shellfish, and amphibians and reptiles. Domesticated birds and mammals (livestock) are not discussed here because they are not relevant to the question of hunting, fishing, or trapping. Additionally, I purposely do not include commensal mammals such as cats, dogs, mice, and rats in this discussion because these are animals that were not usually consumed at this time and place.[37] Finally, I will only discuss taxa that have been identified to the taxonomic rank of species. If an animal is not identifiable to that level, it is not possible to consider the very specific behavioral and ecological traits associated with that animal. However, taxa identified to the taxonomic level of family or genus may be discussed, in some cases.

[37] I also do not discuss weasels, moles, shrews, and mink because it is unclear whether they were considered food items, and also because zooarchaeologists have categorized them as commensal animals when discussed in the context of slave quarters (Bowen et al. 2015; Andrews, Bowen, and Atkins 2018). However, this does not mean that they were definitely not eaten.

Wild Mammals (Possible Food)

First, I will focus on the category of wild mammals that were possible food sources. Wild animals excavated within or around the quarters for enslaved people at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon include:

1. Hares and jackrabbits (*Lepus* sp.), cottontails (*Sylvilagus* sp.), and eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)
2. Squirrels (*Sciurus* sp.), eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), eastern fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), and red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)
3. Woodchuck (*Marmota monax*)
4. Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)
5. Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)
6. Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*)
7. Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)
8. White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

In order to consider which animals may have been hunted by enslaved children, it is necessary to narrow down the list of possibilities, beginning with size. Due to their small stature and still-developing musculature, it is highly unlikely that a child or even a group of children would be able to pursue and kill the largest of the wild mammals identified in the assemblages – white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). White-tailed deer in Virginia can measure (at shoulder height) from 2.95 to 3.4 feet tall and reach lengths of 4.39 to 6.7 feet. Bucks can weigh from 200-300 pounds and does can weigh from 150 to 250 pounds (Virginia DWR 2023). Additionally, deer would have been hunted using firearms, weapons that only a few, highly trusted enslaved adult men were allowed access to for hunting purposes. Enslaved children would not have been given access to any firearms. Therefore, it is unlikely that children are responsible for the presence of white-tailed deer remains in the faunal assemblages.

While white-tailed deer may be the most obvious animal that children would not have been capable of hunting, it is not immediately apparent whether children may have been responsible for catching the other (mostly small) wild animals commonly found in enslaved

contexts. In order to better understand the constraints or opportunities that affected enslaved children's decisions regarding small game hunting, one might consider the behavioral and ecological traits of the animals in question. Drawing from Linares' 1976 article, I created a table compiling these behaviors and traits to ascertain which attributes are the most important to consider in regard to enslaved children's ability to garden hunt (Appendix B). The table includes information about whether the animal is primarily diurnal or nocturnal, habitat, diet, size range (in length and in weight), and other behavioral attributes, e.g., solitary or social; aggressive, skittish, or docile; slow-moving or swift. "The habits and physical properties of prey animals must affect humans' access to them. Small animals are broadly equivalent with respect to protein content and package size, but they differ tremendously with respect to handling costs, the number of individuals that can feasibly be harvested at once, and the long-term price of heavy exploitation" (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000:42). In addition to habits and physical properties, the habitats or natural territories of prey animals also affect humans' access to them. For enslaved children in particular, the spatial organization of animal habitats in relation to the areas that children were allowed to enter on the plantation landscape would have greatly affected the encounter rates between children and specific animals. Considering all of the behavioral and ecological traits associated with a specific animal will aid in understanding the likelihood or probability of a child's ability to hunt, trap, or dispatch the animal.[38]

The first behavioral trait is concerned with the time when a specific animal is most active, and when humans are most likely to encounter this animal. Generally, enslaved children in the

[38] For some (if not all) of these small mammals, a child may have been able to catch and even kill the animal on his or her own or with the help of other children, but may not have had the knowledge, skill, or strength necessary to process the animal to prepare it for cooking. This is to be expected and does not contradict the notion that children were active and capable garden hunters.

antebellum South would have had the most time to hunt or forage during the daytime. Although children began working as young as three years old doing simple tasks like gathering sticks for kindling or pulling weeds in the yard, they would have also had time to themselves (supervised or unsupervised) after completing these tasks. Their parents were either field hands working in the agricultural fields or domestic workers in the enslaver's house and usually did not see their children until the evening. Depending on the season, enslaved field hands could work anywhere from eight to sixteen hours a day, and enslaved domestic workers were required to always be available to the enslaver or enslaver's family. Adults would not have had much free time during the day except for the one day off that they were allowed each week, usually Saturday or Sunday. However, adults would generally hunt or fish at night, if they had the energy. Archival documentation indicates that while children were allowed to explore the plantation landscape during the daytime, in the evening they only left the immediate vicinity of the quarters when accompanying an adult. It is unlikely that children would be hunting or trapping nocturnal animals by themselves, though this may depend on the animal in question, and its other behavioral and ecological attributes.

Eastern Cottontail (Sylvilagus floridanus)

Eastern cottontail rabbits were represented at all three plantations.[39] Eastern cottontails are nocturnal, but they are also considered crepuscular animals, meaning that they are active during twilight. Eastern cottontails are active in the dawn or early morning (matutinal) as well as during dusk (vespertine) (Mikita 1999). There is a fairly high likelihood that children would have encountered rabbits at sunrise or at some time before it became entirely dark, at which time they

[39] Eastern cottontails were found at the South Yard and Stable Quarter at Montpelier (though members of the family *Lepus* were found at all four quartering sites there), at all five of the quarter sites at Monticello, as well as at the House for Families at Mount Vernon.

were generally not allowed to leave the area around the quarters unless they were with an adult. Eastern cottontails live in edge environments between woods and open grasslands, so they would have been easily accessible to children on plantations. Plantations were generally rural because of the necessity of having enough land for agricultural crops, and rabbits are herbivores that may feed on cultivated crops (as well as herbaceous plants). Cottontails are small animals less than 18 inches long and weighing no more than three pounds (Mikita 1999). The physiological constraints of children would not be an issue in regard to trapping or catching cottontails. Eastern cottontails are solitary creatures that move very quickly, at speeds of up to 18 miles per hour. Only a very determined individual would be able to catch a cottontail by chasing it down (though this method was not uncommon, according to documentary records).

Other methods for catching an eastern cottontail without firearms include setting traps like simple snares, deadfalls, box traps, or rabbit gums. Rabbit gums were made of hollowed out logs (often from a gum tree) or a box with a door that snapped shut when a rabbit took the bait placed inside (Sexton 2012:81). Weapons that could be made from easily accessible materials, such as slingshots, heavy sticks used as clubs, and blow guns or pop guns (made from cane or elder) were also utilized for hunting small game. Finally, the eastern cottontail rabbit matches Linares' description of animals that were commonly pursued in garden hunting – small animals that live in edge environments and feed on agricultural crops. Therefore, I posit that eastern cottontail rabbits were one of the species that enslaved children would have been capable of acquiring and contributing as a supplement to a rationed diet.

Eastern Gray Squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis)

The eastern gray squirrel was also present at all three plantations.[40] This animal is active during the daytime (diurnal) and lives in dense forests of around 100 acres (Lawniczak 2002). As eastern gray squirrels are herbivores that eat both wild plants and cultivated crops, they would have been active in wooded areas near agricultural fields – ideal prey for garden hunters. These squirrels are small – 15 to 20 inches long – and weigh less than two pounds, so children would have little difficulty in regard to the size of the creatures (Lawniczak 2002). However, like the eastern cottontail rabbit, eastern gray squirrels can move very quickly, and in addition, are agile tree climbers. Gray squirrels are both more aggressive and more cosmopolitan than fox or red squirrels. It is unlikely that a child would be able to catch an eastern gray squirrel without a trap or a weapon. The methods that children may have utilized to hunt squirrel are similar to those used for hunting rabbits. Generally, children would probably use snares or deadfalls to trap squirrels, though skilled individuals would be able to successfully hunt them using a slingshot. Enslaved children would have had access to these squirrels, the opportunity to hunt them, and the physical capability to incapacitate them.

Eastern Fox Squirrel (Sciurus niger)

The eastern fox squirrel was only identified at the Stable Quarter at Montpelier (though individuals identified as members of the family Sciuridae and genus Sciurus were found at other quarter sites at Montpelier and at Mount Vernon). Like the eastern gray squirrel, the fox squirrel is diurnal and can be found in deciduous or mixed forests (Fahey 2001). The two species are known to coexist and overlap in diet and nest sites (Edwards, Heckel, and Guynn 1998:354). The

[40] The eastern gray squirrel specifically was found in all of the quarter sites except for the South Yard, the Tobacco Barn Quarter, and the Field Quarter at Montpelier, because remains at those sites were only identified to the level of family (Sciuridae) or genus (Sciurus).

eastern fox squirrel is slightly larger on average than the eastern gray squirrel, weighing up to three pounds, at most (Fahey 2001). Though slightly different in size, children would have been as capable as hunting the eastern fox squirrel as they were the eastern gray squirrel, despite its lack of representation in the faunal assemblages discussed. The eastern fox squirrel is also known to eat cultivated crops, such as corn (one of the principal crops at Montpelier) and therefore, is an excellent target for children engaged in garden hunting.

Red Squirrel (Tamiasciurus hudsonicus)

The red squirrel, like the eastern fox squirrel, was only present at Montpelier's Stable Quarter. Red squirrels are significantly smaller than gray squirrels. They are only 10-15 inches in length and weigh less than one pound (Rubin 2012). Although red squirrels can be found in a variety of forests, they prefer those with conifer seeds and interlocking canopies, so are more likely to be found in undisturbed forests and in higher altitudes. Red squirrels are solitary, highly territorial animals and can be aggressive when cornered (Rubin 2012). They are primarily herbivores that eat conifer seeds and mushrooms and are extremely selective in their foraging behaviors (Rubin 2012). Red squirrels do not eat cultivated crops. Their habitat and their dietary preferences suggest that any individuals living on a plantation would need to venture deep into a forest away from agricultural fields in order to hunt them. Red squirrels cannot be hunted in a garden environment. Considering the habitat, behavior, and dietary preferences of this species, it would be improbable for children during enslavement to pursue and acquire red squirrels.

Woodchuck (Marmota monax)

Besides squirrels and rabbits, woodchucks (also known as groundhogs, marmots, and whistle pigs) were identified in multiple faunal assemblages at Montpelier (in all quarters except the South Yard) and were also identified at Building s at Monticello. They were not present in

the House for Families assemblage at Mount Vernon. Woodchucks are active during the daytime and inhabit dens or burrows in fields, pastures, and low-elevation forests (Tobias 2011). They are solitary creatures that can be timid or shy of humans, and they are quite a bit larger than rabbits or squirrels, measuring 16 to 26 inches in length, and weighing from 4 to 13 pounds (Tobias 2011). Woodchucks may have been caught using snares, deadfalls, or box traps, as they are generally too large to dispatch with a slingshot. Their habitat aligns with the areas around plantations, and they have been known to feed on garden crops, making woodchucks a likely choice for children trapping animals during the daytime.

Muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus)

Muskrat was only identified in Building t at Monticello. They are primarily nocturnal animals but are also crepuscular, most active from mid-afternoon until just after dusk (Newell 2000). Muskrats are relatively small animals, weighing four pounds at most. They live together in families in wet environments (wetlands, marshes, swamps, ponds, or lakes) in bank burrows or in nests located in shallow water (Newell 2000). Although it is entirely possible that there were ponds, lakes, or swamps located on or near plantations, the behavior of the muskrats including their group living situation, semi-aquatic nature, and nocturnal schedule heavily suggest that the possibility of a child or group of children pursuing muskrats alone or without the help of an adult is doubtful, but not totally impossible.[41]

Raccoon (Procyon lotor)

Raccoon bones were found at the Tobacco Barn Quarter and Stable Quarter at Montpelier and at the House for Families at Mount Vernon. Raccoons are nocturnal animals that can live in

[41] Children may have been able to set traps for muskrats if there were known habitats in the area. Curiously, at Monticello, there does not seem to have been any likely places for muskrats to live, so the question regarding how the muskrat was introduced into the quarter remains.

a wide range of habitats as long as there is ready access to a water source (Fox 2001). They are omnivorous and opportunistic scavengers, and consume wild fruits and plants as well as cultivated crops, fish, rodents, birds, insects, frogs, and carrion (Fox 2001). They are quite cosmopolitan and highly adaptable to human habitats where they can easily forage through kitchen middens or trash receptacles for food scraps. Raccoons can weigh anywhere from 4 to 23 pounds – larger than any of the other wild mammals discussed thus far (Fox 2001). They are able to move quickly and are adept at swimming and climbing. Because raccoons are nocturnal creatures, can move, climb, and swim quickly, and are potentially too large for a child or children to handle confidently, it is fair to assume that children were not hunting or trapping raccoons by themselves.

Opossum (Didelphis virginiana)

Opossum remains were present at all three plantations – in two quarter sites at Montpelier, four sites at Monticello, and in the House for Families at Mount Vernon. Like raccoons, opossums are nocturnal animals that often inhabit areas near humans, as long as there is access to a water source (Martina 2013). They are also omnivorous and opportunistic in their diet, which varies based on season and habitat location, but includes both plants and small animals as well as carrion (Martina 2013). Opossums are about the same size as woodchucks. They are solitary animals and are known for their defensive behavior of 'playing dead' when feeling threatened. However, they are also skilled at climbing and often climb trees in order to escape a predator or to find food. As with raccoons, based on their nocturnal behavior and their climbing ability, it is unlikely that children during enslavement were pursuing opossums without adult help. It is possible though, that an older child who encountered a wandering opossum purely by chance may have been able to quickly dispatch the animal with a heavy stick.

Striped Skunk (Mephitis mephitis)

Finally, striped skunk was only identified in the Tobacco Barn Quarter at Montpelier (though individuals belonging to the inclusive Mephitidae Family were found in the Field Quarter and Stable Quarter). Striped skunks live in a variety of habitats, including woodlands and grassy plains, and in cultivated areas (Kiiskila 2014). Similar to raccoons and oppossums, striped skunks are omnivores that will eat plants, small animals, and cultivated crops such as corn (Kiiskila 2014). Children probably did not hunt skunks for a number of reasons. The first and most obvious reason is that skunks will spray a foul-smelling musk when threatened or scared, which is a good deterrent for anyone attempting to hunt them, not just children. Skunks are also nocturnal creatures and children generally were not allowed to leave the quarters and go out alone at night. Finally, in order to eat skunk meat, the skunk must be dispatched quickly and in a way that does not frighten them and cause them to spray their musk. If the skunk sprays its malodorous musk, it can contaminate the meat, giving it a bad flavor and also spreading the bacteria kept in its anal glands, possibly poisoning the meat. Children are not generally known for being quiet, though a few older children may have been skilled enough to correctly dispatch a skunk. Nevertheless, it is more likely the case that skunks were pursued by more skilled and accomplished adult hunters, rather than children.[42]

[42] While some scholars interpret skunk remains in enslaved contexts as representative of possible food sources, others consider them to be commensals (Cargill, Gibbs, and Lieber 1980; Bowen et al. 2015; Andrews, Bowen, and Atkins 2018; Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021). However, even if the skunks were not eaten, one must consider how the animals came to be interred at the sites. It is unlikely that the skunks simply wandered in and died in a context with other animal remains that did serve as food, making it more probable that the skunk remains are representative of wild food sources.

Conclusion: Small Mammals

An analysis of the behavioral and ecological traits of small game mammals found in faunal assemblages from enslaved contexts at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon suggests that the most significant factors for enslaved children with regard to hunting decisions were the time when an animal was most active (diurnal vs. nocturnal) and the average size of an animal. Additionally, an animal's habitat would have been another important factor to consider. On most plantations in the Upper South and the Lowcountry that did not rely heavily on enslaved children's labor, children were allowed access to many areas of the land given that they did not interfere with other labor being conducted. They were not allowed to play in the agricultural fields (and were only there when working as field hands or toting food or water to the field hands) and were not allowed near or within the enslaver's home, or the Big House. Children knew to stay within the boundaries of the plantation grounds or else risk getting into trouble with either their enslavers, other (enslaver) neighbors, or patrollers. They would have had regular access to meadows, forests, creeks, ponds, streams, and lakes as long as these areas were within the land boundaries of the plantation.

The wild mammals that enslaved children were most likely to pursue were small, diurnal mammals that lived within the plantation boundaries in locations that children were able to easily access (Table 2). On plantations in the Upper South, these animals include eastern cottontails, eastern gray squirrels, eastern fox squirrels, and woodchucks. Nocturnal and cosmopolitan animals like raccoons and opossums may have wandered near the quarters after dark searching for food waste, and children may have encountered them there on occasion. Enslaved children would have utilized a variety of methods for catching these animals, likely including homemade weapons such as slingshots or heavy sticks and a variety of different kinds of traps that are rarely

found in archaeological contexts because they were constructed from organic materials that do not survive in the material record.

Table 2. Small Game Mammals Likely Hunted by Children

Species	Possible Methods of Capture/Dispatch
Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)	Chase; traps such as snares, deadfalls, box traps, or rabbit gums; slingshots; heavy sticks used as clubs; blow guns or pop guns
Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)	Traps such as snares and deadfalls; slingshots
Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)	Traps such as snares and deadfalls; slingshots
Woodchuck (*Marmota monax*)	Traps such as snares, deadfalls, and box traps

Wild Birds (Possible Food)

Many different species of wild birds were found in enslaved contexts at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon. These include:

1. Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*), redhead (*Aythya americana*), ring-necked duck (*Aythya collaris*), greater scaup (*Aythya marila*), and lesser scaup (*Aythya affinis*)
2. Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) and American widgeon (*Mareca americana*)
3. Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
4. Ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)
5. Common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)
6. Common merganser (*Mergus merganser*)
7. Passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*)[43]
8. Common pigeon or rock dove (*Columba livia*)
9. Mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*)
10. Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
11. Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)
12. Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)
13. American coot (*Fulica americana*)
14. American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)
15. Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

[43] Passenger pigeons (Ectopistes migratorius) became extinct in 1914.

Twenty different species of wild bird were identified in the faunal assemblages, and all of the species are represented at the House for Families at Mount Vernon except for the mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), which was identified at Montpelier's Stable Quarter. Monticello had the lowest representation of wild birds. For the sake of brevity, it is necessary to organize and discuss some of these species according to their taxonomic family or genus. However, more information specific to each species can be found in Appendix C.

Family Anatidae: ducks, geese, and swans

Eleven different species of waterfowl belonging to six genera in the family Anatidae were identified at Mount Vernon's House for Families.[44] The species belonging to the Anatidae family that are discussed here are all classified as ducks and may share similar behavioral and ecological traits that can be considered in regard to enslaved children's hunting activities. Although an in-depth discussion of each species would likely be more accurate than considering family or genera, for the purposes of this chapter and this dissertation, a more general discussion will suffice.[45] In this case, the differences in the habitats and behaviors of species belonging to the same genus are so minor as to not impact the interpretations. Therefore, members of the family *Anatidae* may be evaluated as a group, rather than by individual species. A more comprehensive discussion concerning ducks in regard to children's hunting capabilities will be provided at the end of this section.

[44] Additionally, an individual belonging to the family *Anatidae* was found at Monticello's Building o, and individuals belonging to the genus *Anas* were found at Montpelier's South Yard and Stable Quarter.

[45] Information recorded in Appendix C regarding diet, habitat, and behavior is limited to the winter season (for migratory birds in Virginia).

Diving ducks (genus Aythya, family Anatidae)

Five species belonging to the genus *Aythya* were identified at the House for Families: canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*), redhead (*Aythya americana*), ring-necked duck (*Aythya collaris*), greater scaup (*Aythya marila*), and lesser scaup (*Aythya affinis*). These five species are classified as diving ducks (commonly called pochards) because they dive underwater to find or catch food. Johnsgard (1961) described the tribe Aythyini as "a remarkably homogeneous group of species, behaviourally [sic] as well as anatomically" (as cited in Livezey 1996:74). Therefore, it is possible to evaluate these five species present at Mount Vernon as a group.

Canvasbacks, redheads, ring-necked ducks, greater scaups, and lesser scaups are migratory birds that fly north during breeding season and south during the winter. All five species can be found in Virginia (specifically the Chesapeake area) during the winter months (Bowen et al 2015:16). These five species of duck are diurnal animals that inhabit freshwater wetlands, marshes, ponds, and slow-moving rivers, though the greater scaup inhabits more brackish coastal bays and shorelines during the winter.[46] In order to dive efficiently, the ducks have legs that are set far back and far apart, which makes it more difficult to walk on land (Bowen et al 2015:16). These five species typically keep to the water, though ring-necked ducks, greater scaups, and lesser scaups will come to the shore to nest. Because diving ducks are powerful swimmers, fast flyers, and prefer aquatic environments to the land, it is unlikely that enslaved children would have had the access or ability to hunt them.

[46] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Greater Scaup."

Genus Mareca (family Anatidae)

Two species from the genus *Mareca* were identified in the House for Families faunal assemblage – gadwall (*Mareca strepera)* and American wigeon (*Mareca americana)*.[47] Gadwall and American wigeons can be found in Virginia during their winter migration. They are dabbling ducks, meaning that they feed on the surface of the water by tipping themselves forward into the water, as opposed to diving ducks. Their legs are centrally located on their bodies, making it easier to walk on land and feed on agricultural crops and other vegetation, but they are less suited for powerful swimming.[48]

Gadwall inhabit small bodies of water, brackish marshes, and flooded agricultural fields with an abundance of vegetation. They tend to feed in deeper water than American wigeons and are known to steal food from diving ducks coming up to the surface of the water. Though both species nest on the ground away from the water, gadwall make their nests on islands within marshes, which offers greater protection from predators.[49] American wigeons inhabit freshwater marshes and lakes, saltwater bays, and sometimes agricultural fields (Taylor 2002). They are able to fly away quickly when disturbed, making it extremely unlikely for anyone to hunt them without firearms, as they can easily escape when they see a human approaching.[50] During the 18th and 19th centuries, both gadwall and American wigeons would have been incredibly difficult to hunt or capture without the use of firearms – historically, rifles or muskets.

[47] Gadwall and American wigeons were formerly placed in the genus *Anas*.
[48] John Kerr, n.d. USDA Forest Service. "Diver vs. Dabbler." https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/plants-animals/?cid=fsbdev2_038567
[49] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Gadwall."
[50] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: American Wigeon."

Common goldeneye (Bucephala clangula, family Anatidae)

Common goldeneyes are diving ducks that can be found in Virginia during the winter months. They inhabit marine or brackish waters but can also inhabit freshwater environments such as interior lakes or slow-moving rivers. Common goldeneyes are mostly carnivorous during the winter, feeding on small aquatic invertebrates such as crabs, shrimp, snails, and mollusks, but they also eat fish and insects (Dewey 2009b). They spend most of their time on the water, as (like other diving ducks) their back legs are beneficial for swimming but make it awkward to walk on land. They walk on land when traveling from the water to their nests, which they build in tree cavities.[51] Common goldeneyes are fast, flying at speeds of up to 45 miles per hour, and can dive underwater for up to 55 seconds (Dewey 2009b). They can be aggressive. As with the other ducks that have been previously discussed, there is a very low probability that enslaved children (or any person without access to firearms) would have been capable of hunting common goldeneyes.

Common merganser (Mergus merganser, family Anatidae)

Common mergansers are diving ducks that live in freshwater environments, such as lakes, as well as in forest areas near rivers and streams (Becker 2006). They are the largest North American inland ducks and are sometimes called fish ducks or sawbills due to their serrated bills which allow them to efficiently capture fish (including salmon, trout, shad, and chub) and other prey.[52] Found in Virginia during the winter months, common mergansers are excellent divers and can remain underwater for up to two minutes (Becker 2006). They spend most of their time in the water. Common mergansers typically nest in the crevices of trees up to 100 feet off the

[51] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Common Goldeneye."
[52] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Common Merganser."

ground and within one mile of water, though they sometimes nest in hollow logs, burrows, or chimneys.[53] It is extremely unlikely that enslaved children could have successfully hunted common mergansers, due to the duck's preference for keeping to the water and the heights of their nests. Additionally, the bird's distinctive serrated bill may have been a strong deterrent for any child who attempted to approach it.

Ruddy duck (Oxyura jamaicensis, family Anatidae)

Ruddy ducks are stiff-tailed ducks that migrate to Virginia in the winter. They inhabit coastal marshes and bays as well as freshwater wetlands, reservoirs, and lakes (Hall 2008). Ruddy ducks build their nests in dense vegetation near the water. Like other diving ducks, the ruddy duck is not well-suited for walking on land due to the position of their legs and have been described as "almost helpless" on land.[54] They fly at low heights, even during migration. However, they are extremely fast swimmers and divers, feeding on crustaceans, mollusks, and aquatic vegetation below the water's surface. Ruddy ducks protect themselves from predators by sinking below the surface of the water (Hall 2008). They can also be extremely aggressive toward each other and other species (especially during breeding season) and have been known to chase rabbits grazing on the shore.[55] The ruddy duck's defense mechanisms and sometimes aggressive behavior suggest that children probably did not hunt them.

Mallard (Anas platyrhynchose, family Anatidae)

The mallard is the most common species of duck in North America and arguably the most recognizable. They are found in Virginia year-round and are highly adaptable creatures that

[53] Ibid.
[54] Kenn Kaufman, n.d. Audubon Guide to North American Birds. "Ruddy Duck." https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/ruddy-duck
[55] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Ruddy Duck."

can thrive in many different environments. Mallards are dabbling ducks and can be found wetlands such as lakes, marshes, and bogs, as well as in more urban environments such as ponds in city parks or even backyard swimming pools. They create their nests on dry land near the water, under dense grasses or other vegetation.[56] Mallards are omnivorous and opportunistic feeders, eating plants, insects, and worms, as well as bread and junk foods that humans might feed them. They are unafraid of humans, and when they inhabit city or neighborhood parks and ponds, are often fed pieces of bread, birdseed, or fruit.[57] In urban environments such as parks, mallards can become quite comfortable around people. However, in more rural settings where duck hunting is more prevalent, they may be more cautious and alert to approaching humans. Additionally, mallards are able to fly away if threatened, and are extremely fast, flying at speeds of up to 55 miles per hour.[58] Despite their tame behavior in more urban environments, mallards in the 18th century were probably not hunted in city parks, but they were in more rural areas. This fact, combined with their ability to escape quickly, highly suggests that children were not actively engaged in hunting mallards.

Conclusion: Family Anatidae

The eleven identified species of duck found at Mount Vernon's House for Families as well as the unidentified species of duck at Monticello and Montpelier were most likely hunted by enslaved adult men with access to guns. Ducks, in general, are difficult to catch (and then dispatch) for a number of reasons. The majority of the duck species discussed in this section spent most of their time in the water, including those species who nested on land. Enslaved

[56] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Mallard."
[57] Though people frequently feed mallards bread, it is actually not good for them. Bread (and improper nutrition) can cause angel wing syndrome, which can result in wing deformities and may render the ducks flightless (Hitchcox 2021).
[58] Cornell, "All About Birds: Mallard."

children may have been able to access some of these aquatic habitats, including small lakes and ponds, slow-moving rivers and streams, and possibly even marshes and flooded agricultural fields. However, ducks are either strong swimmers, divers, or fliers (and sometimes all three) and can easily escape humans and other predators by flying or swimming away. Their speed and agility make it challenging for humans to catch them without using firearms, which was (and continues to be) the most popular method used for waterfowl hunting.[59] Therefore, it is highly unlikely that enslaved children were the individuals responsible for introducing ducks into the quarters.

Rock dove or common pigeon (Columba livia, family Columbidae)

Remains of one rock dove or common pigeon (also called a rock pigeon) were found in the House for Families assemblage. The bone from this assemblage was identified as belonging to either a rock dove or a domestic pigeon (Bowen et al. 2015:18). In the wild, rock doves can be found in rocky cliff crevices near the coast. Feral pigeons, however, can be found roosting in old barns or on the flat surfaces of buildings.[60] Rock doves feed on open ground and eat mostly seeds but also agricultural crops such as corn and oats. In the city, they eat human foods including bread and popcorn (Roof 2001). Though pigeons can sometimes be aggressive and peck when threatened, it seems feasible that enslaved children would have been able to successfully hunt them. On plantations, feral pigeons probably would have been easily accessible to children, as they inhabit agricultural buildings and feed on the ground. A child could easily dispatch a pigeon

[59] It has been established that highly trusted enslaved adult men were given access to firearms for the purpose of hunting. Ample evidence of this can be found the documentary record. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that some enslaved individuals had access to firearms which they used for hunting, though whether or not they were given explicit permission to use them is unknown. For examples see McKee (1999:226) and Thompson (1999:182).

[60] Feral pigeons are the descendants of domesticated pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*) that have returned to the wild.

with a slingshot while it foraged on the open ground. Pigeons could also be trapped using a baited box trap or caught with a net and then dispatched with a rock or heavy stick. Therefore, it is likely that enslaved children could have contributed rock doves or common pigeons to supplement a rationed diet.

Passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius, family Columbidae*)

Passenger pigeon remains were also identified in the House for Families assemblage. The population of passenger pigeons began decreasing in 1860 and the species was officially declared extinct in 1914. However, at the time the remains were deposited, passenger pigeon would have been plentiful in the United States. It was estimated that the species made up 25 to 40 percent of the total bird population of the U.S.[61] Passenger pigeons have been compared to mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*) in appearance and measured between 15 to 16 inches in length. They were migratory birds that inhabited deciduous forests and their diet consisted mainly of acorns, beechnuts, chestnuts, berries, and seeds that could be found in the forests.[62] Enslaved children on plantations would not have had much trouble finding passenger pigeons in a nearby forest. Netting was a popular way of hunting numerous passenger pigeons in a flock, and it is plausible that a group of children may have been able to net a few of the birds on their own. Additionally, as with rock doves, a child may have been able to take a pigeon down using a slingshot. Enslaved children were probably fairly capable of catching passenger pigeons due to the birds' abundance, size, and fairly accessible habitat.

[61] Smithsonian Institution, n.d. "The Passenger Pigeon."
[62] Ibid.

Mourning dove (Zenaida macroura, family Columbidae)

Remains of one mourning dove were found in the Stable Quarter at Montpelier.[63] Mourning doves are native to Virginia year-round and are most abundant in suburban and agricultural areas where humans have created suitable habitats (Emiley and Dewey n.d.). They are not bothered by humans and will nest in trees or the gutters and eaves of houses or other buildings.[64] Similar to common pigeons, the doves feed on open ground, mainly eating seeds, fruit, and cereal grains such as corn, millet, and oats. Mourning doves were probably quite common in plantation environments, as open agricultural fields and forest edges are their preferred habitat. The birds would have been highly accessible to children who were out on the grounds after finishing their chores or while watching the younger children. It is entirely feasible that enslaved children dispatched mourning doves in the same ways that they may have caught rock doves and passenger pigeons – by using a slingshot, net, or baited box trap.

Turkey (Meleagris gallopavo, family Phasianidae)

Turkey was represented at all three plantations –the House for Families, the Stable Quarter at Montpelier, and Building o at Monticello. Though the turkey found at the House for Families was considered domestic, it is not possible to make an osteological distinction between wild and domestic turkeys (Bowen 1993:17). For the purposes of this chapter, the turkey remains found at the three plantations will be considered wild. Wild turkeys are large game birds that dwell on the ground in forests and woodlands with openings such as pastures, orchards, and fields (McCullough 2001). They are diurnal animals. Turkeys are omnivorous and their diet mainly consists of acorns, nuts, seeds, and leaves, as well as insects and salamanders. Wild

[63] An individual belonging to the order Columbiformes was also found in the Stable Quarter.
[64] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Mourning Dove."

turkeys can be very wary of humans and have sharp eyesight and hearing. They are also extremely fast runners and fliers and can escape quickly if necessary (McCullough 2001). Although enslaved children would certainly have access to wild turkeys on a plantation, they were probably not hunting the birds due to their large size. Wild turkeys are the largest species of bird found in the faunal assemblages discussed in this chapter. Male turkeys are about four feet tall and can weigh up to 25 pounds, and female turkeys are also quite large, measuring three feet tall and weighing up to 12 pounds.[65] Wild turkeys, like ducks, were probably acquired by individuals with access to firearms – generally, highly trusted enslaved adult men. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that enslaved children were hunting wild turkey themselves.

Ruffed grouse (Bonasa umbellus, family Phasianidae)

Remains of ruffed grouse were found in assemblages from the House for Families.[66] They are medium-sized game birds that typically weigh between one and two pounds. Like wild turkeys, ruffed grouse are ground-dwelling birds, but dislike open areas and prefer more sheltered environments such as deciduous forests and dense thickets (Haupt 2001). They are diurnal and omnivorous, eating mostly berries, seeds, and vegetation. Ruffed grouse can be quite shy and difficult to find, as they can camouflage themselves under bushes and thick brush. When startled, the birds may quickly fly away. Enslaved children living on plantations with access to sheltered forests surely could have encountered ruffed grouse. However, a child would have to be observant and stealthy in order to spot grouse without startling it. Once the grouse was within close range, it would be totally plausible for a child to kill the bird with an accurate blow from a slingshot or rock. Enslaved children who possessed adequate hunting skills (able to stay silent,

[65] Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute, n.d. "Wild turkey."
[66] Wild turkey and ruffed grouse belong to the family *Phasianidae.* Butchered remains of another individual from the same family were found at Monticello's Building o.

approach slowly, and shoot or throw precisely) would have certainly been capable of hunting ruffed grouse and bringing the birds back to the quarters.

Northern bobwhite (Colinus virginianus)

Northern bobwhite is another species of game bird that was found in the House for Families. Also called Virginia quail, northern bobwhites are small, diurnal birds that spend most of their time on the ground. They can be found in agricultural fields, open forests, and grasslands.[67] Northern bobwhites are typically found in small groups and, like ruffed grouse, are shy around humans and use their camouflage to evade predators. When threatened, the birds will freeze to blend into their surroundings or fly away. Due to their small size (typically weighing around one-third of a pound) and accessible habitat, an enslaved child with the same hunting skills mentioned in regard to ruffed grouse would likely also have been successful in hunting northern bobwhite with a simple weapon such as a slingshot.

American coot (Fulica americana)

The House for Families cellar also contained the bone of an American coot, also known as a mud hen. American coots are migratory waterfowl that are often mistaken for ducks, but they actually belong to a different family of birds. American coots can be found in both freshwater and brackish wetland environments, including marshes, swamps, lakes, and ponds. They are typically found in water but can sometimes be seen walking on land and build their nests on floating platforms over the water. [68] Coots are omnivorous birds that primarily eat aquatic plants and small animals, but sometimes eat terrestrial plants and grains as well as insects (Bridgman 2003). When startled, American coots are incapable of immediate flight, and must

[67] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Northern Bobwhite."
[68] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: American Coot."

first run along the water in order to fly away. Although it is possible that enslaved children would have had access to the birds' habitat, it is unlikely that they would have been able to capture them because coots tend to spend most of their time in the water. As with ducks, it seems improbable that children were hunting American coots, and much more likely that enslaved adult men with firearms were the individuals hunting the birds.

American robin (Turdus migratorius)

American robin remains were also found in the House for Families.[69] Robins are migratory birds that appear in Virginia in early spring, at the end of February through the end of March as they travel north, though some robins live in Virginia year-round (Heiser 2015). They inhabit woodlands, fields, orchards, and gardens, and thrive in both agricultural and suburban areas near humans. Robins eat fruits and berries and forage on the ground for insects and earthworms. They build nests in trees, bushes, or even window ledges (Middlebrook 2001). They are very small perching birds and weigh less than one-fifth of a pound, around three ounces. Although a singular robin has very little meat, multiple robins could provide a decent meal or a smaller contribution to a main meal.[70] As robins typically inhabit environments near humans, enslaved children would have had ample opportunities to hunt robins and it seems likely that they could successfully dispatch the birds using slingshots while the birds foraged on the ground.

[69] Robins belong to the order Passeriformes. Remains of a passerine from the family *Corvidae* (ravens, crows, magpies, and jays) were found at Montpelier's Stable Quarter.

[70] Bowen et al. (2015) speculate that the robins found at Mount Vernon could have been "accidental visitors" or songbirds that were kept as pets (18). However, it is well-documented that people in the southern United States commonly ate robins during the 18th and 19th centuries and even into the 20th century, after it became illegal to hunt them without a permit. In Maryland and Virginia specifically, robins were "shot in immense numbers, especially in the spring migration; a robin pie being one of the delicacies of the season" (Langille 1895:479).

Great horned owl (Bubo virginianus)

Finally, the last wild bird species identified in the House for Families was great horned owl. These birds are medium-sized, primarily nocturnal but also crepuscular predators that inhabit both forests and areas around open fields (Dietrich 2013). Owls roost in tree branches or cavities, ledges, and sometimes human-built structures. They are carnivorous raptors with a diverse diet comprised of terrestrial vertebrates such as voles, shrews, squirrels, mice and other small rodents, as well as larger animals like hares and skunks. They also eat other birds, reptiles, fish, and even carrion.[71] Great horned owls are solitary and territorial creatures that can adapt easily to human-inhabited ecosystems (Dietrich 2013).

The owl bone from the House for Families probably did not come from an owl that was consumed by the enslaved inhabitants of the building. People typically do not eat owls for a number of reasons. Great horned owls are predators that are at the top of multiple food chains and are generally not preyed upon by other species (Dietrich 2013). Because the birds are carnivorous and sometimes eat carrion, the meat of an owl might have an unappealing flavor and may contain bacteria or toxins harmful to humans. Additionally, enslaved adults who went hunting at night would focus on capturing other meatier and tastier animals that they were able to acquire with dogs, rather than firearms. Owls would have been more difficult to hunt than other nocturnal animals such as opossums and raccoons. Furthermore, it is likely that hunting an owl would expend more energy than pursuing a terrestrial mammal and would also result in an inferior product (less meat with a strong flavor). Although there is evidence that certain Native American and First Nations peoples consumed great horned owl meat, it is still improbable that enslaved individuals were hunting the animal when there were other, more appealing sources of

[71] Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2019. "All About Birds: Great Horned Owl."

meat available (Kuhnlein and Humphries 2017a). Ultimately, there is no question that if enslaved adults were unlikely to seek out great horned owls, then enslaved children were almost certainly not hunting the birds.[72]

Conclusion: Wild Birds

A thorough evaluation of the behavioral and ecological traits of wild birds found in faunal assemblages from quarter sites at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon indicates that for enslaved children pursuing wild birds, the two most important factors were habitat and size. The time when a bird was most active was not as significant as it was when considering small mammals because all of the birds discussed in this section were active during the daytime, the exception being great horned owls. Enslaved children were unlikely to have hunted birds that predominately inhabited aquatic environments such as ponds, lakes, and marshes, ruling out all eleven species of duck as well as American coot. These birds (particularly at Mount Vernon) were known to have been hunted by enslaved adult men using rifles or muskets. Children would have been unable to approach the birds without startling them, assuming that they could even get close enough, as most of the ducks keep to the water. As for size, enslaved children were probably not pursuing wild turkeys, which are extremely large birds that may have been taller than some of the children. Even if a child were especially brave and attempted to approach the turkeys, they probably would not have been able to catch it, as turkeys are fast runners and strong fliers. Finally, great horned owls are nocturnal raptors that would have been difficult for

[72] Additionally, there may be cultural or religious reasons as to why enslaved people in particular would not have eaten owl. Pasierowska (2017) asserts that interviews from the WPA narratives indicate that many formerly enslaved individuals believed owls to be signs of bad luck, harbingers of death, and/or spiritual guides for the souls of the deceased. Although the WPA interviewees lived many years after those enslaved at Mount Vernon, it is possible that the enslaved people at Mount Vernon may have shared similar beliefs.

grown adults to hunt without firearms, so it is incredibly doubtful that children would have attempted to hunt them.

The wild birds that enslaved children in the Upper South were most likely to successfully hunt were small birds that lived within the plantation landscape and were easily accessible, meaning that they were either ground-dwelling or could often be found on the ground whilst foraging (Table 3). These birds would have been relatively easy to dispatch from a short distance through the use of rocks, slingshots, or heavy sticks. A child may also have been able to trap some of the birds with a baited box trap or by using a net. The probability of a child's success in hunting wild birds depended largely on access and work of capture. The birds that children were unlikely to pursue or incapable of capturing were also birds that would have been extremely difficult for full-grown adults to acquire without the use of firearms and had little to do with children's smaller stature or less-developed musculature. In conclusion, it is entirely plausible that children could have successfully acquired rock doves (common pigeons), passenger pigeons, mourning doves, ruffed grouse, northern bobwhites, and American robins on their own and introduced these birds into the quarters as contributions to a rationed diet.

Table 3. Wild Birds Likely Hunted by Children

Species	Possible Methods of Capture/Dispatch
Rock dove or common pigeon (*Columba livia*)	Slingshot; baited box trap, net, rock, heavy stick
Passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*)	Slingshot; baited box trap, net, rock, heavy stick
Mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*)	Slingshot; baited box trap, net, rock, heavy stick
Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)	Slingshot; rock; heavy stick
Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)	Slingshot; rock; heavy stick
American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)	Slingshot; rock

Fish and Shellfish

A number of fish and shellfish remains were found in assemblages at Montpelier (South Yard, Stable Quarter, Field Quarter, and Tobacco Barn) and Mount Vernon (House for Families). Crader (1989) notes that there were fish remains in Building s on Mulberry Row at Monticello but did not offer further explanation. Although some fish remains were able to be identified at the species level, others were only identified at the class, family, or genus level. Due to the fact that fish and shellfish are aquatic animals, certain factors that were important or significant when considering children's hunting capabilities in regard to terrestrial mammals and birds may not apply here. Therefore, fish and shellfish will be evaluated differently to better understand the possibilities of enslaved children's fishing activities (see Appendix D). Appendix D only includes the fish that were identified to species level with the exception of Atlantic cod, which was probably not caught in local waters.

The following families and species of fish and shellfish were found in the quarters for enslaved laborers at Montpelier and Mount Vernon:

1. Class Osteichthyes (bony fish)
2. Family *Cyprinidae* (carps and minnows)
3. Genus *Acipenser* (sturgeon)
4. Genus *Lepisosteus* (gar)
5. Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*)
6. Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*)
7. Family *Clupeidae*: American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*), and alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*)
8. Family *Ictaluridae*: channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) and white catfish (*Ameiurus catus*)
9. Family *Centrarchidae*: bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), redear sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*), and white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*)
10. Family *Esocidae*: chain pickerel (*Esox niger*)
11. Family *Moronidae*: white perch (*Morone americana*) and striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*)
12. Yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*)
13. Black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*)
14. Blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*)

At Montpelier, the majority of fish were identified only to the level of taxonomic family and are therefore discussed in this section in relation to the specific species of fish (from the House for Families) belonging to each respective family.

First, it is possible to rule out some fish and shellfish that were almost certainly not caught by enslaved children or that were not identified to species level and therefore cannot be adequately evaluated. Remains belonging to the class Osteichthyes (bony fish) were recovered at all four quarter sites at Montpelier and at the House for Families, but because the bones are simply categorized as "indeterminate bony fish" it is impossible to discuss them in any detail. Additionally, remains identified as members of the family *Cyprinidae* (carps and minnows) were found at Montpelier's Stable Quarter. *Cyprinidae* is the largest and most diverse fish family and possibly the largest family of vertebrates in general, so it is not possible to discuss the unidentified species at Montpelier except to note that the remains belong to freshwater fish. Finally, individuals belonging to the family *Catostomidae* (suckers) were present in the assemblages from the Stable Quarter and the House for Families. Remains identified to the genus *Moxostoma* (redhorses) were found in the House for Families. Members of *Catostomidae* are freshwater fish that are most commonly found attached to rocks at the bottoms of swiftly moving rivers, though they can be found in other freshwater environments (Dewey n.d.)

Next, remains belonging to individuals from the genus *Acipenser* were found in the House for Families assemblage. *Acipenser* is a genus of sturgeon. Sturgeon are demersal fish that can live up to fifty years and can reach gargantuan proportions of six to eight feet in length, on average (Bowen et al. 2015:9). Historically, methods used to catch sturgeon included seines or sharp iron hooks suspended from boats, and multiple men were usually involved in these endeavors (Bowen et al. 2015:9). Although it is unclear what species of sturgeon was found in

the House for Families, it is extremely unlikely if not entirely impossible that any children would be capable of catching any sturgeon due to the colossal size of the creatures.

Additionally, members of the genus *Lepisosteus* were uncovered in the House for Families cellar. *Lepisosteus* is a genus of gar, another massive fish. Gar can grow to be six feet long and have "long beaklike jaws" with extremely sharp teeth (Bowen et al. 2015:10). They are also covered in hard, diamond-shaped scales that act as a kind of armor against predators, and traditionally people utilized bows and arrows as well as spears to hunt the fish. Due to their enormous size and armor-like scales, it is highly doubtful that enslaved children were fishing for or spearing gar (although, again, the remains were not identified to species level).

Finally, the bones of Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) were also found in the House for Families assemblage. Codfish are mostly found in colder waters (between 32 and 55 degrees), such as off the coast of New England, though they have been caught in the Chesapeake Bay area "on rare occasions" (Bowen et al. 2015:11). Atlantic cod live near the ocean floor at depths or around 30 to 500 feet (NOAA Fisheries 2023). For these reasons, it is unlikely that the codfish remains in the House for Families were caught locally, and even more unlikely that enslaved children were the ones fishing for cod. It is more plausible that the cod was acquired in a preserved form, such as salted or dried. The preserved cod was probably not provisioned as part of the rations and may have been purchased at the local market in Alexandria. It is also possible that it was given to (or taken by) a domestic worker in the mansion house kitchen, as George Washington was known to enjoy codfish and records indicate that he ordered large amounts of the fish from New England.[73]

[73] Washington's Cash Account from December 1760 notes that he paid Lovett, "a New Englandman" for "100 wt of dryed Cod" and "1/2 Barrl Pickled Do [ditto]" (Washington 1760b).

Eastern oyster (Crassostrea virginica)

Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) were found at all four Montpelier quarter sites. The oysters at Montpelier were probably purchased in barrels elsewhere and brought to Montpelier as part of the rations for the enslaved community (Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021:24).[74] However, it is conceivable that at other plantations on the coast or near brackish water, enslaved children were capable of foraging for oysters on reefs in shallow areas or at low tide with simple tools to pry them off, just as the Meriam children do today (see Bliege Bird and Bird 2002). Children may successfully collect shellfish by the age of six, though whether enslaved children would have been able to access the areas where the shellfish are found varies according to the specific plantation and enslaver. Additionally, depending on their age and strength, children may not have been able to process the oysters that they collected and may have brought them home for an adult to open and prepare.

Family Clupeidae (shad, herring, alewife)

Fish belonging to the family *Clupeidae* were found at Montpelier's Stable Quarter, Field Quarter, and Tobacco Barn, as well as at the House for Families. *Clupeidae* includes herring, shad, and sardines. At Montpelier, like the oysters, preserved herring was most likely purchased and then provisioned to the enslaved workers as part of their rations (Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021:24). Clupeids are pelagic fish, meaning they inhabit the pelagic zone which is neither near the bottom nor near the shore. They live along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean but return to freshwater rivers, creeks, and streams to spawn in the spring and return to the ocean by summer. Shad, herring, and alewives were once abundant in the Chesapeake Bay's tributaries, and it is

[74] It is likely that the imported oysters at Montpelier were harvested by enslaved oystermen working for their enslavers. Prior to the Civil War, oystermen in Virginia were mainly enslaved men and lower-class white men (Pariseau 2021).

possible to catch them with a hook and line (though using dip nets is more common) (FWC and Maryland DNR). It is feasible that at other plantations, enslaved children may have caught shad, herring, and alewives in smaller streams or creeks using simple fishing techniques such as a hook and line or a dip net.[75] However, it is more likely that at the plantations where these fish spawn in large numbers during the spring, enslaved adults caught many at one time using seines, a more efficient method.[76]

At the House for Families, the remains belonging to *Clupeidae* and more specifically, American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*) or blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), and alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) were almost certainly caught by enslaved adult workers at one of George Washington's fisheries on the Potomac River.[77] From March until the end of May (when herring and shad were spawning) enslaved men laid out massive seines by boat to catch the fish, which were then salted to preserve them (Atkins 1994:66-68). Washington used the salted herring and shad as rations for the enslaved community at Mount Vernon and its surrounding farms, but he also sold the fish commercially to other planter-enslavers. Therefore, the remains of the herring and shad in the House for Families can be

[75] Because salt herring was so commonly rationed to enslaved workers at many plantations (including Monticello) it is more likely that any remains belonging to the family *Clupeidae* were representative of provisions rather than fish that were freshly caught.
[76] Frederick Douglass wrote that his grandmother was a "capital hand" at making seines, specifically for catching shad and herring, and was often "in the water waist deep, for hours, seine-hauling" (Douglass 1881:14).
[77] It should be noted that while Bowen (1993), Atkins (1994), and Bowen et al. (2015) identify the remains of the herring excavated from the House for Families as Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*), Mount Vernon's website states that herring caught at Washington's fisheries were blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*). While blueback herring (also known as river herring) are found in the Potomac River, Atlantic herring are pelagic fish that are found in marine waters. Due to the discrepancy between findings, both species of fish may be considered here.

attributed to rations provided from the fisheries operations or possibly from enslaved men who went fishing on their day off.[78]

Family Ictaluridae (North American catfish)

The remains of a catfish belonging to the family *Ictaluridae* were found in Montpelier's Stable Quarters and the remains of channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) and white catfish, or white bullhead (*Ameiurus catus*) were found in the House for Families. Catfish can be found in both large and small bodies of freshwater including ponds, streams, rivers, and lakes (Bowen et al. 2015:11; Pavão-Zuckerman et al. 2021:25). White catfish prefer slow-moving waters.[79] Both channel and white catfish are able to survive in saltwater and brackish water, though they prefer freshwater environments (Schoonover 2004). Catfish are bottom feeders (demersal) and live in the muddy bottoms of rivers, streams, and ponds. Both channel catfish and white catfish are more active in the late afternoon or evening but can still be caught during the daytime (though they are more likely to be found deeper in the water). White catfish rarely weigh more than six pounds, while channel catfish typically weigh between two and four pounds but can grow to be 40 or 50 pounds.[80] Enslaved children would certainly have had access to catfish that lived in smaller ponds and streams on the plantation. It is reasonable to believe that they could successfully catch small to average sized catfish with a line and baited hook or perhaps even nets in more shallow water. Though it is more common to use fishing weights or sinkers when fishing for catfish, it is still possible to catch the fish without them. Children who were older may have

[78] An entry from George Washington's diary noted that some of his enslaved workers "askd the lent of the Sein to day [sic] but caught little or no Fish" (Washington 1760a). The date of the entry was April 13, 1760 – a Sunday, the day when enslaved laborers (but generally not domestic workers) were given a day off. April is also the time of the year when shad, herring, and alewife would have been abundant in the Potomac River.
[79] Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "White Catfish"
[80] Ibid; Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute n.d., "Channel catfish."

also set fish traps that would be set and then checked sometime later. These traps were typically constructed from organic materials such as pliable strips of wood and sticks, or grapevines woven together to form a basket.

Family Centrarchidae (sunfish)

Also found at Montpelier's Stable quarter were the remains of an individual belonging to the *Centrarchidae* or sunfish family. True sunfish including bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*) and redear sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*) were found in the House for Families cellar, as well as white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*), which also belongs to the sunfish family.[81] Bluegill, redear sunfish, and white crappie are considered panfish – small freshwater fish that can easily fit in a frying pan. Bluegill live in lakes and slow-moving streams, redear sunfish prefer calm waters such as lakes or river backwaters, and white crappie live in shallow and slow-moving streams, rivers, and ponds. All three species are crepuscular and are most active at dawn and dusk (Barbee 2011; Parr 2013; Tingle 2015). Bluegill and redear sunfish spawn from May to August and build their nests in the shallows (Atkins 1994:48). Due to the relatively small size of the fish and their habitats in freshwater environments commonly found on plantation landscapes, it is entirely plausible that enslaved children were successful in fishing for sunfish. Calm and shallow waters in ponds or lakes and slow-moving streams are places where enslaved children were known to have ventured on the plantation. Children would have been highly capable of catching these panfish using a line and hook baited with worms or small insects.

[81] An unidentified individual of the genus *Micropterus* (black bass) was found in the House for Families as well – possibly a largemouth or smallmouth bass (Bowen et al. 2015:12).

Family Esocidae (pike, pickerel, and muskellunge)

Remains of fish belonging to the family *Esocidae*, including the bones of a chain pickerel (*Esox niger*) were uncovered in the House for Families assemblage. *Esocidae* is a family of fish that includes pike, pickerel, and muskellunge. Chain pickerel inhabit freshwater as well as brackish water and are commonly found in tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, migrating to shallow waters to spawn in early March to mid-April (Atkins 1994:48). The fish are most abundant in calm waters of ponds, streams, and lakes. They prefer fairly shallow, sheltered areas with submerged cover such as logs, weeds, and aquatic vegetation (Shelburne 2017). Chain pickerel are considered sport fish and weigh about three pounds on average. They may be aggressive once they are hooked (Shelburne 2017). Enslaved children would have had good access to the bodies of water that chain pickerel inhabit and would be able to catch the fish with a baited hook. Although chain pickerel can be aggressive fighters once caught, they do not grow to be very big and a child would have been fairly capable of catching the fish with a hook and line if they were familiar with the combative behavior of the fish.

Family Moronidae (temperate bass)

Other species found in the House for Families include white perch (*Morone americana*), striped bass, or rockfish (*Morone saxatilis*) as well as an unidentified member of the genus *Morone*. These fish are known as temperate bass and are semi-anadromous, meaning that they spend an equal amount of time in the ocean and in freshwater rivers, lakes, or streams. White perch live in the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay year-round and return to freshwater or low-salinity rivers to spawn from April until June. Striped bass are typically found in coastal waters and migrate to fresh or brackish water of tidal tributaries during the spring when they spawn (Bowen et al. 2015:13). White perch, on average, typically weigh less than three pounds but

striped bass can be much heavier, generally weighing from ten to thirty pounds.[82] While both species may be found in freshwater or slightly brackish rivers and streams during the springtime, it is unlikely that children were fishing for striped bass, due to the larger size of the fish. However, it is certainly feasible that enslaved children were fishing for the smaller white perch (considered panfish) during the spring months from April to June. White perch prefer quiet and shallow areas of streams and would be relatively simple to catch with a baited hook and line.

Yellow perch (Perca flavescens)

Remains of yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) were also found in the House for Families cellar. Also called American perch, they are freshwater fish that have adapted to the brackish waters of Chesapeake Bay rivers. In the early spring, yellow perch will spawn in shallow freshwater areas (Creque 2000). They are small fish and normally weigh from a quarter of a pound to one pound. Enslaved children would have had the best access to yellow perch in the early spring when the fish arrived in shallow freshwater areas of rivers and streams to spawn. Additionally, children could be relatively successful catching the fish with a baited hook and line.

Black sea bass (Centropristis striata)

The next species of fish found in the House for Families is black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*). Black sea bass are temperate reef fish that live along the east coast of the United States. In the spring the fish migrate to the lower Chesapeake Bay to spawn and return to the ocean in the fall for more southern waters.[83] Black sea bass are typically bottom dwellers that can be found along rocky bottoms near jetties, pilings, and reefs (Bowen et al. 2015:13). They are

[82] Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "White Perch" and Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "Striped Bass."
[83] Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d. "Black Sea Bass."

generally one foot long but can grow to two feet, and typically weigh one or two pounds, but can reach up to nine pounds.[84] Black sea bass are demersal fish found at depths of around twenty feet beneath the surface and are generally caught by bottom fishing from boats. It is highly unlikely that enslaved children were capable of acquiring black sea bass as they were almost certainly unable to access a boat and fish from waters of greater depths.

Blue crab (Callinectes sapidus)

Finally, blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) remains were also represented in the House for Families assemblage. Blue crabs are shellfish that can be found along the Atlantic coast but are most abundant in the Chesapeake region and are generally caught in the summer months (Bowen et al. 2015:8). They can survive in the brackish waters at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay as well as in the tidal freshwaters of the upper Bay, where they are found during the summer.[85] Blue crabs are bottom dwellers and live in submerged aquatic vegetation such as underwater grasses. They can sometimes be found underneath docks and at the bases of pilings. Traditionally, crabs were caught using dip nets and hand lines (also called "chicken necking"). Chicken necking refers to the method by which a chicken neck will be used as bait, tied to a string with a weight at the end, and then dropped into the water. When the line goes taut, the fisherman quickly pulls it (and the attached crab) out of the water. This method generally works best with at least two people working together – one person to pull the line out and another to either catch the crab with a dip net or swiftly pull it off the line by hand. Dip nets may be used simply by scouring shallow waters for the crabs and then scooping them out. So long as they had access to a

[84] NOAA Fisheries 2023, "Black Sea Bass."
[85] Maryland Department of Natural Resources n.d., "Maryland Fish Facts, Shellfish – Blue Crab."

tributary of the Bay, enslaved children would have been highly capable of catching and acquiring blue crabs to bring home to the quarters during the summer and early fall.

Conclusion: Fish and Shellfish

Considering the behavioral and ecological traits of the fish and shellfish found in assemblages at Montpelier and Mount Vernon, it is extremely likely that enslaved children were frequently capable of bringing home some sort of catch after fishing in a nearby area on the plantation landscape. The main factors affecting the probability of successfully acquiring fish were accessibility of the fish's habitat and the average size of the fish. Small freshwater fish or panfish such as bluegill, redear sunfish, white crappie, white perch, and yellow perch would have been the easiest fish to catch. Channel catfish and white catfish are demersal fish and are generally inactive during the day when they tend to stay in deeper water or more sheltered areas, though they can still be caught. The catfish as well as chain pickerel are larger fish and may have been more difficult or required greater skill to catch but would not have been totally impossible to acquire. Bluegill, redear sunfish, white crappie, white perch, yellow perch, channel catfish, white catfish, and chain pickerel are fish that enslaved children living on inland plantations would have had the most access to, with the panfish constituting the most likely candidates for fish obtained by enslaved children.

While it is possible that enslaved children were fishing for anadromous fish including American shad, blueback herring, and alewife, it seems relatively unlikely considering that many enslaved adults attempting to catch these fish would have been catching them in large seines, as the fish are only present in large numbers when spawning and appear en masse. The fish that children were almost certainly incapable of acquiring are striped bass and black sea bass, mainly due to their large size. Additionally, black sea bass inhabit marine waters at depths of around

twenty feet below the surface, making the fish impossible for enslaved children to catch on their own. Finally, shellfish such as eastern oysters and blue crabs would have been relatively simple for enslaved children to either forage or catch on their own, provided that the children had access to the areas where the shellfish are found – marine or brackish environments such as the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

Fishing methods that enslaved children may have utilized include a hook and line, handmade fish baskets or traps, and small nets. Gigging (or spearfishing) was probably uncommon, at least amongst children. It is certainly possible that some children attempted to spearfish using sharp sticks, though this was probably not a very successful method. Although there was no archaeological evidence of fishing implements such as hooks or weights in the House for Families assemblage, enslaved children (and adults) may have fashioned hooks from other readily available materials, such as straight pins commonly used for sewing. Line could be made from plants such as hemp or, when available, lengths of twine or thread. Nets could also be made with twine. Fish baskets or traps could be constructed with organic matter such as vines or pliable sticks. Finally, the simplest (and most readily available) item that children may have used for catching fish is a heavy stick. In shallow and clear creeks and streams, it would have been possible for a group of children to herd a few fish into a certain area and then dispatch the fish by hitting them with a stout stick.

Enslaved children probably had a greater success rate catching fish and shellfish as opposed to animals belonging to the small mammal and wild bird categories. As demonstrated in Bliege Bird and Bird's ethnographic research with Meriam children, fishing (and foraging for shellfish) seems to be the most popular and accessible way for children to acquire and contribute food resources to their families and community. As previously discussed, Meriam children are

"fairly efficient" shellfish foragers by the age of six, become *as efficient* at hand-line beach fishing as adults shortly after they first begin fishing with this method at five years old, and can become as successful at spearfishing as the most accomplished adult spear-fishers by the age of ten (Bliege Bird and Bird 2002:261). While Meriam children almost certainly have greater accessibility to the ocean shore and fishing areas than enslaved children had, it is nonetheless significant that young children are extremely successful in fishing ventures despite their smaller stature and still-developing musculature. On plantations where enslaved children were capable of accessing fishing areas such as streams, creeks, rivers, ponds, or lakes, there is a relatively good chance that they were able to catch some sort of fish after a few attempts (Table 4). And on plantations near the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers or coastal areas, shellfish foraging would have been another good opportunity for children to acquire extra protein for themselves and their families.

Table 4. Fish and Shellfish Likely Caught by Children

Species	Possible Methods of Capture/Dispatch
Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*)	Hand collecting with simple tools for prying them off of reefs
Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)	Baited hook and line; fish traps
White catfish (*Ameiurus catus*)	Baited hook and line; fish traps
Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams
Redear sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams
White crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams
Chain pickerel (*Esox niger*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams
White perch (*Morone americana*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams
Yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*)	Baited hook and line; nets or heavy sticks in shallow streams

Blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*)	Chicken necking with hand line and net

Amphibians and Reptiles (Possible Food)

The last category of animals found in the assemblages from Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon includes amphibians and reptiles (Appendix E). Some of these animals were possibly food sources while others were intrusive to the sites. Amphibians consist of one species of frog (identified in the House for Families assemblage) and remains belonging to the order Anura (frogs and toads), also found in the House for Families as well as in the Stable Quarter at Montpelier. Reptiles include members of the order Testudines (turtles) and individuals belonging to the family *Colubridae* (colubrid snakes). The colubrid snakes in the Stable Quarter and Tobacco Barn were likely intrusive to the sites (Copperstone 2014, 55; 76). Indeterminate remains belonging to the order Testudines were found at all three plantations: the Stable Quarter, Field Quarter, and Tobacco Barn at Montpelier; Building o and Building s at Monticello; and in the House for Families at Mount Vernon. Additionally, two identifiable species of turtle were found at the Stable Quarter and one identifiable species was found at the House for Families. The four species of amphibians and reptiles include:

1. American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)
2. River cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*)
3. Box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*)
4. Common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)

American bullfrog (Lithobates catesbeianus)

Remains from the Stable Quarter at Montpelier and House for Families at Mount Vernon were identified to the order Anura, which includes both frogs and toads. Virginia has 27 native species of frogs and toads (Bowen et al. 2015:13). Because the remains of frogs and toads are difficult to differentiate, it is unclear whether the remains from the two sites belong to frogs or

toads. Copperstone (2014) suspects that the Anura remains in the Stable Quarter were probably intrusive, rather than evidence of a food source (76). Additionally, remains of an American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) were found in the House for Families assemblage. American bullfrogs can be commonly found in permanent bodies of water such as ponds, lakes, rivers, and bogs. They are active during the day and night and are quite small, weighing less than one pound. American bullfrogs are carnivores, and their diet consists of insects, fish eggs, worms, shellfish, snakes, and even other frogs (Bruening 2002). American bullfrogs are sometimes eaten by humans (primarily their legs) but according to Bowen (1993) the particular individual found in the House for Families assemblage was quite small and therefore probably was not part of a meal (13). In general, on plantations with accessible ponds or lakes, it would be quite possible for an enslaved child to catch an American bullfrog. Though the frogs can be sometimes be skittish, making them more difficult to catch, the male frogs are less jumpy during breeding season (Iati 2023). It would have been fairly easy for a child to quickly catch the frogs with their hands, though dispatching the creatures with a heavy stick is also feasible.

River cooter (Pseudemys concinna)

River cooter remains were found at Montpelier's Stable Quarter. Primarily found in freshwater rivers and lakes, river cooters can also be found in ponds, swamps, or springs. These turtles generally measure between eight and eleven inches in length and weigh around eight to ten pounds (Malueg 2017). River cooters are active during the day and spend most of this time basking and nesting on logs or rocks. When not basking and nesting, they stay submerged under the water, where they can stay for hours without coming up for air. River cooters tend to be extremely skittish and prefer to live in areas that are sheltered and moderately inaccessible to humans (Malueg 2017). Enslaved children were probably not hunting and catching river cooters.

Though the turtles do come out of the water to bask or nest, they will hide under aquatic vegetation or submerge themselves for hours if necessary, and they purposely choose habitats that are inaccessible to predators. Additionally, for a child between the ages of six and twelve, river cooters are quite substantial in size and weight. It is possible (but not probable) that some children were capable of catching the turtles.[86]

Box turtle (Terrapene carolina)

Box turtle remains were also found in the Stable Quarter. These turtles are much smaller than river cooters, measuring around four to seven inches long and weighing less than one pound (Niedzelski 2002). They are found near streams and ponds in open wooded areas and at the edges of pastures. Box turtles are omnivorous and will eat almost anything, including a variety of different fruits and vegetables like berries and mushrooms, insects and worms, birds, and carrion (Niedzelski 2002). Their most distinctive feature is their ability to retract their head, limbs, and tail into their shell and then shut it completely as a defense mechanism. Box turtles can be quite dangerous to eat, as mushrooms are a large part of their diet and they are able to eat toxic mushrooms which do not harm them but that can harm humans (Niedzelski 2002). It is unclear whether the box turtle present in the assemblage was a food source. It was almost certainly introduced into the quarter by a human rather than wandering in by itself, so it is probable that it was eaten. As to whether enslaved children were capable of catching box turtles, it seems likely that they were capable of doing so. Box turtles are quite small, live on land, and are not especially fast due to their heavy shells. A child would most likely be able to catch one of the animals and bring it to the quarters where an adult may have dispatched it.

[86] It is even more unlikely that a child could dispatch the creature without a considerable weapon due to the turtle's hard carapace, but this could have been done by an adult if the turtle were caught and then brought to the quarters.

Common snapping turtle (Chelydra serpentina)

The House for Families assemblage included snapping turtle remains.[87] Common snapping turtles can be found in both fresh and brackish water such as ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. They prefer habitats with muddy bottoms and a good amount of vegetation for concealment (Bosch 2003). They are omnivores that will eat a wide range of food sources, including aquatic vegetation, fish and shellfish, small mammals, birds, amphibians, and carrion. Snapping turtles are the largest of the three species of turtles discussed in this section – they measure eight to eighteen inches long and can weigh between nine and thirty-five pounds (Bosch 2003). In terms of behavior, snapping turtles can be highly aggressive when provoked and may become particularly vicious if removed from water (Bosch 2003). They will fight violently when threatened. Three factors make snapping turtles an unlikely choice of prey for enslaved children: their habitat, behavior, and size. They are almost entirely aquatic and spend the majority of their time in the water. When on land, snapping turtles are much more aggressive and their bites are very serious. They are capable of biting off a human finger, or other bits of flesh. Finally, snapping turtles can grow to be very large. Enslaved children were probably not attempting to capture snapping turtles as food sources. More daring (or perhaps reckless) children have been known to provoke aggressive animals as a thrill, but it seems extremely improbable that any children were actively pursuing snapping turtles for their meat.

Conclusion: Amphibians and Reptiles

The final group of animals represented in the faunal assemblages from Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon includes amphibians and reptiles. The most important factors for

[87] Remains of at least two unidentified individuals belonging to the genus *Chelydra* were found at the Stable Quarter. Also found in the House for Families were the remains of unidentified species belonging to the genus *Chrysemys* (water turtles).

enslaved children when hunting amphibians and reptiles are size and accessibility of habitat. Children would be more likely to successfully capture bullfrogs and box turtles rather than river cooters and snapping turtles because the former are quite small and can be caught by hand relatively easily (Table 5). Although bullfrogs are aquatic, they can be found on land near the ponds or lakes that they inhabit, and box turtles are land turtles that often live near streams or ponds. Enslaved children on plantations would have had good opportunities to access these areas. River cooters and snapping turtles, on the other hand, live primarily in the water and actively seek out places to hide from predators, making them much more inaccessible to children. Both species can stay submerged under the water for long periods of time – several hours for river cooters and up to 45 minutes for snapping turtles. These turtles are also fairly substantial in size, and snapping turtles can be tremendously aggressive when provoked, posing a serious risk to children (and adults) attempting to capture or dispatch the creatures. Ultimately, it is highly improbable that enslaved children would choose to pursue these large and potentially dangerous animals over smaller and safer options that could be obtained with much less effort.

Table 5. Amphibians and Reptiles Likely Caught by Children

Species	Possible Methods of Capture/Dispatch
American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)	Catch by hand; heavy stick
Box turtle (*Terrapene Carolina*)	Catch by hand

Conclusion: Garden hunting on the plantation landscape

Though the age when an enslaved child began his or her formal work assignments varied according to each plantation and enslaver, they were generally assigned formal work between the ages of ten and fourteen. For example, at Monticello, children were not given formal jobs until

they reached the age of ten years old and were tasked with being "nurses" to the younger children before that time (Jefferson 1824:77). At Mount Vernon, boys and girls between the ages of eleven and fourteen became part of a "transitional group" called "working boys and girls," largely tasked with assisting enslaved adults in farm work (Thompson 2019:160). It is not explicitly stated at what age children began formal work at Montpelier, but it is clear that there were many young enslaved people on the plantation and that they were given a variety of tasks including laundry and brickmaking.[88] Before (and perhaps even during) the transitional period between childhood chores and tasks and formally assigned jobs, enslaved children were expected to take care of the younger children and keep them busy until their parents returned from working in the evenings. Within the enslaved population, children between the ages of six and twelve were arguably the least heavily surveilled group on the plantation and would have had the most time available during the day to pursue hunting, fishing, and plant foraging activities.

Enslaved children's hunting and fishing decisions were almost certainly more opportunistic and more haphazard than targeted hunting trips conducted by experienced enslaved adults. However, an evaluation of the behavioral and ecological traits of wild animals found in faunal assemblages from Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon may allow archaeologists to better assess the probability of enslaved children's involvement in regard to supplementing a rationed diet. The major decision-making factors for enslaved children living on plantations were most likely accessibility and "work of capture." Accessibility is concerned with whether an animal is diurnal or nocturnal. Nocturnal animals were largely inaccessible to enslaved children, who typically did not leave the vicinity of the quarters at night unless accompanied by an adult. Accessibility also includes the ability to safely or easily enter the animal's habitat, as animals

[88] Wall text, *Color Through a Child's Eyes*, James Madison's Montpelier, Orange, VA.

that inhabit more isolated or hard-to-reach areas outside of the plantation's boundaries would be less accessible to children and would result in low encounter rates.

Work of capture is concerned with "how a prey animal's defense and escape mechanisms affect a predator's ability to obtain it" (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000:42). "Work of capture may be the cost of searching for prey, investment in technological aids, and/or the energetics of true chase" (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000:42). For example, small prey that may be easily caught by hand have a higher "catchability" than those that cannot be caught by hand. The differences in catchability "translate into distinct work-of-capture costs in the absence of special tools" (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000:49). Therefore, animals that have higher catchability may have lower work-of-capture costs than animals that are more difficult to capture. Work of capture may also involve processing costs, though in this case, I do not consider processing costs as part of the work of capture in regard to enslaved children because I would expect that adults were the individuals processing the animals that were captured by the children. In some cases, children may have processed the animals themselves under adult supervision. Archaeologically, this may be represented by the presence of whole carcasses in assemblages rather than specific body parts, indicating that the animal was processed on-site rather than field processed.

I hypothesize that enslaved children selected prey based on work of capture and access rather than profitability, as this is how children in contemporary hunter-gatherer societies make decisions related to hunting and foraging. Rather than wasting time and energy on pursuing an animal that may yield more meat but is more difficult to capture, it is likely that children would have focused on hunting the animals that they knew to be most easily acquired – small animals

with less meat.[89] The size of an animal can determine work of capture, as well as traits such as speed and agility. Children would be more inclined to choose smaller animals as prey, rather than larger animals that were difficult to handle or that could potentially harm them. An altercation with an aggressive eastern cottontail rabbit is preferable to an aggressive raccoon, where the weight difference between the two animals can be as much as 20 pounds. In regard to speed, slower or stationary animals such as shellfish or turtles would be easier to catch than faster animals like birds or squirrels. These animals are easier to capture or collect, but some may require more work to find (Stiner, Munro, and Surovell 2000:44). Small, relatively sessile animals will have higher catchability and less work-of-capture costs, making them the most likely prey for enslaved children.

Finally, children would have been more likely to pursue animals that could be found in the immediate environs of the plantation, rather than animals that inhabited areas farther away or in difficult to access locations. Animals that occupied remote areas at the edge of the plantation or past its borders would not fit the definition of "garden hunting" as children would have to travel farther or go out of their way to pursue these animals. Therefore, the animals that enslaved children were successfully hunting (and bringing back to the quarters) were most likely smaller, slower, diurnal creatures that could be found easily in areas that enslaved children frequented on the plantation landscape (resulting in high encounter rates). These animals may have been

[89] This practice is known as optimal foraging theory (OFT), a behavioral ecology model which attempts to predict the behavior of animals when searching for food. The theory posits that "foragers will be selected to behave to as to maximize the *net rate of return* (of energy or nutrients) *per unit foraging time*" [emphasis in original] (Smith 1983:626). When applied to humans, however, there are a few issues, because human behavior is not always predictable. In this case, the behavior of children in particular can be extremely unpredictable. While some children would have followed the OFT model, it is also possible that others would have chosen to expend more energy pursuing less reliable options.

creatures that enslaved adults overlooked or did not waste their time pursuing because of a negligible amount of meat, such as frogs, small birds like robins, and minnows. Additionally, ethnographic research demonstrates that children are generally more curious or adventurous eaters than adults and will often pursue prey that adults will not eat.[90]

Enslaved children's game acquisitions may be represented archaeologically by the whole carcasses of small and relatively sessile animals that were found in abundance within the plantation's confines. Further, these animals may have been viewed by adults as undesirable or as insignificant sources of meat and therefore, the type of prey that only children pursued. Archaeologically, there is no way to discern who exactly introduced the remains of specific animals into the quarters. However, proposing the idea that children may have been the individuals contributing small game and fish allows for a more nuanced interpretation of life in the quarters. It is unreasonable to assume that enslaved adults (usually men) were the only people engaged in subsistence strategies such as hunting and fishing. A more accurate portrayal of life for enslaved individuals and families in the quarters is one that includes children as active participants and members of their community.

Broader Implications

Although this chapter focuses on faunal remains from slave quarter assemblages located in the Upper South, the main ideas can still be applied to enslaved children living in other regions. Enslaved children living on plantations in the Lowcountry or Lower South almost certainly hunted and fished some of the same species that have been discussed here. Additionally, they may have pursued other wild animals native to their specific geographic

[90] For examples see Bird and Bliege Bird 2002:292-293 citing Swadling and Chowning (1981) and Meehan (1982).

locations (and which are not found in the Upper South). Despite any differences, it is possible to understand enslaved children as contributors of certain species in a faunal assemblage by considering the same decision-making factors discussed here – access and work of capture. Did enslaved children on this plantation have access to the animal? Where did it live and when was it active? How much work would it take for a child or group of children to capture this animal? How big is the animal on average, how fast is the animal, and are there other factors such as defense mechanisms that might make the animal particularly difficult to capture or dispatch? Advancing this line of questioning with enslaved children in mind aids in recognizing their agency and capabilities. These questions may also lead to new ideas, potential possibilities, and more thoughtful, authentic interpretations concerning sites of enslavement in the United States.

Enslaved children as plant foragers

In addition to faunal remains, macroplant remains found in archaeological assemblages may also be interpreted as representative of the contributions of enslaved children. As with hunting and fishing, enslaved children would have had the most opportunity to forage for wild plants, fruits, and nuts during the workday. Additionally, gathering these food sources would have required less effort than pursuing a live animal, and therefore children as young as two or three years old would have been able to participate in foraging activities. For the sake of brevity, I will not go into an in-depth analysis of macroplant remains at the Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon but will discuss some remains found at the House for Families site at Mount Vernon.

In the House for Families assemblage, macroplant remains that may have been collected by enslaved children included cherry pits (*Prunus* sp.), a peach pit (*Prunus persica*), persimmon seeds (*Diospyros virginiana*), a huckleberry seed (*Gaylussacia* sp.), a plum seed (*Prunus* sp.),

grape seeds (*Vitis* sp.), a blueberry or raspberry seed (*Rubus* sp.), hazelnut fragments (*Corylus* sp.), black walnut fragments (*Juglans nigra*), and a poke seed (*Phytolacca americana*).[91] Varieties of wild cherries, persimmons, huckleberries, plums, grapes, blueberries, and raspberries are native to Virginia, and may have been gathered by enslaved children on the plantation. Huckleberries, grapes, blueberries, and raspberries grow on vines or bushes and are therefore easy for even small children to reach. Cherries, persimmons, and plums grow on trees but would have still been relatively accessible to children. George Washington did grow varieties of plums, grapes, and peaches, so it is possible that the children acquired those fruits from plants purposefully cultivated by Washington rather than from wild plants (McKnight 2015).

Black walnuts and hazelnuts are native to Virginia and grow in the wild, though colonists did bring European varieties of hazelnuts to North America as well (McKnight 2015). Black walnuts grow on trees and can be harvested by picking directly from the tree or by gathering the fallen walnuts from the ground, making them easy for small children to collect. Hazelnuts typically grow on bushes or shrubs and can also be picked from the bush or gathered from the ground. Finally, pokeweed is a poisonous plant native to North America and can be found year-round in southern states. It grows in both open and edge habitats like fields or along fences, making it easily accessible to children. Though the raw plant is extremely toxic, the leaves and stems can be boiled and eaten. Children would have gathered the plant and brought it home for adults to prepare and cook. Poke sallet (also called salad) was a popular dish in the American South and is still eaten today (Covey and Eisnach 2009:87). Additionally, other parts of the plant such as the berries were used for dye or for medicinal purposes.

[91] Object Query 2, June 20, 2023. The Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS). https://daacsrc.org/queries/query_objects_two?daacs=y

Enslaved children almost certainly snacked on some of the nuts and berries that they foraged during the day while they were in the process of gathering them. They were able to provide themselves with extra nutrients and calories immediately while also collecting more food to bring back to the quarters and provide for others. Foraging was also an activity that superannuated enslaved people (especially those charged with minding babies and toddlers) were able to participate in, and perhaps this is how the children were taught which plants were safe to eat and which were toxic. While fruit such as wild strawberries, blueberries, and huckleberries are fairly easy to identify, it can be more difficult to discern which kinds of mushrooms, leafy plants, roots, or tubers are edible and which are poisonous. Enslaved children would have learned at an early age which plants were safe to consume and which were poisonous. In addition to this knowledge, they would have been taught the medicinal benefits of certain plants and herbs and how to correctly utilize them. Enslaved adults would have also taught children how to forage with respect to seasonality and the time when certain fruits were most ripe and therefore best to pick and eat.

Foraging, then, was not merely a subsistence activity but also a method of survival that allowed children to be self-sufficient. In learning how to identify potential food sources and natural medicines, enslaved children were gaining survival skills that would better prepare them for many different situations in their adult lives. Many self-emancipated individuals relied on their knowledge of the natural environment to forage and hunt for food while they journeyed north, generally keeping to uncultivated areas such as forests in order to avoid been seen or captured (see Ball 1837, Bibb 1849, Brown 1855, Jackson 1847). Additionally, foraging is an example of one of the ways that important knowledge was shared by elders and taught to the youngest members of the community.

Enslaved children's subsistence activities in the archival record

This section is a discussion of multiple forms of evidence regarding enslaved children's hunting, fishing, and foraging activities found in the documentary record. The model that I presented earlier in this chapter is an attempt to predict what kinds of animals enslaved children were most likely to hunt, and this section may corroborate or contradict the predictions that I made using that model. Additionally, information discussed in this section will shed light on other possible artifacts that may be associated with the subsistence activities of enslaved children. Archival sources including WPA interviews, individually published narratives, photographs, and plantation documents indicate that enslaved children were absolutely active hunters, fishers, and foragers. These sources also provide information on the types of animals that children typically pursued and successfully caught, tools and methods of capture and dispatch, foodways in the enslaved community, and the importance of subsistence activities in regard to the transmission of cultural knowledge, family bonding, and community survival.

WPA interviews with formerly enslaved individuals provide invaluable information about the lives of enslaved children on plantations across the South and their daily activities including labor and play. Although individually published narratives by self-emancipated or formerly enslaved people are certainly integral to understanding American slavery, the WPA interviews are significant because most of the interviewees focused largely on their childhoods. Only 16 percent of the informants were fifteen years old or older at the start of the Civil War, meaning that the vast majority of people interviewed were children at that time and therefore discussed their experiences as children who were enslaved (Blassingame 1975:486). Because the WPA interviews are so extensive, for the sake of brevity I will not include every single quote about children's hunting, fishing, or foraging activities. There are simply too many to compile

here. The quotes that I do include here are ones that I felt were representative of many of the stories told by formerly enslaved people, or quotes that include details about material culture.

Recollections of hunting small game and birds

Many formerly enslaved people recalled hunting small game and birds as children. While girls may have been capable hunters, the majority of the individuals discussing hunting were men and the stories that they shared imply that hunting was generally accepted as a male activity. Adult men in the enslaved community were responsible for sharing essential knowledge about hunting and fishing, and those men stand out in the WPA interviews as significant figures in the childhoods of the informants. Emanuel Elmore was enslaved in South Carolina and his father (also enslaved) worked at the Cherokee Iron Works, where another enslaved man named Alex Golightly was killed in an accident. "He taught the boys my age how to swim, fish, and hunt. His death was the worst thing that had happened in the community" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:8).

Enslaved in Florida, Acie Thomas learned how to fish, chase rabbits, and find the best nuts and berries from a man he called Cousin Ed, "who was several years older than he and quite willing to enlighten a small boy in these matters" (FWP. Vol 3 Florida 1936:328). It is unclear whether or not Cousin Ed was actually Acie's cousin, but nevertheless, Emanuel's and Acie's recollections demonstrate the importance of mentorship in the enslaved community, which often came from individuals who were not blood relations. The men who acted as mentors to the young boys taught them valuable life skills and knowledge that helped them to survive, and that could eventually be shared with the future youth in the community. That the men were mentioned by Emanuel and Acie in interviews so many decades later is a testament to how significant they were in the boys' young lives.

Rabbits

Gus Clark, who was enslaved in Virginia, recalled hunting for rabbits with other children barefoot in the snow because he did not receive a pair of shoes until he was 12 or 13 years old (FWP Vol. 9 Mississippi 1936:24). Isaac Martin was 12 years old when he was emancipated in Texas. Before emancipation, he and five other boys around his age were responsible for keeping the dogs away from the sheep on the plantation. The boys would often go hunting for rabbits with the dogs, and one night they caught four or five rabbits. They took them home, cleaned them, dressed them, and put them in a big pot "for a big rabbit supper" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:50). Isaac recalled the incident very clearly because he added red pepper to the pot for seasoning and rubbed his eyes immediately afterwards, causing them to burn. He noted that the "old folks" used to show the boys how to fix the things they caught hunting and cook them, thereby teaching them important skills. C.B. McRay, who was also enslaved in Texas, said that he was known as Racer, because he used to "be fleet on the feet" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:40). When he was ten years old, he could often catch rabbits simply by running them down. Other methods of capturing rabbits that were mentioned in the interviews included snares, box traps, and gums. The WPA interviews indicate that rabbit hunting was a gendered activity that boys participated in. Additionally, these boys were generally around ten to twelve years old and did not mention younger children accompanying them on hunting outings. The interviews also revealed that, at least on some plantations, boys in this age group were allowed to leave the quarters at night without an adult.

Squirrels

When discussing hunting as children, interviewees tended to mention squirrels less than rabbits, possibly because squirrels are more difficult for children to catch.[92] George Rogers, who was enslaved in North Carolina, said that he and other boys would go hunting with guns when his enslaver was away. "We used to kill squirrels, turkeys, an' game wid guns. When marster went off some o' us boys stole de guns, an' away we went to de woods huntin'. Marster would come back drunk. He would not know, an' he did not care [neither], about we huntin' game" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:225). George's story implies that if his enslaver were sober, the boys would not be allowed to use the guns. Therefore, the boys' plan to only take the guns when their enslaver was gone (and would likely return in an inebriated state) may be understood as a conscious act of resistance.

Morgan Scurry was also enslaved in North Carolina and recalled that some of the enslaved boys hunted possums, rabbits, and squirrels. He mentioned that his enslaver had 100 acres of woods, and "they were just full of squirrels and we killed more squirrels than you can count" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 4 1936:89). Unfortunately, Morgan did not mention the methods that they used for hunting the squirrels. Finally, Henry Clay Bruce (who self-emancipated in 1864) wrote that when he was "too young to be put to work" he and four or five other boys his age would spend their days hunting and fishing on the Missouri farm where they were enslaved. They hunted rabbits and squirrels using hounds. "The trees there were usually small and too far apart for them [the squirrels] to jump from tree to tree, and when we saw one "treed" by the dogs, one of us climbed up and forced it to jump, and when it did, in nine cases

[92] Interestingly, in some Native American tribes, squirrels were considered "child's food," and in many tribes, children were the only individuals who hunted squirrels for food (Kuhnlein and Humphries 2017b).

out of ten the dogs would catch it. We often got six or eight in a day's hunting" (1895:18). As with rabbit hunting, squirrel hunting seems to have been an activity that only boys of a certain age participated in. Though ages are never explicitly mentioned in these quotes, it is implied that the boys were older children (and in Bruce's case, too young for labor). George Rogers and his friends were old enough to operate guns, so they were likely ten or twelve years old at the time. Other formerly enslaved men mentioned setting traps to catch squirrels when they were children. Overall, most of the WPA interviews that mention squirrels (as food) explicitly note that enslaved adult men were typically the individuals hunting squirrels and used dogs or guns to catch them.

Possums and Raccoons

In the WPA narratives, possum and raccoon hunting were almost always discussed as an activity that young boys participated in with their fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or other adult men in the enslaved community. Possums and raccoons are nocturnal animals and hunting excursions occurred after dark. Many of the interviews indicate that hunting for these animals was a male bonding activity. Enslaved adult men taught boys how to hunt while also spending much-needed quality time with them, which was largely impossible during the workday. George Henderson, who was formerly enslaved in Kentucky, remembered these trips with his father. "My daddy used to hunt rabbits and possums. I went with him and would ride on his back with my feet in his pockets. He had a dog named Brutus which was a watch dog…We ate all kinds of wild food, possum, and rabbits baked in a big oven" (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:5). From George's story, it is clear that he was quite young during these outings – small enough to put his feet in his father's pockets while he rode piggy-back. Charlie Barbour, who was enslaved in North Carolina, mentioned that "Ole Uncle Jeems" had some hounds that would run possums or

raccoons, and he would often take Charlie and the other boys along with him on hunts (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:75). John Glover, enslaved in South Carolina, lamented that his grandfather (whom he referred to as Uncle Ben) was a great possum hunter who died before John was big enough to go hunting with him (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:138).

Like rabbit and squirrel hunting, possum and raccoon hunting were also activities that older boys did together as a group. Simon Stokes, who was formerly enslaved in Virginia, shared a story that indicates that while the boys caught the animals, his mother was the person who actually cooked the meat. Simon discussed how he and his friends hunted possums in the fall, when the persimmons were ripe. The boys would catch two or three possums in one night, then keep them and feed them hoecake and persimmons to fatten the animals up. Finally, his mother would roast the possums with sweet potatoes (FWP Vol. 17 Virginia 1936:45).

Older boys understandably did not want younger children tagging along on these trips, as evidenced by Charlie Hudson's interview. Charlie was enslaved in Georgia and recalled how the older boys distracted the younger children to keep them from hunting with the boys. They would take the children across the fields until they reached a mass of thick bushes. The older boys would exclaim that there were mighty fine snipes in the area, and would make the younger children hold a bag open so the snipes could run in. Then the boys would blow out their lightwood knot torches and leave the children in the dark holding the bag while the boys went off hunting possums without them (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:223-224). In reality, there were no snipes at all.[93] A snipe hunt is a practical joke wherein the individual being pranked is taken

[93] Although there are birds called snipes (family Scolopacidae), in American folklore the snipes in the snipe hunt are fictitious creatures whose physical descriptions vary. Sometimes the snipe is simply a small bird and other times it is more fantastic, such as "a creature about the size of a squirrel, with six legs, scales, wings, and ears like a rabbit" (Marsh 2015:46).

to the woods at night and told to hold a bag open for the snipes to run in. The prankster then leaves the gullible person alone in the dark, holding out a bag, and waiting for the imaginary snipes (Marsh 2015:46-47). The older boys in Charlie Hudson's story were simply sending Charlie and the younger children on a fool's errand in order to keep them out of the way. This suggests that possum hunting was a serious venture that smaller children were likely to bungle and were therefore not welcome to join. The use of dogs to hunt possums and raccoons seemed to be the most popular method of capture, but other interviews also mentioned setting traps including pit traps disguised with leaves and brush to capture the animals.

Birds

Birds were hunted in a variety of different ways. Men who were formerly enslaved in North Carolina recalled going bird blinding as children, a process that took place after dark. It is unclear from the interviews whether the boys were accompanied by adult men when bird blinding, but this is most likely the case. Bird blinding, as described in the narratives, involved going out at night with torches made of lightwood splinters to an area with thick brush or broom grass, where the birds roosted. Zeb Crowder, who was enslaved in North Carolina, even mentioned that he would pile the brush himself in the wintertime to attract the roosting birds (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:199). Birds would also roost in sage fields, grass patches, briars, and vines along creeks low to the ground. The hunters would disturb the birds by jumping around or hitting the brush piles and when the birds came out, the light from the torches would blind them and the hunters would kill them by hitting them with a thorn brush. Birds that were hunted in this manner included robins, doves, and partridges (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:199).

Another method of catching birds was simply to set traps such as snares. Partridges, doves, and quail were caught in traps. Amos Lincoln, who was formerly enslaved in Louisiana, described a specific trap that he constructed to catch birds. "Us lace willow twigs and strings and put a cross piece on top and bottom, and little piece of wood on top edge. The trap 'bout two feet off the ground to cotch the birds. Doves, blackbirds, any kind birds you can eat" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 :18). After cleaning the birds, they would rub them in lard and broil them with plenty of black pepper and salt. Amos also mentioned that they would shoot ducks with a musket. Salem Powell, who was enslaved in Mississippi, remembered making slingshots and popguns to shoot sparrows. He would shoot rocks, china balls, and paper spit balls with the popgun (MDAH Series 0436). Foster Weathersby, who was also enslaved in Mississippi, recalled shooting birds with his slingshot as well (MDAH Series 0436).

Finally, bird-catching may have been a popular way to earn some money (with or without an enslaver's knowledge). Jim Gillard was enslaved in South Carolina but was taken to Georgia as a young boy. He said, "Game was plentiful in dem days, an' I never had any trouble catchin' dem birds" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:154). As a boy, Jim caught partridges and took them to the train (station?) where he sold them to a man named Charlie Crowder for ten cents each. Elisha "Doc" Garey, who was enslaved in Georgia, also sold partridges for money. Elisha said that the only way he could make money as a child was to sell the partridges that he caught in traps to the Yankees who were always passing through (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:3). It is unclear whether the Yankees were Union soldiers or simply northern visitors, but they purchased his partridges for ten cents apiece. Elisha commented that he might have saved more of his money if he had not loved store-bought peppermint candy so much. The stories of Jim Gillard and Elisha Garey are significant because they demonstrate that enslaved children were not only

capable hunters but that they were also resourceful economic contributors. Stories such as these may answer questions regarding how certain artifacts were introduced to slave quarters.

Recollections of catching fish and shellfish

Of all the animals mentioned in WPA interviews in regard to enslaved children's subsistence activities, fish were by far the most common. Additionally, fishing was not a gendered activity, and both men and women recalled fishing frequently as children. The most common method of catching fish was with a hook and line. James Bolton, who was enslaved in Georgia, said that children mostly caught fish with a hook and line – "mostly cats [catfish], and perch and heaps and heaps of suckers" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:93). Tom Hawkins, who was enslaved in South Carolina, explained that at his plantation, adults seined for fish in the evening while children used a hook and line during the day (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:128). Wes Woods, who was formerly enslaved in Kentucky, discussed fishing with a stock pole and twine string after finding worms for bait (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:25). And George Dorsey, who was also enslaved in Kentucky, remembered cutting poles in the woods and using flax thread for fishing line (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:57).

Enslaved children often repurposed items that were readily available and modified them to fit their own needs (such as flax thread and twine string in lieu of fishing line). While some children had access to fishing hooks, many others recalled using dress pins and bending them into hooks, like Maggie Jackson, who was formerly enslaved in Texas. Maggie said that almost all of the children on the plantation would go fishing together on Saturdays, using pins as hooks. This method was quite successful, and Maggie remembered catching "a whole string of fish" by herself on one particular day (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:185). George Rogers, who was enslaved in North Carolina, also used pin hooks to catch fish in the creek on the plantation. "We

would trade our fish to missus for molasses to make candy" (Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:223). Henry Clay Bruce also used bent pins as hooks and he made fishing lines out of hemp grown on the farm. For Henry, catching the fish was easier than digging the worms for bait. Deemed too young for work, he and his young companions "often brought home as much as five pounds of fish in a day" (1895:18). Other methods of catching fish included the use of seines, sometimes made out of organic plant materials. Levi Branham, who was enslaved in Georgia, recalled tying "pine tops" together to make a seine to catch fish as a young boy (1929:1).[94]

Another method that children used to catch fish was to simply hit the fish on the head (either stunning them or killing them). This was generally done in very shallow waters, such as creeks. Susan Castle, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, said that the children used to go fishing in Moore's Branch. "One would stand on one side of de branch wid a stick, and one on de udder side would roust de fishes out. When dey come up to de top and jump up, us would hit 'em on de head, and de grown folks would cook em" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:179). In many of the interviews where informants discussed hunting or fishing as children, the interviewees stated that although the children would catch the animals, the adults were the ones who cooked the meat. This supports the notion that although young children may have been capable hunters or fishers, they did not yet have the skill to process, clean, and cook the animals that they caught.

Enslaved children also set traps for fish, though it is not clear if the children made (or helped to make) these traps themselves. At the plantation where James Bolton was enslaved in

[94] The exact definition of "pine tops" is unclear, but Branham may have been referring to pine needles, which can be woven into baskets. The needles of the longleaf pine and slash pine are especially long, measuring up to 24 inches in length, and could have feasibly been tied together to create a seine.

Georgia, the carpenters there knew how to make basket traps that caught many fish (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:93). Gus Feaster, who was enslaved in South Carolina, set mud baskets, a sort of trap for catfish. He would tie grapevines to the baskets and set them in the river (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:46). Finally, some formerly enslaved individuals recalled going gigging for fish as children. Robert Hinton, who was enslaved in North Carolina, said that he (and others) would find fish lying on the bottom of creeks or ponds at night and stab them with gigs to pull them out (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:439). This information is surprising, as I believed that it was unlikely that children had access to weapons such as spears and because gigging is typically (but not always) done at night. However, this fact is important in recognizing that at least some enslaved children had access to spears and were also capable of correctly utilizing them. Remains of certain fish species found in slave quarters that I may have considered improbable as the catch of enslaved children may now be reconsidered. Some fish that are commonly targeted when gigging include catfish, suckers, carp, and gar.

Besides fish, enslaved children also caught shellfish such as crawfish. Crawfish are more commonly found in the Lower South states, and this may be the reason as to why there were no crawfish remains identified in the assemblages from Virginia plantations. The interviewees who explicitly mention crawfish were enslaved in Mississippi and Louisiana, states where crawfish are plentiful. Valmar Cormier, who was enslaved in Louisiana, told his interviewer how the enslaved children caught crawfish. The children would tie an old piece of fat meat to the end of a string and go to the bog, dropping the string down a crawfish hole. When the crawfish grabbed the meat with its pincher, the children would haul it up and then boil it or use it as an ingredient in gumbo. Cormier also remembered that he and the other children would go through the woods and eat snails right out of their shells (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:253). As opportunistic

hunters and foragers, children may have gone out with the intent of catching crawfish, but if there were edible snails along the way, they might have eaten those as well.

Many of the WPA interviewees that mentioned fishing as children also noted that fishing (as well as hunting and foraging) occurred at a time in the informant's life when they were considered too young for fieldwork (see Figure 3). For example, Alonza Fantroy Toombs, who was enslaved in Georgia, mentioned that when he was too young to work in the fields, his job was to hunt and fish and feed the livestock in the evening (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:383). Alonza did not say whether the game that he caught hunting and fishing went to feed his own family or his enslaver's, but his story highlights the fact that although enslaved children may have been too young for fieldwork, they still had responsibilities, and were obviously capable of doing work that required some skill (such as hunting or fishing). Therefore, the age of enslaved children or the fact that they did not yet work in the fields should not be understood as an indicator of their abilities or skillset. As mentioned previously, Henry Bruce Clay was too young for fieldwork, but he and his companions still managed to bring home up to five pounds of fish a day (1895:18).

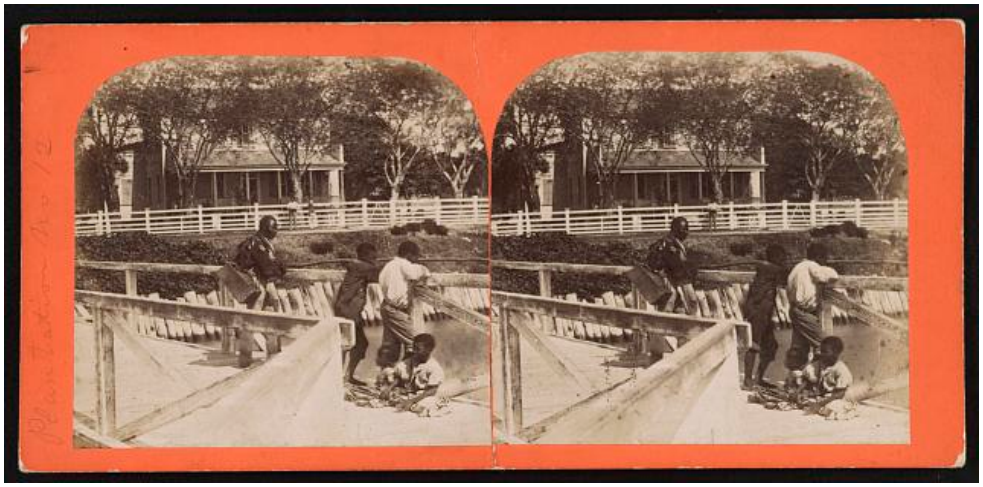


Figure 3. Plantation no. 12 Rockville Plantation, near Charleston, SC.

An adult man (referred to as "Old Bacchus" on the back of the stereograph) fishes off the side of a bridge using a long pole. Two boys stand with him while a younger child and toddler sit by their feet. The date (1860) and location suggest that the man and children are enslaved. Possibly, Bacchus is teaching the older boys to fish while they mind the younger children. *Photo by Osborn & Durbec, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.*

Bert Mayfield, who was enslaved in Kentucky, remembered that "The little boys would fish, bringing home fish to be scaled by rubbing them between their hands, rolled in meal and cooked in a big skillet" (FWP. Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:14). It is not clear whether the little boys cooked the fish themselves, but it seems that they caught enough fish to adequately feed themselves and others. The fried fish were served with pone corn bread, a meal which Bert fondly recalled was "big eatins," demonstrating that the children were sometimes the primary suppliers of the protein for supper. Thomas Johns, who was enslaved in Alabama, said that he and the other children would actually go fishing and then cook the fish themselves, providing a meal for themselves during the day. "I was de leader of de bunch. We would ketch little fish in de creek. We'd cook a lot of fish and den we'd put a rag rug in de yard under a big mulberry tree and pour de fish out on dat and den eat 'em" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:203). Thomas' story indicates that although the children were considered too young for work, some were fairly self-sufficient and able to find something to eat and cook it without adult help. Thomas Johns, as the leader of the bunch, was probably one of the oldest children in the group and therefore responsible for caring for (and feeding) the younger children during the daytime.

Other interviews echo the notion that when they were not doing chores such as stacking wood, pulling weeds, or feeding the livestock, enslaved children could typically be found fishing at a creek on the plantation. Steve Brown, who was formerly enslaved in Missouri, said that when he was little, the most fun the children had was going fishing, and they spent most of the time by the branch. "I guess de big folks was glad to have us out of de way" (FWP Vol. 10 Missouri 1936:57). Though he did not discuss what kinds of fish he caught or how often, it seems likely that if the children spent most of their time fishing, they would typically catch some fish each day, even if they were small. Other interviews mention that even minnows were fished,

fried, and eaten. Susan McIntosh was formerly enslaved in Georgia. She remembered that her enslaver's son, a man who had dwarfism, was responsible for watching the enslaved children on the plantation during the day. He would take the children down to the creek that ran through the plantation and they would fish all day (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:81).

Taking into account all of these stories from formerly enslaved individuals about fishing during childhood, one might overlook their significance because these stories are often discussed as an enjoyable pastime or as an activity that children did during the daytime as a way to entertain themselves while their parents were away. However, by analyzing the stories through a more critical lens, it becomes immediately clear that enslaved children were skilled fishers who were incredibly resourceful. They constructed fishing poles, hooks, lines, and seines from other materials and implemented multiple methods in order to catch fish, including hook and line fishing and the use of seines, fish traps, and gigs. When such materials were not available, enslaved children invented other creative ways to acquire fish, like Susan Castle's method of a group of children herding fish to one side of the creek where other children waited to dispatch the fish by hitting them with sticks. Finally, it is exceedingly evident that enslaved children were frequently supplying their families (and themselves) with fresh fish to supplement their rationed diets, contributing necessary calories and nutrients to communal meals.

Recollections of catching amphibians, reptiles, and miscellaneous creatures

Hunting amphibians and reptiles (as food) was rarely mentioned as a childhood activity in the WPA interviews, though this does not necessarily mean that eating those kinds of animals was uncommon. Elisha Garey, who was enslaved in Georgia, mentioned that along with fish, he also went gigging for frogs as a boy (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:3). And Joseph Holmes, who was enslaved in Virginia, said that he and his little sister would give their mother a mud

turtle to cook (or a raccoon or a rabbit) as an apology gift when his little sister would tear her clothes playing in the woods with him (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:197). From the interviews, it seems that capturing amphibians and reptiles for food was more opportunistic rather than planned. In general, amphibians and reptiles were mentioned by formerly enslaved individuals in other contexts, but typically not as food.[95]

Recollections of foraging plants, fruit, and nuts

Foraging for edible plants (such as greens or roots), fruits, and nuts was mentioned as often as fishing in WPA interviews. Depending on the season, enslaved children could gather many different wild foods to contribute to family meals or to sustain themselves during the day. Wild, leafy plants and roots were typically brought home to be cooked. Sally Murphy, who was enslaved in Alabama, recalled that as a child, she and the other children would go to the fields early in the morning to pick young hickory and oak leaves "to scald and cook in de pot wid meat" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:294). She said that they made good greens, and that they ate poke salad (which must be boiled at least twice before it is safe to eat) too. Enslaved in South Carolina, Jim Henry remembered that he and the other enslaved children ran around in their shirttails during the summer months, just hunting for "grapes, muscadines, strawberries, chinquapins, hickory nuts, calamus root, slippery elm bark, wild cherries, mulberries, and black and red haws" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:266-267). And Julius Nelson, who was formerly enslaved in North Carolina, said that sometimes his enslaver would let the little children pick blackberries off the hedge row to make a big pan pie for their supper (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:145). For Alice Hutcheson, who was enslaved in Georgia, hunting

[95] Although he did not capture these animals for food, Richard Slaughter, who was enslaved in Virginia, caught snakes and terrapins as a boy and sold them to sailors who used the creatures to eat roaches on the ships (FWP Vol. 17 Virginia 1936:49).

for chestnuts and chinquapins was only allowed as a reward for completing labor. Her enslaver's wife made the children card, spin, and reel cotton. Alice said that the woman gave the children six cuts of thread for a day's work, and if they worked hard and fast enough, they could finish in time to gather the nuts (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:285). In all of these instances, the children learned at a young age which plants were edible and how to identify them. Further, they were contributing types of food to their own meals which they may not have had eaten otherwise, as enslaved adults typically went hunting or fishing in the evening rather than picking berries or greens. Enslaved children, then, were most likely the primary contributors of wild greens, fruits, and nuts, along with the superannuated enslaved people who may have been their caretakers during the daytime.

Many formerly enslaved people discussed eating nuts or other snacks around a fire at night with their friends or family. Tom Woods, who was enslaved in Alabama, remembers gathering the nuts for these occasions – hickory nuts, hazelnuts, pig nuts, and walnuts – and then eating them around the fire while telling ghost stories (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:358). Enslaved in Mississippi, Charlie Davenport also collected nuts for these nights. He said, "us little tykes would gather black walnuts in de woods an' store 'em under de cabins to dry." When he became old enough to tote sweet potatoes from the fields, he and the other children would hide a pile of them away for later. In the evening, they would roast the potatoes in the ashes of the fire while eating cracked nuts which they picked out with horseshoe nails (FWP Vol. 9 Mississippi 1936:34). Charlie Davenport and the other children were forced to work but were able to take some of the sweet potatoes and hide them for later. Acie Thomas, who was enslaved in Florida, remembers doing something similar with eggs. The children on the plantation where he was enslaved were required to check the nests of stray hens, turkeys, guineas, and geese so that the

eggs would not hatch far from the hen house. “Quite a number of these eggs got roasted in remote corners of the plantation by the finders…” (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:329). Acie Thomas’ narrative, unfortunately, has been rewritten in the third person by his interviewer, so there are no direct quotes from Acie himself. The interviewer implied that the eggs were supposed to be returned to the hen house, rather than taken to “remote corners of the plantation.” Although Acie Thomas and Charlie Davenport may not have been old enough to intentionally hide some sweet potatoes or eggs as acts of resistance, they were old enough to know that if they were caught, they would likely get into some trouble. However, the boys (and their companions) defied their enslavers by continuing to hide the potatoes and eggs, thereby providing themselves with sustenance for later.

Finally, foraging was also a method for making money. When Henry Walker was a child enslaved in Tennessee, his enslaver, whom he called “old mistress,” made the children who were too young to work in the fields earn money for her in other ways. She forced the children to collect “scaley barks and hickory nuts and chestnuts and walnuts” which she sold in Nashville by the barrel. The children collected the chinquapins in the swamps and the walnuts in the woods. The enslaver also made the children tote buckets of sap down from the sugar maple trees on the plantation which she boiled down to make brown sugar. Additionally, Henry’s enslaver sent the children up into the hills to gather ginseng, which they collected in sacks to be sold (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 7 1936:28-29). In this way, Henry Walker’s enslaver was able to make quite a profit from all of the nuts, sap, and ginseng gathered by the little children who were too small for fieldwork. Even when enslaved children were too young for fieldwork, the labor that they were forced to perform in the form of small tasks or chores typically generated some sort of profit for their enslaver and kept the plantation system running.

Enslaved people were sometimes able to make small amounts of money by selling the goods that they foraged, such as berries. Gus Feaster, who was enslaved in South Carolina, recalled that the first time he ever made money was by selling blackberries he gathered to a woman at Goshen Hill, who used them to make wine. Like the other interviewees who discussed making money as children, Gus used his earnings to purchase candy (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:43). Willie Cozart, who was formerly enslaved in North Carolina, told his interviewer that the only way that the enslaved people at his plantation were able to make money was by selling the berries that they picked. He noted that they did not have very much time to pick the berries, because they worked from sunup to sundown six days a week (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:184). Willie was around 16 years old when the Civil War began and probably worked as a full hand and did not have much extra time to devote to other pursuits. However, young enslaved children on the plantation may have had the time to pick berries to sell.

Another piece of evidence proving that enslaved children sold the fruit that they foraged comes from Anne Cary Randolph's household accounts book. Anne was the granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson and kept records of household purchases at Monticello from 1805 to 1808. She purchased many things for the household from the enslaved workers at Monticello, including eggs, honey, and produce. On Sunday, May 25th, 1806, Anne recorded separate purchases of strawberries from Billy and Nancy (Randolph 1805-1808). Billy, who would have been six or seven years old at the time, received three shillings for his six quarts of strawberries. Nancy, who would have been fourteen or fifteen years old, received two shillings for four quarts of strawberries. Billy must have returned with another four quarts of strawberries, as he is listed again, and received two shillings for them. In the next daily entry, Anne paid Beverly one

shilling and six pence for his three quarts of strawberries. Beverly was Jefferson's enslaved son and would have been eight years old at the time.[96] The account book may suggest that after Billy and Nancy received payment for their strawberries, they shared the news with Beverly, who gathered strawberries and sold them to Anne the next day. However, strawberry season in Virginia takes place in May and June, so the children may have been out picking strawberries anyway. In any case, the entries in Anne Cary Randolph's account book provide documentation that enslaved children were picking strawberries together and selling them for money. How the children spent their money is unknown. They may have given the money to their parents or used it to purchase things like candy or toys from the local general store. Regardless of how they spent it, the children were earning money as producers in the local economy of Monticello.

Conclusion

The documentary record is full of examples of enslaved children's hunting, fishing, and foraging activities, though it is clear that some ventures were more successful than others. Small game hunting including birds was a gendered activity practiced by boys and men. It served multiple purposes beyond providing meat for the table – it provided necessary male bonding time and allowed for the transmission of knowledge regarding hunting skills. Fishing, on the other hand, was an activity that both boys and girls participated in frequently and may have been a daily activity on some plantations during the spring and summer months. Enslaved children learned to fish from a young age and could create their own fishing tackle from objects that they modified and repurposed. It is clear that fish were probably the most significant contributions that enslaved children made in terms of providing more food for themselves and their families. Amphibians and reptiles were not mentioned much in the narratives, though the animals that are

[96] Beverly was Jefferson's son, making Anne Cary Randolph his niece.

explicitly mentioned (mud turtles and frogs) are creatures that the model predicted as probable contributions made by children. Finally, foraging for wild plants, roots, fruit, and nuts was another enterprise that enslaved children practiced daily during the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Due to the time-consuming nature of picking berries or harvesting nuts, both of which are done during the daytime, children would have also had the most time available to forage. While older boys between the ages of ten and twelve (possibly up to age fourteen if they were not working in the field) were most likely responsible for hunting small game and birds, it is apparent that younger children were successful fishers and foragers.

Outside of the plantation labor that they were required to perform, enslaved children found the time to provide necessary and nutritious foods for themselves and their families. They were also able to sell the animals that they caught and fruits that they foraged for cash, which allowed them to purchase goods from general stores that they may not have otherwise been able to acquire. Store-bought items that are found archaeologically and that are typically considered children's items, such as marbles, doll parts, and Jew's harps may now be interpreted as purchases made by enslaved children, rather than their parents. Additionally, the bones of small birds, freshwater fish, and shellfish may now be more seriously considered as possible dietary contributions made by enslaved children, along with macroplant remains such as pits, seeds, and nuts. These contributions may be considered by some as insignificant, but in fact they were incredibly important to the survival of the enslaved community.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will discuss the primary theoretical approach that has shaped this dissertation project, namely critical theory. This theory explains the motivations behind this

research and the ways in which to understand it. It also provides an explanation of why this research is both relevant and necessary, particularly when understood in the context of the current American political climate.

Critical theory and ideology

In this discussion, critical theory refers to the Frankfurt School of critical theory associated with the Institute for Social Research, founded in 1923. Critical theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse drew from the theories of Karl Marx, and were interested in "the forces which moved (and might be guided to move) society towards rational institutions – institutions which would ensure a true, free, and just life" (Held 2004:15). They utilized history to guide their interdisciplinary approach to questions regarding the conditions which reproduce and transform society. For these scholars, as well as others associated with Marxist theories (such as Lukács and Althusser), understanding ideology and the ways in which it functioned was fundamental to achieving their goal of enlightenment, or social emancipation.

According to Marx, the ruling class in every era controls both the material means of production and the means of mental production, and therefore their ideas are also the ruling ideas (Marx and Engels 2004:64). "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance" (Marx and Engels 2004:64-65). The ruling class creates the ideas and regulates their production and distribution among society, and in this way the ideas of the ruling class become the dominant ideas, or ideology. Ideology functions to secure the positions of those in the ruling class and obscures or conceals the true relations of production, which includes the exploitation that reproduces societal inequalities. This is achieved by presenting the interests of the ruling class as

the common interests of everyone in society, including the laboring classes. These interests are represented "as the only rational, universally valid ones" (Marx and Engels 2004:66). As such, they suggest the notion of equality and blur the actual conditions of production. American democracy, or the concept that all Americans have equal rights and access to democratic government, is a good example of an interest of the ruling class that is presented as a common interest which actually functions to serve the ruling class.

For Althusser, ideology may be understood as both illusion and allusion; ideologies "constitute an illusion" while making an "allusion to reality" and "they need only be 'interpreted' to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world" (Althusser 1971:162). Ideology is "the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (Althusser 1971:165).[97] Therefore, ideology "hides and masks exploitation or rationalizes by naturalizing or supernaturalizing it. Ideology acts within a stratified or class society to reproduce inequality without serious resistance, violence, or revolution" (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987:284). According to Althusser, "individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects," meaning that ideology is inescapable (1971:176).[98] Therefore, the purpose of critical theory is to reveal the contradictions that have been purposely hidden or masked within the dominant class ideology.[99] "Theory must be

[97] The contemporary philosopher Slavoj Žižek offers a more effective (if less tasteful) description of ideology in his 2012 film, explaining, "I already am eating from the trash can all the time. The name of this trash can is ideology. The material force of ideology makes me not see what I am effectively eating" (Fiennes 2012).

[98] Scholars disagree on whether it is possible to ever fully rid oneself of ideology. While Althusser claims that it is impossible to escape, Marx believes that it is possible to know the real conditions of history through consciousness (2004:67).

[99] It must be stated that some members of the proletariat do not always share the ideology of the dominant class, or bourgeoisie. They are not always convinced and therefore operate under differing ideologies.

oriented, in short, to the development of consciousness and the promotion of active political involvement" (Held 2004:22). In other words, the application of critical theory should always be directed towards producing social change through enlightenment. Real political change can only occur once people are made aware of the material conditions of production which are rationalized through ideology.

Critical archaeology

The use of critical theory in the field of archaeology (more specifically, historical archaeology) began in the 1980s after first being applied in ethnographic studies of historic museum sites (Roller et al. 2020:2804; see also Handsman 1981; Wallace 1981; Leone 1981; Wylie 1985; Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987). Outdoor history museums such as Colonial Williamsburg presented (and continue to present) a falsified version of American history – one that was intended to ignite feelings of patriotism in visitors and purposely excluded the ugliness of realities such as slavery, sexism, and violence. These sites "not only misrepresent the past…but, in doing this, they directly serve the interests of the present; they are a medium for the self-definition and self-legitimation of those who create and view them" (Wylie 1985:138).

Museum reconstructions examples of ideology at work – they are illusions, created to convince visitors of a noble American past wherein slavery did not exist (or that enslaved people were totally accepting of their status as enslaved) and women were fine with being disenfranchised members of society who were happy to obey their husbands. When visitors see such scenes at museums, they are presented as accurate and true. The interpretations of history then become ideology. The social inequalities and power imbalances that result in exploitation are depicted as normal, implying that if this is the way things were in the past, then the social order that exists today is justified and is therefore maintained by the visitors who accept it as

fact. The depictions of the American past at outdoor history museums concerned archaeologists because many of these places used archaeology as the basis for the legitimacy of their claims whilst selectively choosing which facts to present and which to ignore or hide. The living history museums were selling the idealized (and false) version of American history that visitors paid to see and experience.

The use of critical theory in outdoor history museum ethnographies (and the realization that archaeology was being used as a political device) influenced historical archaeologists to practice archaeology informed by critical theory, or critical archaeology. Critical theory aims to expose the violence and unequal social relationships camouflaged by ideology, which has a material existence represented through artifacts that can be studied archaeologically (Althusser 1971:165; Roller et al. 2020:2802). Critical archaeologists (drawing from historical materialism) understand ideology as "the mental "givens," or "taken-for-granteds" held unawares by members of society; things that are taken as being "obvious" and "naturally so," not the explicit beliefs of a group" (Leone 1982:748). Ideology "serves to reproduce society intact," or in other words, maintain the status quo, and it "activated and reproduced in use" (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987:284). "It is the means by which inequality, bondage, frustration, etc., are made acceptable, rationalized, or hidden" (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987:284). Archaeologists who utilize critical theory believe that consciousness produced by exposing ideology may lead to enlightenment or emancipation from coercion, including self-imposed coercion (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987:284).

Archaeologists interpret the past by excavating sites and analyzing artifacts. To do this, they consult other sources to inform their research. These sources are generally archival documents including ledgers, personal papers, maps, and photographs, among other things. But

these sources are not objective. They were created by individuals who were influenced by ideology in the past and are now being consulted by individuals who are influenced by ideology in the present. Because of this, critical self-reflection is integral to archaeology informed by critical theory, as all knowledge is produced by individuals who are interpellated by various ideologies, which then affect one's knowledge of the past or perception of the present. These ideologies will therefore affect archaeological interpretations. "Once an archaeologist understands that history and archaeology are not neutral or culture-free pursuits, but part of the ideological process of his or her own society, then the categories that generate a particular reconstruction of the past may be examined for their role in generating interpretation of it" (Leone 1982:750). Critical theory calls for an examination of the context of knowledge production in the past and in the present (including the standpoint of its producers).

Power, and more specifically the imbalance of power (which results in unequal social relationships and, more broadly, a hierarchical society) is fundamental to the reproduction of the social order and "[sustains] systematic inequality, sexism, and racism" (Roller et al. 2020:2803). Archaeologists are knowledge-producers in positions of power. They create interpretations of the past that are then shared with the public, and their position or status as archaeologists typically affords them some measure of credibility. But if archaeological sites are interpreted through a non-critical lens, that is, through ideology that has not been thoroughly interrogated, then the interpretations of sites may be inadvertently reproducing structural inequalities as well as an inaccurate representation of the past. "Our job [as archaeologists] is to help in the unmasking of the partial in the first place" (Leone 2010:48). Here, "the partial" refers to the inequalities of wealth and power inherent in a capitalist society that are disguised or masked through the government and other institutions peddling the illusions of democracy and equality.

In order to conduct the job of unmasking the partial, critical archaeologists must interrogate the popular or obvious ideas that we, as a society, believe about people and societies in the past. This is because ideology functions to make us believe that our current social order is natural. It is a given, it looked this way in the past, and therefore this is the way it has always been. Ideology makes people complaisant with the existing conditions of society (including inequalities) and with ideological violence, which includes things like "racism, incitement, [and] sexual discrimination" (Žižek 2008:10). Critical archaeology can demonstrate that "the roots of modern society are arbitrary and not inevitable" (Roller et al. 2020:2803). In this way, archaeology functions as a vehicle for the unmasking and serves the imperative mission for critical scholars of contributing "to public political and social consciousness" through research endeavors (Roller et al. 2020:2806). One of the main ideas that Archaeology in Annapolis shared with site visitors in the 1980s was that "The past is thought up, not dug up" (Leone 2010:167). Critical archaeologists are capable of creating political change in the present through the study of the past and are responsible for emancipating or enlightening others from ideology through their work.

How rewritten history becomes ideology

This research focuses on enslaved children in the antebellum United States. The general history of enslavement in the U.S. is an extremely political topic, especially today. Here I will briefly explain how this history has been successfully rewritten through ideology, how that ideology is maintained, and how that ideology influences both the public's perception of slavery as well as the ways that historical archaeologists interpret sites of enslavement (both of which reproduce unequal social relationships and maintain structural violence). I will also discuss why the U.S. government, as the State, or the Repressive State Apparatus, is key to upholding and

promoting this ideology, and how it is distributed and reinforced through the multiple Ideological State Apparatuses.

Since the end of the Civil War, slavery apologists, former Confederates, Southern aristocrats, and a significant portion of the population in the South have worked to spread the story, or lie, that the southern states seceded from the Union not because of slavery, but because of the Northern threat against their rights (Bailey 1991; Smith 2021). They asserted that the Civil War was a result of Northern aggression against the Southern economy and the Southern way of life. These groups also claimed that slavery was positive, rewriting it as a necessity for the good of enslaved Africans and African Americans. They portrayed the relationship between an enslaver and those whom he or she enslaved as a paternal one. The enslavers, they declared, were kind and took care of the people they enslaved. And actually, they did not benefit that much from their stolen labor! They enslaved them out of the goodness of their hearts.[100]

This myth is known as the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, or simply the Lost Cause, and it continues today. The Lost Cause narrative is rampant not only in the American South, but across the country, though it is still viewed by many as extreme or false. Many individuals continue to believe that the Civil War was fought over states' rights, rights allowed to them by the Constitution. Of course, this begs the question: states' rights to do what? The answer is very clearly: states' rights to continue the institution of chattel slavery. What may have begun as a story that the losers of the Civil War told their children and themselves in order to preserve their

[100] See U.B. Phillips' *American Negro Slavery* (1918) and Winfield Collins' *The Domestic Slave Trade of the Southern States* (1904) for examples of publications by academics promoting the Lost Cause as accurate history.

pride has become a popular ideology regarding the history of U.S. slavery for much of the country and has deeply influenced the dominant ideology today.[101]

The current dominant ideology claims that slavery was in the past (and is therefore dead or not worth discussing), slavery was not so bad, some enslavers were actually nice to those whom they enslaved, and people who want to discuss America's history with slavery today need to let it go or move on. This ideology says things like, "We have moved on. We are all Americans now and we are all equal. Why bring up ugly things from hundreds of years ago? What you think you know about the past is not true, anyway." This current dominant ideology has its roots in the Lost Cause, but it is separate. It is less extreme and therefore widely shared. This ideology is nonpartisan and is espoused by Republicans and Democrats alike, though it operates on a spectrum.[102] Individuals do not have to agree with something as extreme as the Lost Cause in order to be interpellated by this ideology (though some certainly do). To clarify, the Lost Cause is an explicitly held belief, while ideology works subconsciously. People may hold explicit beliefs that they consciously recognize, but the ideology that is related to that belief is still hiding and normalizing conditions that these people are *not* totally conscious of. Ideology affects the way people think, react, and behave.

Historian Edward Baptist wrote, "The idea that the commodification and suffering and forced labor of African Americans is what made the United States powerful and rich is not an

[101] Clint Smith demonstrated that the Lost Cause narrative is still alive and well in his 2021 work, *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*.
[102] For example, the number of Democrats who have attempted to shame or chastise me for simply discussing my research is about the same as the number of Republicans who have done so. This typically occurs after the person enquires about my research and then feels compelled to either argue with me or to make me feel as if I have said something offensive. These people immediately become defensive. Therefore, the dominant American ideology surrounding slavery does not seem to correspond with any particular political party.

idea that people necessarily are happy to hear. Yet it is the truth" (Baptist 2016:xxii). Ideology simply hides the true material conditions of American history by ignoring it, forgetting about it, rewriting it, and tying it to other ideals such as patriotism. In the United States, acknowledging the realities of slavery that are contrary to what is taught in schools or that are perceived to paint the country (especially the Founding Fathers) in a negative light is considered distinctly unpatriotic behavior.[103] And if you are not proud to be an American, then perhaps you are an outsider or an enemy. In this way, ideology creates a feeling of exclusivity and a membership that people are eager to both join and defend. Conversely, it has negative or punishing social and political effects for those who consciously and explicitly disagree with it.

I will give an example of how ideology (in regard to slavery and patriotism) is created and why it is easy to maintain. Twelve U.S. presidents enslaved people during their lives, including Founding Fathers such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. These men are attributed with creating the United States – without them, we would not be free from the tyranny of England and the United States of America would not exist. When the Founding Fathers are discussed, there is typically the implication or sentiment that Americans today should be grateful to them and that they are owed respect. At the very beginning of this country's history, then, there exists the contradiction that the same men who fought for freedom and equality also enslaved hundreds of human beings. This incongruity is extremely difficult for people to contend with. The inability to comprehend the truth results in a sort of mental gymnastics to explain or justify the situation.

[103] The education system is an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). How this ideology is maintained in schools will be discussed shortly.

For example, one might claim that because George Washington won the Revolutionary War, founded the country, and served as our first President, there is no way that he was an evil slaveholder. Washington is considered the greatest American hero, and as such it is impossible to imagine that he may have been a morally corrupt man. Therefore, he must have been kind to the people whom he enslaved. There is also evidence that he felt badly about enslaving people. A quote attributed to Washington reads, "the unfortunate condition of the persons, whose labour in part I employed, has been the only unavoidable subject of regret" (Humphreys 1991:78). The logic follows that if George Washington was a good and kind enslaver who felt bad about slavery, then it was probably not uncommon for other enslavers to be nice to the people whom they enslaved as well. And if this were the case, then perhaps slavery was not really that terrible for enslaved people after all. Many Americans are eager to believe this lie rather than grapple with the upsetting and confusing truth, and thus, rewritten history becomes ideology.

In order to unmask this ideology and reveal the true conditions of the master-slave relation, all one must do is to understand that kindness does not justify enslavement and that George Washington was an imperfect man who was capable of many things, some of which were contradictory. Additionally, in the master-slave relation, the enslaved person was typically powerless in relation to the enslaver. This means that "no authentic human relationship was possible where violence was the ultimate sanction. There could have been no trust, no genuine sympathy; and while a kind of love may sometimes have triumphed over this most perverse form of interaction, intimacy was usually calculating and sadomasochistic" (Patterson 1982:12). By all accounts, George Washington did treat the people whom he enslaved better than the majority of enslavers. The bottom line here is that he still enslaved them. He stole their labor, their children, and their freedom. He oppressed hundreds of people and went out of his way to keep them

enslaved, going so far as to violate the Gradual Abolition Act (1780) multiple times while he was living in Philadelphia as the President.[104] These are facts that most Americans are either unwilling to accept, happy to ignore, or quick to justify, and this is how the dominant ideology surrounding American chattel slavery is created and maintained.

The Repressive State Apparatus

The Repressive State Apparatus, specifically the American government, is fundamental to perpetuating this ideology. The U.S. government (including the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches) is the State, or what Marxists call the State apparatus (Althusser 1971). The State apparatus, also known as the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) includes the police, the legal courts, the prisons, the army, and above these, the head of State – the government and the administration (Althusser 1971:137). The RSA apparatus may be defined as "a force of repressive execution and intervention 'in the interests of the ruling classes' in the class struggle conducted by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat" (Althusser 1971:137). The State therefore enables and maintains the domination of the ruling class over the working class, which is achieved primarily through the capitalist exploitation of the working class.[105] The Repressive State Apparatus functions primarily through violence, though this violence or repression can take non-physical forms as well (such as the repression enacted by the federal government). The RSA also functions through ideology, but less so than the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).

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[104] For more information, see Erica Dunbar's *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (2017)

[105] It should be noted that the Repressive State Apparatus is separate from Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), but ISAs are also important to this discussion and will be addressed later in this chapter. The RSA works in conjunction with ISAs to maintain the dominance of the hegemonic class.

Understandably, one might assume that the only people who promote the dominant ideology surrounding American slavery are those who are uneducated and outwardly racist. However, that is not the case. One need only look at what some members of the RSA are doing and saying to understand that many of the individuals who believe in the Lost Cause are the same people who are currently running the country. This is not a coincidence. The dominant ideology is generally comprised of ideas that the ruling class creates and distributes. These ideas are designed to keep the ruling class in power but are presented as ideas that everyone shares – the givens and taken-for-granteds. This ensures that the working class will not question why the current structural inequalities exist, or worse, take action against these inequalities. So why would the government (or the majority of the government) want people to ignore or forget or deny the history of enslavement in this country? In other words, what would happen if the majority of the population realized how deeply slavery affected this country and continues to affect this country today?[106] There are multiple possibilities.

First, for the U.S. government (as the RSA) acknowledging the fact that slavery was integral to the creation of this country and its success as a global entity means taking responsibility for it. Once the RSA admits to creating and supporting these crimes against humanity, it will not be able to take the confession back. Additionally, taking responsibility for American chattel slavery also extends to taking responsibility for the United States' role in the transatlantic slave trade, the illegal transatlantic slave trade after 1807, and for the numerous

[106] I explicitly use the language "majority of the government" and "majority of the population" because there are certainly individuals or groups who are quite passionate and vocal about addressing the country's history of enslavement. However, outside of academia, these people are either not taken seriously (and therefore depicted as misinformed or as liars with an agenda) or are taken seriously for a brief amount of time in the news cycle before quickly being ignored. The dominant ideology is the cause for both attitudes towards these people.

wrongs that stemmed from the institution of American slavery such as segregation, police brutality against Black people, and more.

Second, the RSA would have to answer for these crimes in some material way, such as reparations, and this would upset a significant amount of the population who feel that reparations to descendants of enslaved people are undeserved. The RSA would also have to commit to massive structural changes that would anger the same people who do not support reparations. This would result in widespread distrust in the RSA which would manifest in a number of negative ways, most obviously, violence. This would cause the State to deploy other arms of the RSA, including the police and the military, in order to defuse the situation and to remind Americans that insubordination against the RSA only results in more violence. The RSA has demonstrated that it has no problems with killing innocent people who are deemed threats to the established hierarchy.

Third, if the RSA acknowledged slavery and claimed responsibility for the issues that stemmed from slavery, it is likely to create a snowball effect. People would become more aware of just how many issues within the country were caused by the institution of slavery. Ultimately, many of the people who were once influenced by the dominant ideology will become conscious of the many structural inequalities that continue today and that affect *all* Americans. These include basic human rights, such as equal access to healthcare and housing, which do not exist in the United States currently. A significant part of the population suddenly gaining awareness could possibly result in class consciousness which in turn might lead to a revolution against the RSA, which the RSA would then attempt to repress.

The RSA acknowledging the history of American slavery would be akin to opening Pandora's Box. The scenarios listed above may be construed as cynical or extreme, but the

current state of the American government suggests otherwise. Many of the men and women who profited from enslaving other humans were part of the Southern elite and also served as members of the RSA. The ancestors of those enslavers continue to enjoy the privileges of the ruling class as current members of the RSA.

Earlier this year, Reuters found that five living presidents, two supreme court justices, eleven governors and at least one hundred legislators descend from enslavers (Lasseter et al. 2023). This is not to say that any of those individuals are inherently racists or slavery apologists. They cannot control who their ancestors were or what they did. However, there are two important takeaways from these findings. First, this demonstrates that some of the seventeenth to nineteenth-century enslaver-lawmakers were able to keep their high status as members of the RSA after emancipation, which their direct descendants also inherited. This refutes the idea that the past is dead because those whose ancestors profited from slavery continue to profit from the same wealth and status that was procured through enslavement. In fact, President Joe Biden as well as every living former U.S. president (except Donald Trump) are direct descendants of enslavers (Lasseter et al. 2023).[107] In other words, the nineteenth century ruling class (many of whom were enslavers) controlled the RSA in the past, and their descendants (who belong to the current ruling class) control the RSA now.[108]

The second important thing to note is the way that these individuals respond when confronted with the information that their ancestor(s) were enslavers. According to Reuters, "Few are willing to talk about their ties to America's "original sin"" (Lasseter et al. 2023).

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[107] Donald Trump's ancestors immigrated to the United States after the abolition of slavery.
[108] To clarify, not all members of the government, or the RSA, are members of the ruling class. However, the point here is that many of the members of the government do belong to the ruling class, as did their ancestors, and therefore the ruling class largely controls the RSA because it controls the government, the police, the military, etc.

Members of both parties (as well as one Independent) largely refused to comment on their slaveholding ancestors (Lasseter et al. 2023). Very few of those who responded acknowledged that their ancestors enslaved people or whether the country's history with slavery needed to be addressed. Instead, the responses were overwhelmingly defensive, dismissive, or simply out-of-touch. These responses are important to this chapter because the language used is a result of the dominant ideology, and therefore representative of dominant attitudes regarding slavery in the context of American history.

A statement from Senator Lindsey Graham's (Republican, South Carolina) office stated that the senator "has called slavery 'the original sin of the country'" but in the past, Graham has publicly declared the importance of building "a more perfect union rather than looking backward" (Lasseter et al. 2023). Insisting on the need to move forward rather than focus on the past is a common tactic that people use to avoid discussing slavery. The future takes precedence over the past, thereby framing subjects like American chattel slavery as irrelevant.

Representative Nancy Mace's (Republican, South Carolina) responded that she did not know the ancestors mentioned and could not confirm whether they were related to her. She went on to say, "but slavery was a stain on this country and we as Americans should be grateful for the progress we've made since the 1860s" (Lasseter et al. 2023). Here, the use of the term "grateful" implies that Americans are indebted to something or someone (the RSA?) for abolishing slavery and therefore should stop talking about it lest they are perceived as thankless or unappreciative.

Finally, Senator Jeanne Shaheen's (Democrat, New Hampshire) office provided a statement that included the fact that Shaheen had once been "a teacher at a Mississippi school that had recently been integrated" (Lasseter et al. 2023). The only reason for sharing this information is perhaps to suggest that because Senator Shaheen once taught both Black and

white children, this somehow balances out the fact that her ancestor enslaved ten people, "including three boys and two girls under the age of 10" (Lasseter et al. 2023). People influenced by ideology often become defensive when slavery is brought up, even in casual conversation. Shaheen's statement is certainly defensive, among other things.

These three examples represent how ideology is perpetuated by the Repressive State Apparatus through its membership. However, senators and representatives are only individuals. They are not the RSA, which functions as a unified institution, but they belong to the RSA as members of Congress, and as such, are lawmakers. The ideology that is so clearly influencing many of the members of Congress then extends to the bills they create, some of which become laws. Ideology controls the decisions that they make. They can be understood as "…the political representatives of the ruling classes in possession of State power" (Althusser 1971:149). Although these people are only individuals, the positions that they hold as legislators allow certain ideologies to affect the entire country. For instance, in recent years, members of the RSA have promulgated laws and policies regarding whether slavery can or should be taught in schools.

Ideological State Apparatuses

Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) are distinct from but work with the Repressive State Apparatus. Whereas the RSA works primarily through violence, the ISAs function primarily through ideology (Althusser 1971:145).[109] Additionally, there is only one RSA (with many branches) but there are multiple ISAs. The RSA operates within the public domain, but ISAs are part of both the public and private domain. "Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some

[109] Neither the RSA nor the ISAs function through only one. Both function through violence (repression) and ideology, but whereas the RSA functions primarily through violence (but also through ideology), the ISAs function primarily through ideology (and to some extent, violence).

schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc., etc., are private" (Althusser 1971:144). Althusser defines Ideological State Apparatuses as "a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (1971:143). The following institutions are ISAs:

- the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches),
- the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'),
- the family ISA,
- the legal ISA,[110]
- the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),
- the trade-union ISA,
- the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
- the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser 1971:143)

In this way, ideology is perpetuated through numerous and multiple private and public institutions at all times, and the ideology being promoted differs. Though the ideologies may be different, they still serve the same purpose: to hide or naturalize systemic inequality in order to obscure the relations of production. The RSA works with the many ISAs to keep the ruling class in power. "To my knowledge, *no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*" (Althusser 1971:146; emphasis original). The ruling class must exert control through both the RSA and ISAs to ensure the reproduction of the relations of production.

The educational Ideological State Apparatus

According to Althusser, the educational Ideological State Apparatus is the dominant ISA of the ruling class. Hardly anyone notices this because the ideological representation that the ruling class, or bourgeoisie, has given itself would seem to be the political ISA (Althusser 1971:153). The educational ISA functions so successfully as the dominant ISA because almost

[110] "The 'Law' belongs to both the (Repressive) State Apparatus and to the system of ISAs" (Althusser 1971:143).

all children must attend school (unless homeschooled) and this typically starts during pre-school and ends, for most individuals, after graduating from high school or from an undergraduate institution, when they become full-time workers. School prepares these individuals (through ideology) for the roles that they will fulfill in their lives – either the role of the exploited or the role of the agent of exploitation. Additionally, there is no other Ideological State Apparatus that "has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven" (Althusser 1971:156). School is natural, it is something that is never (or rarely) questioned. People must work, their children must go somewhere during the workday, and public school is free. Of course, people may also send their children to religious or private schools, but because ISAs operate both publicly and privately, the children at private schools are still administered their daily dose of ideology from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

The ideology of the School "represents the School as a neutral environment purged of ideology" (Althusser 1971:156). This illusion is so successful that even the majority of teachers do not realize that the work that they do is actually forced upon them by the system, and this ignorance of and blindness to the ideology that they are helping to advance only aids in the upkeep of the ideological representation of the School as natural (Althusser 1971:157).[111] In this way, School, or the educational ISA, is integral to reproducing the relations of production, because "the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order…"

[111] There are, Althusser notes, teachers who "in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they 'teach' against ideology, the system and practices in which they are trapped" (1971:157). However, these teachers are extremely rare, so much so that he refers to them as "a kind of hero."

(Althusser 1971:132). Essentially, School teaches children how to obey ideology from a very young age, so that when they become adult workers, they will already know how the system works and will not question it. The educational ISA "teaches 'know-how,' but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice'" (Althusser 1971:133; emphasis original). For Althusser, children will either grow up to become agents of production, agents of exploitation, or agents of repression, but for this transition to seamlessly and successfully occur, they must be "steeped" in the ruling ideology (1971:133).

Educational gag orders and the dominant ideology

It has been established that the multiple Ideological State Apparatuses work in conjunction with the Repressive State Apparatus, that the educational ISA is the dominant ISA of the ruling class, and that the role of the educational ISA is to indoctrinate children (or future workers) with the dominate ideology necessary to reproduce the relations of production. This section of the chapter demonstrates the political climate surrounding the history of American slavery (as a subject in schools, or the educational ISA) to give context to how and why this dissertation work is particularly relevant today. I will now return to the topic of current legislation restricting (or attempting to restrict) educators from discussing U.S. slavery in schools. PEN America, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to defend free expression, has been conducting an ongoing investigation regarding educational censorship in the U.S. since January 2021. These educational gag orders typically restrict teaching about race (which extends to teaching about slavery) but more recently have also been targeting topics regarding LGBTQ+

identities (Young, Friedman, and Sachs 2022). The majority of these bills and laws apply to public k-12 schools, though there are many that do extend or apply to higher education.[112]

Many of these bills and laws intentionally use language that makes it unclear what and how educators are allowed to teach, which has resulted in a fear to discuss certain topics in American history. The goal of these vaguely worded bills is to create feelings of confusion and trepidation around specific topics that have been a part of an established curriculum for decades so that teachers will likely refuse to discuss them in detail or avoid teaching them at all because they are afraid that doing so may cost them their jobs. New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu signed HB 2 into law on June 25, 2021. The law contains "The Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination" which states, "No pupil in any public school in this state shall be taught, instructed, inculcated or compelled to express belief in, or support for, any one or more of the following," including "(b) That an individual, by virtue of his or her age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously" (N.H. Rev. Stat. § 193:40). The FAQ sheet distributed by New Hampshire's Department of Education, Commission for Human Rights, and Department of Justice meant to "provide guidance" translates the law into layman's terms: "In short, do not teach that a person or group is inherently oppressive, superior, inferior, racist, or sexist. Teach and treat all equally and without discrimination" (NH DoJ 2021). This makes certain topics almost impossible to discuss while also adhering to the law. A teacher may not know whether teaching about colonial

[112] Between January 2021 and June 2023, 309 educational gag order bills have been introduced in 45 states, with 29 becoming law in 17 states. Additionally, 99 higher education gag order bills have been introduced in 33 states, with 13 provisions becoming law or policy in 9 states (Sachs and Young 2023).

America (which includes slavery as well as the genocide of Native Americans) would "compel" a student "to express belief in" colonial landowners being racist.

Since HB 2 was passed, K-12 public school educators in New Hampshire have faced harassment from parents regarding how their children are taught about issues like slavery and racism. Sometimes, the issue is that the teachers dared to educate their students on these topics at all. Because of this, many teachers are afraid to teach history for fear of losing their jobs. AFT-New Hampshire and AFL-CIO are currently suing NH Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut over this law, which the President of the American Federation of Teachers claims is "intended to be used to stop educators from teaching honest history" (AFT 2023). New Hampshire's law is only one of many that utilize intentionally vague language to dissuade and instill fear in teachers endeavoring to teach honest history.

Other proposed bills were more explicit regarding the teaching of slavery in schools. A (now dead) bill in Kentucky (SB 138) dictated that K-12 teachers should instruct and provide instructional materials that are consistent with the concept that "The understanding that the institution of slavery and post-Civil War laws enforcing racial segregation and discrimination were contrary to the fundamental American promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, but that defining racial disparities solely on the legacy of this institution is destructive to the unification of our nation." In other words, students should be taught that slavery and Jim Crow were distinctly un-American, but also, one cannot attribute the racial inequalities that exist today to the legacy of slavery. Why would it be "destructive to the unification of our nation" to conclude that systemic racism largely stems from the legacy of American chattel slavery? This phrase in particular can be strongly linked to the dominant ideology regarding slavery because it is also tied to the concept of patriotism. One

should not claim (or teach) that racism is a result of slavery because to do so would be to advocate for a more fragmented and disconnected nation. Good Americans strive to build a happier, more unified nation. Everyone is proud to be an American, and if someone is not, then he or she is ungrateful, and can live elsewhere. The language utilized in this bill serves to separate the ongoing issue of racial disparity from the legacy of slavery (rewriting history) while simultaneously demonizing anyone who would make the connection between the two by referring to them as someone who is actively destroying the possibility of a unified country. This bill, like others designed to censor accurate U.S. history, punishes individuals who insist on the truth by framing them as dissidents who are dangerous to the collective success of the nation.

A failed Oklahoma bill (HB 2988) would have made it illegal for schools to teach any components of The 1619 Project, specifically. Additionally, if passed, it would have been illegal to teach "that America has more culpability, in general, than other nations for the institution of slavery;" "That one race is the unique oppressor in the institution of slavery;" "That another race is the unique victim of the institution of slavery;" or "That America, in general, had slavery more extensively and for a later period of time than other nations…" It is a fact that in the United States of America, one race was the unique oppressor, and another race was the unique victim. If that were not the case, why would the Virginia House of Burgesses have passed the legal doctrine of *partus sequitur ventrum*? It was certainly not because a multitude of free or indentured (white) women were having children with enslaved men, resulting in the children's questionable legal status. It is also a fact that other nations abolished slavery before the United States did, such as Great Britain in 1833.

The language used in this bill can be perceived as defensive – America was not the only nation that allowed slavery, race was not a defining factor of enslavement, America did not have

more slavery than other nations, and America did not keep slavery alive for longer than any other nation. The implication here is that if America is not the outlier in the list of nations that utilized slave labor, then another country is, and that country is more culpable. It seeks to shift the blame, rather than to take responsibility for the fact that slavery existed in the United States at all. Teaching an honest version of the history of slavery in the United States would make the country look bad. After all, slavery existed in many other countries as well. Slavery was commonplace and acceptable at that time, and the U.S. was just doing what everyone else was doing. Again, the dominant ideology is very clearly at work in this (fortunately) dead bill. If this bill had passed, teachers would be coerced into lying to their students in order to keep their livelihoods.

Some gag order bills that explicitly targeted the topic of American slavery were eventually signed into law. Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed SB 3 into law in 2021. This law states that:

> a teacher, administrator, or other employee of a state agency, school district, or open-enrollment charter school may not…require or make part of a course inculcation in the concept that…the advent of slavery in the territory that is now the United States constituted the true founding of the United States; or with respect to their relationship to American values, slavery and racism are anything other than deviations from, betrayals of, or failures to live up to the authentic founding principles of the United States, which include liberty and equality…

Furthermore, teachers must discuss any controversial issues "objectively and in a manner free from political bias" (TX SB 3 2021). This law not only restricts K-12 teachers, administrators, and state employees in Texas from teaching about slavery in an honest manner – it requires that they lie. Additionally, it is not possible to discuss slavery in an objective manner. The similarities

between this law and the failed bills in Kentucky (KY SB 138) and Oklahoma (OK HB 2988) can be seen most obviously through the implementation of the dominant ideology surrounding slavery. The successful tactic is to first frame slavery as an un-American anomaly that was totally separate and divorced from the "authentic founding principles" of the U.S., including "liberty and equality" (TX SB 3 2021). The intention here is to convince Americans (including American school children) that slavery had nothing to do with the founding of the United States, and therefore it is irrelevant to the country and its citizens today. The second part of the tactic is the portrayal of objectors as troublemakers, liars, and most importantly, threats to American dominance and success.

The Lost Cause and the educational ISA

Although all of the bills and laws that have been discussed in this section were sponsored by or signed into law by members of the Republican party, I maintain that the dominant ideology is present in both political parties. However, it is more obvious and easier to recognize in the actions of Republicans, particularly in the numerous educational gag orders that have become exceedingly commonplace within the last few years. Republicans today are using the same tactic that the United Confederate Veterans, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans utilized at the end of the 19th century and well into the 20th century (Bailey 1991). These groups successfully rewrote history and established the Lost Cause of the Confederacy as the "true" narrative about the Civil War, primarily in the South. "First, they campaigned for the expulsion of the northern-biased historical materials; and second, they wrote, published, and promoted histories bearing their interpretations" (Bailey 1991:512). These rewritten histories were distributed in the form of textbooks that were used to teach all of the children in K-12 public schools located in former Confederate states. The Southern aristocracy

knew that the best way to promote this ideology was through the educational ISA, which they controlled. Because all children must go to school and the majority of children attend public school because it is free, the ruling class ensured that entire generations of students in the South would learn that the Lost Cause was the real reason for the Civil War. The educational ISA was and is a trusted institution. Children had no reason to doubt the accuracy of their history lessons, and neither did their parents.

The textbooks also served a second, less obvious purpose – to keep the ruling class in charge. "Southern children learned that the patrician class not only redeemed their land from war and misrule, but also instituted an era of universal progress. Rarely did students glimpse a hint of plebeian discontent, and never did they find a glimmer of black oppression or crushing white tenancy" (Bailey 1991:527). Southern school children therefore learned the history that the aristocracy manufactured for the primary purpose of reproducing the relations of production. Depicting the Confederacy as the true and moral victors of the Civil War was an incredibly effective illusion, and one that the majority of white southerners zealously accepted and proclaimed as fact. The textbooks "not only praised the Old South but also perpetuated the upper classes' peculiar values into the twentieth century" (Bailey 1991:520). This is how the interests of the ruling class were framed as universal, and how the continued success of former enslavers after the Civil War was portrayed as progress for all southerners.

It is clear that politicians today are following the model established by the Confederate groups who successfully promoted the Lost Cause through school textbooks and bans on Northern literature (utilizing the power of the educational ISA). Florida's Required Instruction Planning and Reporting rule for K-12 public schools explicitly prohibits the use of The 1619 Project in curriculum. Additionally, Florida's State Academic Standards for the 2023 school year

includes a benchmark clarification for teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th grade African American history that reads, "Instruction includes how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit" (2023:6). Florida Governor Ron DeSantis defended the new curriculum as well as the benchmark clarification in question, which drew national criticism, most notably from the U.S. Vice President, Kamala Harris. Vice President Harris traveled to Florida shortly afterwards to publicly condemn the idea that slavery benefitted enslaved people in any way, stating that "[Slavery] involved rape. It involved torture. It involved taking a baby from their mother. It involved some of the worst examples of depriving people of humanity in our world" (Wootson 2023). That the Vice President quickly and vehemently denounced this idea about slavery is incredibly important. However, the claim that slavery benefitted enslaved people is outrageous and has been publicly criticized by members of the Republican party as well, because it is not a part of the dominant ideology. The dominant ideology is subtle rather than outlandish, and this is what makes it both so insidious and so effective.

The blatant censorship (or attempts at censorship) that has become common in the American public education system at large is certainly troubling. However, the shocking and flagrant remarks that politicians like DeSantis make daily are more highly covered in the media than the fact that hundreds of educational gag order bills have been introduced since January 2021, a number of which have been made laws.[113] Obviously, singular incidents are quite sensational and make for good news, whereas the educational censorship issue is ongoing and would take more time to explain. This situation can be understood through Žižek's thoughts regarding violence. He asks,

[113] The media is part of the communications Ideological State Apparatus, which includes the press, radio, and television (Althusser 1971:143).

> Is there not something suspicious, indeed symptomatic, about this focus on subjective violence – that violence which is enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses, fanatical crowds? Doesn't it desperately try to distract our attention from the true locus of trouble, by obliterating from view other forms of violence and thus actively participating in them? (Žižek 2008:10-11)

Subjective violence is not limited to physical violence and can take other forms. The claim that enslaved people benefitted from slavery is absolutely a violent statement, and it is even more harmful and destructive when one considers that children in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade are actively being taught such heinous lies. While this is a real and horrific problem that must be faced in Florida and other states, such as Texas, it is also a distraction that stops people from thinking beyond what is being presented to them.

If such an atrocious idea can be boldly and openly included in a public document, one must consider the things that are not being announced and that are operating in silence. In other words, incendiary policies or statements are merely distractions from the harmful ideologies that are currently functioning. Ideology presents itself as natural, a series of obvious givens. And when compared with an appalling statement deliberately intended to provoke strong reactions, ideology seems that much more natural. The distraction is a calculated tactic. It is designed to deceive people. Therefore, one must always ask questions of such shocking spectacles. What other forms of violence are we unknowingly participating in because of distractions such as this? What are the issues that we are being distracted from recognizing?

Slavery in America can never be an isolated topic because it is so intrinsically connected with the founding of this country and the way that systemic violence is essential to the maintenance and success of American capitalism. Because of this, the censorship and the

outright lies regarding the history of American chattel slavery within the educational Ideological State Apparatus serve a much more extensive and pernicious purpose than to simply prevent children from learning the truth about the country's history. For some, these restrictions and falsehoods largely operate as distractions from ideology and the other forms of violence that it entails. However, in certain places (such as the Deep South) they are undoubtedly becoming a new ideology to replace or enhance the current ideology. The ruling class benefits from either scenario.

Enslaved children and the dominant ideology

Thus far, I have discussed the dominant ideology surrounding the history of American chattel slavery at length. This ideology is not the same as the Lost Cause, which is an explicit belief in a pseudohistorical myth. However, the dominant ideology has its roots in the Lost Cause, just as it is also tied to the American value of patriotism, and the belief of American exceptionalism. I have attempted to distinguish the dominant ideology from other competing ideologies by demonstrating that the blatant denial of American slavery is not part of this ideology at all. It is understood that the institution of slavery existed. Even so, the dominant ideology works to paint slavery as irrelevant, as dead, as a distasteful and offensive subject that need not be discussed. It is simply a fact that should be acknowledged and then left alone. Those who hold the dominant ideology may be moved to speak out in defense of the truth, though only in the most reprehensible situations, such as those created by far-right politicians or white nationalists.

Overall, the dominant ideology surrounding slavery works the way it should – it keeps the ruling class in charge by glossing over or blurring the ugly details of the past that would otherwise enlighten people to the way this country truly functions, and their own roles in the

capitalist machine. This is why the ideology regarding slavery is so successful. It frames the past as obsolete and presents the desire for American success as a universal interest that everyone holds. Additionally, slavery, even the most generic descriptions of it, is painful and traumatic. It can also make people feel guilty, and therefore defensive. The Ideological State Apparatuses have an easy job of promoting this specific ideology because they are largely addressing an audience that does not need much convincing.

Disinformation about enslaved children (specifically, the realities of the domestic slave trade) was first used by adherents to the Lost Cause and subsequently became part of the dominant ideology on American slavery in general. When the United Confederate Veterans, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans began the task of mythologizing the history of the Civil War and the role of the Confederacy, they also recognized the need to fabricate a noble story about the institution of slavery in the South. Instead of simply ignoring slavery or denying it outright, they painted a picture that was the exact opposite of reality, one that softened the institution and glorified enslavers as white saviors.

An essential part of this fabrication involved lying about the treatment and sale of enslaved children.[114] This lie became extremely successful, to the extent that many Americans today (regardless of political beliefs) still believe this as fact. People are already inclined to project 21st century attitudes about toddlers and children onto children in the past – that all children are precious gifts and should be coddled and treated gently.[115] Of course, this was not the attitude towards most children in the past, as even white children of low socioeconomic status were relied on by their families to engage in some form of labor such as farm work,

[114] For a more detailed discussion on the sale of enslaved children see chapter two of this dissertation, "Trading in Children."
[115] See Zelizer's *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (1994)

factory work, etc. Regardless, people do not want to believe that infants were ripped away from their enslaved mothers and sold on the auction block, though this was a relatively common occurrence during the 19th century. As with slavery in general, the former Confederates and slavery apologists were selling a story that many people wanted to believe in, because the realities of slavery were too painful and distressing to accept.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, the primary texts on the institution of slavery were written by white supremacist slavery apologists who were also historians.[116] Therefore, much of the information that people learned about slavery was not true, and the claim that "the prices of young children are rarely ascertainable from the bills, since they were hardly ever sold separately; the prices of women likewise are too seldom segregated from those of their children to permit anything to be established beyond a ratio to some ascertained standard" became an accepted fact (Phillips 1929:369). Another racist historian wrote that "Slaves were seldom sold until they were over ten years of age" and that "as a rule, [enslavers] did not sell their slaves unless compelled to do so by pecuniary or other embarrassments" (Collins 1904:74,80). These texts used primary source documents (from enslavers) to support their findings, though they cherry-picked the sources that would best support the Lost Cause narrative.

Other popular works acknowledged that enslaved children were sold but continued to offer racist misinformation alongside the facts. In *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1976) Eugene Genovese alleged, "The slaves grieved over the sale of their children but accepted it as a fact of life; however much they suffered, they did not necessarily hate their individual masters for it" (125). The assertion that enslaved parents accepted the sale of their children and did not hate their

[116] See "Introduction: Key Slaves and the Poverty of Paternalism" in Tadman (1996) for more information.

enslavers because of it is baseless, and any narrative or interview from a formerly enslaved person directly invalidates his assertion. Tadman (1996) notes that Genovese "very seriously underestimated the scale of family separations generally" as well as underestimating "the emotional significance of parent-child separations" (xxx). Nevertheless, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* was considered a legitimate history on American slavery, and even won the distinguished Bancroft Prize for History from Columbia University in 1975.[117]

Although the concept of slavery as a paternalistic institution originated in the South with the Lost Cause, clearly some of the disinformation from this myth was making its way across the country. Eugene Genovese was from New York, not the South. And when *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, was being written, he was not an obvious slavery apologist or a right-wing conservative. He identified as a Marxist and a Socialist. That a leftist from New York would make such an unfounded and frankly, hard-hearted conclusion regarding the relationship between enslaved parents and their children demonstrates that parts of the Southern ideology regarding slavery were becoming more common nationwide. Genovese's assessment was either motivated by racism or a profound misunderstanding of slavery and/or parent-child relationships. One could argue that the dehumanizing aspect of ideology in regard to enslaved people in particular may not have been solely attributed to the Lost Cause. Rather, the assessment or supposition that enslaved people were less caring, less emotional, and therefore less human was already part of the dominant ideology surrounding slavery. However, the secondary claim that enslaved people did not hate their enslavers for selling their children is almost certainly related to the Lost Cause,

[117] This is not to say that *Roll, Jordan, Roll* should be discounted entirely. It is an influential text that contributed some new and interesting interpretations of slavery. The point here is that even prize-winning works from historians at Ivy League institutions can spread misinformation stemming from the Lost Cause.

as it paints the master-slave relationship as paternalistic and portrays enslaved people as complicit in their own oppression.

Finally, *Time on the Cross* (1974) is another well-known text that damaged the understanding of slavery significantly. Fogel and Engerman's economic study of the institution of slavery concluded that basically, slavery was not as bad as people thought. Though they made the important contribution demonstrating that slavery was economically profitable (disproving the widely held theory that slavery was not profitable and would have eventually ended), their other findings were problematic and false. One of their principal corrections to the "traditional characterization of the slave economy" was the assertion that keeping enslaved families together was economically beneficial to the enslaver, and "Most slave sales were either of whole families or of individuals who were at an age when it would have been normal for them to have left the family" (Fogel and Engerman 1995:5). This is categorically untrue. Tadman (1996) notes that Fogel and Engerman made this finding using evidence from the coastwise trade to New Orleans, which was unique and was not "an appropriate basis on which to calculate the scale of the trade" (xxxiv). Additionally, the authors claimed that "[t]he belief that the typical slave was poorly fed is without foundation in fact" and that the average diet of an enslaved man exceeded the diet of a free man by ten percent (1995:109). They stated that slave housing was comparable to the housing of free workers at the time (1995:116). And from these findings, they inferred that "[t]he material (not psychological) conditions of the lives of slaves compared favorably with those of free industrial workers (Fogel and Engerman 1995:5). None of these statements are true, but even if they were, does good food and housing make a person any freer or any less enslaved? Regardless of Fogel and Engerman's intentions, *Time on the Cross* fed into the myth of the Lost Cause and seemed to provide justifications for the institution of American slavery.

Covering lies in archaeology

In the previous section, I attempted to trace the history of how the widespread understanding (or misunderstanding) of enslaved children and therefore, slavery in general, has come to be a part of the dominant ideology surrounding slavery today. In doing so, I demonstrated the pernicious ease with which certain falsehoods that can be traced to the Lost Cause made their way into widely read academic texts that were considered authorities on slavery. But why is this important? "By giving a history to contemporary ideology, critical archaeology helps to disassociate the events, structures, and processes of the past from their naturalized connection with the present" (Roller et al. 2020: 2805). In order to emancipate others from ideology, it is imperative to first expose the lies that are so commonly accepted without question.

A critical archaeology of enslaved children must begin with the process of ascertaining the origins behind these lies and, ideally, the motivations behind them. In this way it is possible to understand how and why these beliefs persist today in the form of ideology, which Leone also refers to as "covering lies." "Covering lies are truths that are untrue but in whose repetition social organization is continued intact" (Leone 2010:59). The covering lies are very much present in the archaeology of slavery and in historical archaeology more broadly. They affect the archaeologist's understanding of slavery and therefore, his or her interpretation of a site. When this occurs, archaeologists are guilty of reproducing the exact social inequalities that they are endeavoring to correct. The ramifications of an uncritical archaeology are not contained within the academic field, rather, they reinforce ideology to the public through multiple Ideological State Apparatuses.

Archaeology does not exist within a vacuum. Archaeological discoveries and interpretations are topics that are frequently discussed within four main ISAs: the educational ISA; the political ISA; the communications ISA; and the cultural ISA (including art, literature, sports, etc.). This means that uncritical archaeological interpretations which maintain the dominant ideology are then promoted in the different ISAs to reinforce that ideology more efficiently. Therefore, archaeologists must be extremely conscious of the ways that they explain their research because their findings may be twisted or taken out of context in order to support various agendas. Critical theory was introduced to the field of archaeology due to "the fact that archaeological interpretations presented to the public may acquire a meaning unintended by the archaeologist and not to be found in the data" (Leone, Potter, and Shackel 1987:284).

For the archaeology of slavery, in particular, the political use of interpretations is an extremely worrisome possibility. The danger of an unreflective "plantation archaeology" is that archaeologists who lack self-reflection supply "a potential weapon" to those who would use that evidence as a justification for slavery (Potter 1991:95). For example, Potter criticizes an article by two other archaeologists that concludes with the statement, "Their legal status was still as chattel slave, of course, but their economic freedoms were much greater than most people realize" (Adams and Boling 1989:94 cited in Potter 1991:94). He notes that "…it would be relatively easy for someone advocating a racist position to use a statement like Adams and Boling's conclusion as a starting point from which to claim that slavery was not such a bad deal for enslaved African Americans" (Potter 1991:94). The point that Potter makes here is that even if enslaved people did have greater "economic freedoms" than previously thought, that does not change the fact that they were still enslaved. A similar issue is present in archaeological interpretations of enslaved children.

Since the 1980s, books and articles discussing the archaeology of slavery or plantation archaeology rarely mention the presence of enslaved children at all, and when they do, it is only because porcelain doll parts or marbles were uncovered during the excavation.[118] While toys typically suggest the presence of children archaeologically, it is not right to confine them to this one artifact category. This is not to deny the archaeological importance of toys– toys can have various significant meanings that may reveal insights regarding gender, economic freedom, age, etc., but it is high time to consider children (enslaved and free) through other artifact categories as well.

This is particularly important when discussing enslaved children, simply because they were generally not treated as children and they did not have normal childhoods. It is unwise to continue relying on toys as the only indicators for the presence of children because it promotes the idea that enslaved children were carefree and happy all the time – after all, if they were lucky enough to have toys then perhaps slavery was not so terrible. When archaeologists ignore the possibilities for enslaved children to be represented through other artifacts, they replicate violence through interpretations that mask the realities of enslavement – covered lies. These covered lies then leave the field of archaeology to be distributed through multiple Ideological State Apparatuses, thus contributing to an ideology that hides the truth about slavery.

Conclusion

The simple lie, "enslaved children were never or rarely sold" has been integral in constructing ideology and destroying the truth. The implication is that if enslaved children were never sold and if they were not responsible for doing hard work until they were teenagers, then

[118] Exceptions to this statement include Wilkie 2000a; Wilkie 2000b; and Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005.

their lives must have been very similar to the lives of children today, and therefore, not so bad at all. It follows, then, that the institution of slavery, overall, may not have been that bad. This rewritten history has become ideology. It is now an obvious assumption that enslaved children were treated like children, and played like children, and were carefree, and had loving parents whom they were never separated from.

The truth is that enslaved children were the most vulnerable members of an already vulnerable population. They were in danger from both free and enslaved adults. They experienced vast amounts of trauma and violence very early in their lives. They were separated from their parents frequently. And the majority of enslaved children began working when they were barely more than toddlers, often as soon as they could walk. However, their lives were not one-dimensional and filled with fear or violence at all times. Enslaved children made toys, played games, and told ghost stories. They hunted small game and fished in creeks and ponds. They picked berries for their mothers or grandmothers to bake into pies. Interviews from formerly enslaved individuals demonstrate that enslaved parents did as much as they could to provide their children with childhoods. Enslaved children were loved and brought joy to their families and communities.

This dissertation endeavors to paint as full a picture as possible, and this includes both the positive and negatives aspects of the lives of enslaved children. To only include the instances of violence and labor would be to deny them their humanity. At the same time, hiding or denying that they experienced inordinate amounts of violence (as the current ideology does) is also denying them their humanity. The dominant ideology reproduces the violence that enslaved children experienced by covering the truth. It is a huge injustice that diminishes their importance and their lived experiences. It is also an injustice to people today because it presents the current

inequalities due to race, class, gender, etc. as normal and ordinary. Horkheimer believed that the task of the critical theorist, (in this case, the archaeologist) was "often conceived as that of 'remembering', 'recollecting' or capturing a past in danger of being forgotten" (Held 2004:25). One might argue that through ideology, many of the aspects of slavery have been intentionally forgotten. Our task as critical archaeologists is to remember that and expose it through the material culture of those who lived it. It is only by unmasking the ideology around slavery and exposing the truth that the goal for an emancipated and more equitable society may be fulfilled.

Chapter 5: Enslaved Children and Labor

Mary Island was born and enslaved in Union Parish, Louisiana. When she was two years old her mother died, and Mary was raised by her aunt, who was also enslaved. She told her Federal Writers' Project interviewer about her life as an enslaved child and the different jobs that she was tasked with, starting when she was very young.[119]

[119] Mary Island was interviewed by Pernella Mae Anderson, one of only two African American interviewers in Arkansas working for the Federal Writers' Project. Because of this, her interview

> She [Mary's aunt] started me out washing dishes when I was four years old and when I was six she was learning me how to cook. While the other hands was working in the field I carried water. We had to cook out in the yard on an old skillet and lid, so you see I had to tote brush and bark and roll up little logs such as I could to keep the fire from one time of cooking to the other. I was not but six years old either. When I got to be seven years old I was cutting sprouts almost like a man and when I was eight I could pick one hundred pounds of cotton. When it rained and we could not go the field my aunty had me spinning thread to make socks and cloth, then I had to card the bats and make the rolls to spin. (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 3 1936:389)

Mary's interview demonstrates the incredible amount of labor that many (if not most) enslaved children were expected to accomplish in their daily lives, and how the difficulty of the tasks escalated with each year. As a six-year-old child, Mary was responsible for cooking outdoors over an open flame – an onerous and sometimes dangerous job that required knowledge of how to control fire and heat without undercooking or burning the food in a heavy skillet. And just two years later, eight-year-old Mary was picking one hundred pounds of cotton a day. She discussed how the work did not cease – when it rained, she carded cotton batts by hand to make into rolls to spin thread on a spinning wheel, another task that required technical knowledge and great concentration, especially for an eight-year-old child. Mary also told her interviewer how she helped her aunt with laundry, using a battling stick to beat the dirt out of wet clothing on a stump before hanging the clothes on the fence or on bushes to dry. By the time Mary Island was eight

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is less likely to have been affected by some of the issues that frequently occurred when the interviewer was white (see Blassingame 1975 for examples).

years old she could efficiently clean, cook, carry heavy loads, cut sprouts, pick one hundred pounds of cotton a day, create thread from cottonseed, and do the laundry.

This chapter is about enslaved children and labor. It begins with Mary Island's story because her experiences were likely very similar to the experiences of many enslaved children living on plantations in the Lower South during the antebellum period. This chapter will discuss the various jobs, tasks, and chores that enslaved children were responsible for. Different forms of labor depended on region (Upper South, Lowcountry, and Lower South), age, gender, and other factors. Archaeologically, an understanding of enslaved children's labor is extremely important for understanding how certain artifacts may be associated with enslaved children, which translates into numerous possibilities for more accurate or comprehensive interpretations. Artifacts that were previously believed to be utilitarian objects with little or no meaning or associations may now be considered differently.

Cultural historian and theorist Saidiya Hartman's concept of critical fabulation provides the framework or lens through which to read and understand the information discussed in this chapter. This chapter will address critical fabulation and how it is utilized in this dissertation project to better inform the archaeology and material culture of enslaved children in antebellum America. Finally, this chapter ends with a case study on thimbles excavated from quarter sites at James Madison's Montpelier and an example of employing critical fabulation to interpret a specific thimble included in the case study.

First, it is necessary to define here what the term "work" refers to, because many formerly enslaved individuals have written that before a certain age, they did not do much work (meaning formal, routinized jobs), but were responsible for a number of chores and tasks. In this chapter, work refers to any chores, tasks, responsibilities, or jobs that were required of enslaved

children either by their enslavers directly or by enslaved adults in order to serve the interests of the enslaver. Certainly, an enslaved mother may have asked her children to sweep the floors or clean the dishes, but those things are not considered work in the context of this chapter because they serve the direct interests of the family, rather than the enslaver. Therefore, even insignificant or mundane tasks like gathering sticks for firewood or clearing the enslaver's yard of weeds and debris are considered as work. Enslavers assigned those small chores to little children in order to begin stealing their labor as early as possible. They may not have seen a monetary profit immediately, but they profited in other ways – an immaculate front lawn and obedient enslaved children demonstrated the power of the enslaver to visitors. Additionally, work is one of the major factors that informed the experiences of an enslaved child. Historian Wilma King referred to work as "the thief of the childhood of youthful bondservants" (King 2011:71).[120]

Second, Saidiya Hartman's concept of critical fabulation is integral to pushing the boundaries of archaeological interpretations and broadening the possibilities for how enslaved children might be represented in the material record. According to Hartman, "The archive of slavery rests upon a founding violence. This violence determines, regulates and organizes the kinds of statements that can be made about slavery and as well it creates subjects and objects of power" (Hartman 2008:10). How can one use the archive of slavery to learn more than what is explicitly written? Is it possible to utilize the archive of slavery without replicating that founding violence, and instead using it to illuminate the lives of those who were violated? Hartman asks,

[120] The practice of "hiring out" also applied to children and was extremely common. However, this practice is discussed at length in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, so it will not be discussed in this chapter. Enslaved children could be hired out to do any of the jobs discussed here, as well as other jobs more typical in urban environments, such as working in hotels, factories, on steamboats, as well as many other positions.

"Is it possible to exceed or negotiate the constitutive limits of the archive?" (2008:11). She solves this problem using a method that she calls critical fabulation. "The intention here," she writes, "isn't anything as miraculous as recovering the lives of the enslaved or redeeming the dead, but rather laboring to paint as full a picture of the lives of the captives as possible" (Hartman 2008:11). To employ critical fabulation, Hartman advances "a series of speculative arguments" and exploits "the capacities of the subjunctive (a grammatical mood that expresses doubt, wishes, and possibilities)," to fashion a narrative which is "based on a critical reading of the archive that mimes the figurative dimensions of history" (Hartman 2008:11). With critical fabulation, Hartman intends to "both tell an impossible story and to amplify the impossibility of its telling" (2008:11). "The intent of this practice," she clarifies, "is not to *give voice* to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified" (Hartman 2008:12).

Hartman introduced critical fabulation in the context of archival ledgers from the transatlantic slave trade, where sometimes the only recorded information about an individual was their name. While there exists quite a lot of documentation from the antebellum period, I believe that critical fabulation is still applicable to this topic. Because the majority of enslaved individuals either could not read or write (or were unable to safely record their stories for numerous reasons), most of the archival documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were written by white male enslavers, though many white women were also enslavers (see Jones-Rogers 2019). By utilizing critical fabulation, scholars researching the ledgers and account books of enslavers may be able to interpret or infer a more detailed account than what was actually written. Archival materials such as newspapers, family papers, and account books provide scholars with the opportunity to learn more about the lives of enslaved people who were

unable to write down and share their stories, providing a fuller picture of their lives and a greater understanding of the institution of American slavery as a whole.

Hartman writes that critical fabulation "is a history of an unrecoverable past; it is a narrative of what might have been or could have been; it is a history written with and against the archive" (2008:12). Through published narratives and through the FWP interviews, scholars studying eighteenth and nineteenth-century American slavery have the unique privilege of learning directly from those individuals who were previously enslaved. In this context, critical fabulation may not seem as necessary as when it is employed to interpret a ledger with scant information, because many of the interviews clearly mention specific situations and objects. However, it still allows for one to imagine situations or objects that may not have been recorded, simply by using context clues. Additionally, when critical fabulation is practiced on the private letters or plantation manuals of enslavers, it is certainly possible to learn much more about an enslaved person's life and the objects that they would have used and interacted with on a daily basis. Here, critical fabulation may provide insights or ideas about the meaning of artifacts, particularly utilitarian objects, that would otherwise have not been considered, resulting in multiple possibilities for the interpretation of such artifacts.

Most significant for this dissertation project is the inclusion of enslaved children in more archaeological interpretations. Through critical fabulation, the presence of children can become more visible within the material record. Straight pins that were previously only attributed to women or teenage girls may now be associated with young enslaved children of both genders, as well. Material culture that may be associated with enslaved children is mentioned throughout this chapter, though it is provided within the context of the labor of enslaved children. One must use

critical fabulation to truly realize how the presence of an enslaved child should be just as obvious as the presence of an enslaved man or woman, which are typically taken as givens.

Regional differences in labor: the gang system and the task system

The age at which enslaved children began working varied according to the enslaver but was also largely affected by the region and the size of the plantation or farm. Large plantations typically operated using one of two systems: the gang system or the task system. The gang system was the most popular labor system utilized on plantations in the Upper and Lower South, particularly on those that produced short-staple cotton, tobacco, and sugar.[121] Under the gang system, enslaved field laborers worked alongside one another in rows, with their pace dictated by how quickly the designated leader of the row worked. Therefore, an individual's place in the line determined the speed at which he or she must work (Morgan 2018:1272). Enslaved field hands were classed to determine whether they could keep up with the leader of a gang, and then separated into gangs. On both tobacco and short-staple cotton plantations, field gangs were usually divided into plow hands and hoe hands (Morgan 2018:1271). The gangs were then constantly surveilled by an overseer to ensure that individuals were not lagging behind (and therefore decreasing productivity) in each gang. This was achieved through physical violence and the threat of physical violence.[122]

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[121] According to Morgan (2018) this notion is an oversimplification, as even on plantations where the gang system was the primary system utilized, there were still some jobs that were tasked (such as spinning or weaving), so no plantation ever utilized only one system at a time. However, for the purposes of this chapter, identifying the dominant labor system on any plantation can be helpful for understanding how enslaved children's labor may or may not have been affected.

[122] After Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793, short-staple cotton plantations in the Lower South began operating by a new form of the gang system – the "pushing system." This system was founded on "innovation in violence" (Baptist 2011:117). It was "a system that extracted more work by using oppressively direct supervision combined with torture ratcheted up to far higher levels than …had [been] experienced before" (Baptist 2011:121).

The second form of labor division was called the task system. In the United States, the task system was primarily utilized on plantations in the Lowcountry – parts of South Carolina and Georgia – where rice, Sea Island cotton, and indigo were produced. Under the task system, enslaved laborers were allocated a task to be completed that day. After an individual had completed their task, they would be given the rest of the day to do whatever they wished, and this was the accepted system by both the enslaver and those whom he enslaved. "Lowcountry masters were careful not to encroach upon their slaves' "own time" unless by offering payment" (Morgan 2018:1285). Unlike the gang system, the task system was not based on total surveillance. Enslaved individuals on Lowcountry plantations were able to use their spare time as they desired, resulting in a "significant internal slave economy" by the time of emancipation (Morgan 2018:1285). However, this is not meant to suggest that the circumstances of enslaved people working under the task system were mitigated by having time to themselves. Though they were able to have time off after working, they were still enslaved and subjugated by their enslavers and others in positions of power.

On some larger plantations in the Upper and Lower South, children who were deemed too young for more formal work (and who were not in the charge of an enslaved nurse) were placed in the "trash gang," a group which usually consisted of pregnant women, injured individuals, and elderly individuals who could no longer perform other work.[123] The trash gang collected litter around the property, pulled and chopped weeds, bound and stacked wheat, and

[123] Enslaved children who were under the care of an elderly enslaved nurse were still required to do some sort of work. A South Carolina enslaver-planter wrote in *Farmers' Register* that on his plantation, the nurse "makes the little ones, generally speaking, both girls and boys, mend and wash their own clothes and do many other little matters, such as collecting litter for manure &c. In this they take great pleasure, and it has the tendency to bring them up to industrious habits" (Breeden 1980:282).

picked any leftover cotton that the field hands had missed. The ages of the children working in the trash gang varied by plantation and by enslaver. On some plantations, enslaved children as young as three years old may have been placed in the trash gang, where they could also be supervised by the enslaved adults in the group. On others, only older children and teenagers (ranging from the ages of twelve to sixteen) were placed in the trash gang. In general, it seems that it was more common to place younger children in the trash gang, as on most other farms and plantations, enslaved children were generally involved in more routine work by the age of five or six years old.

However, not all plantations that operated according to the gang system utilized trash gangs or placed children in them. On plantations and farms in both the Upper and Lower South, it was not uncommon for enslaved children to begin working in the fields at young ages. If children were not working in field gangs alongside enslaved adults, they were typically placed into a separate, child-only group, called the "children's gang." The children's gang was responsible for a variety of different tasks. They cleaned yards, spread manure, shelled corn, sowed grass and other seed, spread hay, stacked wood, and cleared ditches, among other chores (Schwartz 2000:135). Children's gangs were common in both the Upper and Lower South as well as the Lowcountry. They were generally supervised by enslaved adults, rather than overseers (Schwartz 2000:135).

The interviews and narratives of formerly enslaved individuals indicate that the dominant labor system on the plantation or farm did not necessarily dictate the jobs that enslaved children were assigned to perform. Regardless of the dominant labor system, enslaved children who were considered either too young for fieldwork or better suited to other jobs operated largely according to a kind of combination of the two systems. Children were given separate tasks to

complete, either in small groups (children's gangs), pairs, or individually (depending on the specific task, the size of the plantation, and the number of available working children). This system was utilized on both large plantations and small farms in the Upper and Lower South, as well as the Lowcountry.

Work according to age

Though the exact age when an enslaved child began working depended on multiple factors, it seems to be almost universally true that by the time a child could walk and understand instructions, he or she was charged with some sort of chore or duty. These smaller tasks "could be completed by boys or girls who were too immature chronologically or physically to assume jobs that required careful attention to processes over long periods of time" (King 2011:72). Oftentimes, this included the aforementioned chores of collecting sticks and cleaning the yard, either with other children or under the supervision of an elderly enslaved man or woman nurse.

Carrie Hudson, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, attested to the fact that children began working at an extremely young age. She said that children who were "knee high to a duck" had to work, doing "all sorts of piddlin' jobs" such as toting water to the big house or to the field hands, collecting chips and wood, and monitoring the cows (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:212).[124] Similarly, when asked about the work of enslaved children, Mahala Jewel, who was also enslaved in Georgia, remembered "De littlest ones just picked up trash when de yards was bein' cleant up and done easy jobs [like that]" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:317). Although the jobs may have been considered easy, even the youngest children were still required to do some type of labor for those who enslaved them. Enslavers assigned these tasks in order to

[124] Carrie noted that most of the time, she was responsible for serving as a nurse minding the younger children (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:212).

steal labor but also so that the children would "acquire habits of perseverance and industry" which might lead to creating obedient and productive laborers (King 2011:72).

Historian Brenda Stevenson places the age at which most enslaved children began to work at around six years old, "or sometimes earlier depending on their size and physical maturity" (1996:187). For example, this chapter opened with the story of Mary Island, who began working when she was just four years old. Other formerly enslaved individuals, such as Charles Grandy, remember starting to work more seriously at five years of age. Charles was enslaved in Virginia and recalled playing around the big house and "doing small errands" until he turned five years old, at which point his enslaver began assigning him chores to complete on his own. First, he was forced to pull up all of the grass along the side of a fence, and after that he "was carried to the field" to pull up the grass from the cotton and other crops. "This task was done by hand because he was still too young to use the farm implements" (FWP Vol. 17 Virginia 1936:21). Charles was responsible for completing this chore daily, from morning until evening. He often fell asleep before arriving home and would spend most of the night sleeping outdoors on the ground. When he awoke, it was sometimes too dark for him to find his way home (FWP Vol. 17 Virginia 1936:21).

During childhood, enslaved individuals "began to learn not only work routines, but also work discipline and related punishment" (Stevenson 1996:187). From a very young age, enslaved children learned that simple mistakes could often result in corporal punishment. Isaac Green, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, remembered that when he was "big [enough]," he was forced to go to the field with the rest of the children to plant corn and peas. The children used their heels to make dents in the ground. In each dent, they would drop two peas. If they made the mistake of dropping three seeds instead of two too often, "it meant de strap fum de

overseer" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:212). Isaac did not mention how old he was when he began working in the field, but he was probably quite young considering that he was only working with other children who were responsible for a simple task typically reserved for children. The young children learned that the small difference between planting two seeds and planting three seeds was extremely important, as that one extra seed might lead to being beaten with a leather strap. Enslavers utilized the constant fear of violence (which could be triggered by the most miniscule error) to teach enslaved children how to be obedient and careful workers.

Work for young children (under ten years old)

Young enslaved children completed a variety of tasks that were needed on the farm or plantation, such as calling the field hands in for dinner, caring for poultry and livestock, or collecting firewood for the enslaved cook. Though many of these chores may sound simple or relatively easy, some were quite taxing, especially for a child. As a young boy enslaved in South Carolina, Randall Lee's job was to deliver the butter from the dairy to the plantation house, with the help of another boy his age. However, the dairy was located two miles away from the big house. The two seven-year-old boys were expected to retrieve the package of butter and carry it two miles to the plantation house without dropping it or getting it dirty (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:194-195). While the task of retrieving and delivering butter does not seem to be a particularly onerous one, two miles is a fairly long distance for a seven-year-old child to walk. Additionally, the children were not supervised by an adult and were likely tempted to stop along the way to play, making the job even more difficult to complete.

Frederick Douglass wrote about the first jobs that he was responsible for as an enslaved child at Wye House Plantation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. "The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run

of errands for my old master's daughter, Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them" (Douglass 1845:26). Although they did not seem arduous to Douglass, these chores can still be considered work that he was required to do – including his time spent with Daniel Lloyd, the son of the plantation owner. Douglass was seven or eight years old when he left Wye House for Baltimore, meaning that he would have been between six and eight years old when he was responsible for these various jobs (Douglass 1845:27). According to Stevenson, enslavers assigned tasks to young children based on the jobs that they intended the children to do as adults:

> Future agricultural laborers began as children by picking up stones and trash. As they grew older, they began to help stack and bind wheat, pull weeds, worm tobacco, and carry water. Additional tasks included caring for livestock and picking fruit, nuts, and berries. Other slave children, delegated as the next generation of domestics, sometimes were companions to young masters and mistresses, but mostly assisted cooks, maids, and baby nurses (1996:187).[125]

While this generally holds true, the distinctions between the jobs of a child who would become a field laborer and the jobs of a child who would become a domestic worker were not always fixed or rigid, especially for young enslaved children. As demonstrated by Frederick Douglass' account, at seven years old he was given tasks that might be assigned to a future field hand (driving cows, keeping birds out of the garden, cleaning the yard) but he was also a companion

[125] Stevenson also asserts that "Masters and overseers routinely enforced early gender distinctions," with the example of boys herding livestock and girls taking care of little children and working in the kitchen (1996:187). I agree with the assessment that livestock herding was a male-specific task, but personal accounts as well as archival evidence indicate that childcare as well as working in kitchens as scullions were consistently acknowledged to be gender-neutral jobs.

to young Daniel Lloyd (the son of the plantation owner), which might normally be a task reserved for a future domestic laborer. Soon after, in Baltimore, Douglass worked in a domestic capacity, as the nurse or childminder of young Thomas Auld (1845:30). While enslaved children were certainly given jobs to prepare them for their future roles at some point during childhood, it seems that the majority of very young children were simply assigned any small, random chores that the enslaver or overseer needed to be done.

Transporting water

Toting water from a well or from a well pump to the enslaved field hands or to the enslaved cook was a common chore that was allocated to young enslaved children. Perhaps this task does not seem particularly arduous, but in fact, it was a difficult job. Water is very heavy. One gallon of water weighs over eight pounds, not including the vessel that contains the water. Additionally, the children often had to carry the water over long distances. Charlie Hudson, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, said that he and the other children had to tote water to the field hands during crop time. The bucket was so heavy that it would slap against his legs as he carried it, and most of the water would have splashed out before he even arrived at the field (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:222).[126]

Martha Ann Dixon, who was born and enslaved in North Carolina, said that she also had to tote water, "one bucketful on my head and one bucketful in each hand" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:162). Molly Finley, who was formerly enslaved in Arkansas, remembered using the exact same method for carrying water as a child, as did Isom Starnes, who was enslaved in Alabama (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:292). Isom said that the children had to take a path

[126] Enslaved children worked as water carriers from very young ages. The Charleston Museum has in its collection a small wooden yoke with leather straps, meant for carrying buckets of water. It is sized to fit a five-year-old child.

up a hill when carrying the water back, and that he would stub his toes on the rocks until they bled, "sometimes it looked like the nail would come off" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 6 1936:218). Isom Starnes and his companions probably toted the water barefoot, as most enslaved children did not receive shoes until they began working in the field, or if they worked in the plantation house. Therefore, enslaved children who were forced to tote water not only had to carry a number of buckets at once, but they also lacked footwear. Because they carried a bucket on their heads as well as one in each hand, they would not be able to look down and watch their steps without spilling the water. This resulted in wounds to their unprotected feet.

Jane Clark, who was enslaved in Maryland, was responsible for toting water "a long distance from a spring for culinary purposes for all on the plantation" with two other children (Clark and Ferris 1897:3). Jane was eight years old at the time. The three children began working at four o'clock in the morning, making two trips before breakfast, four trips before dinner, and another trip before supper. "The hair was worn off their heads by the water pails which the children carried on them" (Clark and Ferris 1897:3). It seems that because enslaved children often carried the pails of water upon their heads, it was not uncommon for their hair to wear off in a ring due to the heavy loads. This often happened to enslaved children on cotton plantations during harvest time, as the fieldworkers picked cotton for sometimes up to sixteen hours a day and needed the children to bring water often (Baptist 2014:131). Even jobs that were deemed simple or easy enough for young children were in actuality extremely taxing and dangerous, physically harming the children in a number of ways.

Childcare and nursing

Nursing was another job reserved for enslaved children. In the Upper South, where smaller plantations and farms did not have any elderly enslaved nurses, children were frequently

tasked with watching or caring for the younger enslaved children while their parents worked in the field. Oftentimes the children who were designated as nurses were still quite young themselves. In his Farm Book, Thomas Jefferson stipulated that enslaved children under the age of ten years old were to serve as nurses (Jefferson 1824:77). He never states the age when the children should start working as nurses, only the age when they should stop (to perform other jobs).

Hattie Thomas, who was enslaved in Georgia, was only five years old when she was tasked with caring for the younger enslaved children (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:377). And Silvia Witherspoon, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi, was so young when she began nursing the other children that her mother (who worked in the fields) had to tie the smallest baby to Silvia's back so that she would be able to play while keeping the baby with her (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:429). Sallie Crane, who was formerly enslaved in Arkansas, recalls that she was seven or eight years old when she first began to nurse. "I could barely lift the baby. I would have to drag 'em round" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:52). Hattie Thomas, Silvia Witherspoon, and Sallie Crane were so young when they began nursing other children that they were unable to physically lift the babies whom they were charged with watching.

John Brown, who was enslaved in Virginia, remembered that his first job as a child was to nurse his younger brother while their mother worked in the field. Brown would lay his little brother under a tree, in the shade, while he left to go play nearby or to take a nap under a hedge. "He would wake me by his screaming, when I would find him covered with ants, or musquitos [sic], or blistered from the heat of the sun, which having moved round whilst I was asleep, would throw the shadow of the branches in another direction, leaving the poor child quite exposed" (Brown 1855:4). John Brown was too young to properly care for an infant, as he was only a

small child himself. He did the best that he could – he made sure his little brother was in the shade and stayed close by him. However, John was also young and had a child's attention span – he went off to play or fell asleep, resulting in his baby brother getting bitten by bugs or sunburned.

On larger plantations, enslaved children sometimes worked as nurse's helpers in the plantation nursery, assisting the elderly enslaved nurse with caring for the babies and toddlers. This was the case on a South Carolina rice plantation that Frederick Law Olmsted visited during his journey to the South. He wrote that there were about twenty-seven children (most of whom were infants) on the verandah and the steps of the nursery building. While an elderly nurse was in charge, Olmsted noted that "A number of girls, eight or ten years old, were occupied in holding and tending to the youngest infants" (Olmsted 1856:424). Large plantations with many enslaved children and babies often required more than one person to watch all of the children in the nursery. Henry Brown, who was formerly enslaved in South Carolina, remembered that the babies were taken to a designated house where multiple elderly women and young girls "who were big enough to lift them" cared for them during the day (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 1 1936:119). Instead of being charged with nursing younger siblings or small groups of little children alone, the "older" children worked in the nursery building. This arrangement typically occurred on large plantations in the Lowcountry and Lower South where nursery buildings were more common.

Finally, enslaved children were often tasked with working as caregivers for their enslaver's white children.[127] As mentioned earlier, this was Frederick Douglass' first job when

[127] Wilma King notes how the responsibility of caring for an enslaver's child reinforced the hegemonic master-servant relationship, as enslaved individuals would be forced to address a

he arrived in Baltimore at the age of eight. Lou Williams, who was born and enslaved in Maryland, worked as a nurse for her enslaver's children, also starting when she was eight years old. However, Lou remembered that her enslaver's wife decided that Lou would become a nursemaid when Lou was only five years old, because she felt that Lou would be a dependable worker (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4:166). This seems to be the case for many enslaved individuals who worked in a domestic capacity. Enslavers (or their wives) would ascertain which enslaved children would eventually work in the plantation house and would train them from a young age, oftentimes taking them away from their parents and keeping them in the enslaver's house. For example, Mary Divine, who was formerly enslaved in Tennessee, was forced to nurse her enslaver's baby when she was just three and a half years old – still a toddler herself. She said, "de baby was most big as me, but I nursed it just de same" (FWP Vol. 10 Missouri 1936:103). Mary nursed the baby for two years before she was sent to work for her enslaver's oldest son. While enslaved by him, Mary continued to do domestic work as a spinner.

Household work for young children

Besides working as nurses or companions for the enslaver's children, enslaved children also worked other jobs within the enslaver's household. Typically, this began at a young age so that the children could be trained for the domestic positions that they would eventually hold. Household positions like house boy or girl, lady's maid, valet, house maid, footman, butler, seamstress, laundress, and cook were commonly filled by enslaved individuals who had been trained within the enslaver's house for years. Sam Kilgore, who was enslaved in Tennessee, was taken to the big house when he was four years old. His enslaver's son wanted Sam as an errand

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baby or a toddler with titles like "Miss," implying that "the slaves, regardless of age or size, owed deference to the toddler" (King 2011:174). See also Jones-Rogers 2019, pp. 1-24.

boy and as a playmate. When Sam got older, he became the boy's valet, accompanying him everywhere (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:256). Will Daily, who was formerly enslaved in Missouri, was also taken to his enslaver's house when he was very young – about four or five years old. His enslaver's wife began training him as a house boy, and he was capable of doing many different chores by the time he was six years old (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:270).

Elizabeth Smith, who was enslaved in Kentucky, began performing the duties of a house girl when she was five years old or perhaps younger. Along with the domestic chores, Elizabeth was forced to "spin long reels five cuts a day, pick seed from cotton, and cockle burrs from wool" (FWP Vol. 5 Indiana 1936:183). And Francis Black, who was formerly enslaved in Louisiana, was so young when she was made a house girl that she remembered having to climb up on a chair in order to reach the dishes stored in the cabinet so that she could set the table (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:89). The duties of a young house girl may have included cleaning (the floors, furniture, silverware, etc.), textile work (spinning and sewing), laundry, serving at meals, and possibly working part of the time as a scullion, helping the enslaved cook with menial culinary tasks in the kitchen.

The jobs associated with being a house boy were typically the same. "Many of these chores were gender-blind, and both enslaved boys and girls cleaned, served meals, attended to poultry, and assisted in making clothes or caring for children" (King 2011:77). As an enslaved child in Kentucky, Henry Bibb worked as a house boy for his enslaver's wife, cleaning the furniture, and washing and scrubbing the floors. He was also forced to rock her in her rocking chair, comb her hair, fan her, and other odd jobs. The woman "was too lazy to scratch her own head" and would make Henry scratch it for her (Bibb 1849:16). Young enslaved children who were working in the enslaver's household were responsible for a variety of different tasks, rather

than one main job, such as an enslaved adult domestic worker might have. More routinized work typically occurred at the age of ten or older (King 2011:76).

Fanning

Fanning flies off of the dining table was a specific task that enslaved children primarily performed, possibly because enslavers did not want enslaved adults to overhear their discussions. Of course, children did hear those discussions, though enslavers may have assumed that the children were not listening or that they would not remember the information in order to relay it to their enslaved parents or other enslaved adults.[128] Additionally, children were small in stature – perhaps enslavers felt that their presence would feel less obvious than that of an adult. Enslaved children typically fanned air or flies off the table through the use of two methods. The first was by operating large ceiling fans called punkahs, which worked by circulating air through the use of a rope pulley system.[129] The child managing the punkah would have had to pull the rope constantly for the duration of the meal or for however long their enslaver kept them there. Formerly enslaved individuals recall that these large ceiling fans were constructed of materials such as paper or peacock feathers (Washington 1901:9 and Davis in FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:290).

The second method was through the manual use of a fly brush. Some accounts from formerly enslaved individuals state that small enslaved boys were placed in a swing above the table, given a fly brush (typically made of peacock feathers), and forced to fan the brush back and forth over the diners, being careful to avoid touching any of the food with the brush. It seems

[128] Booker T. Washington operated one of these ceiling fans as an enslaved child in Virginia. "Naturally much of the conversation of the white people turned upon the subject of freedom and the war, and I absorbed a good deal of it" (Washington 1901:9-10).
[129] For more on the origins of punkahs and the use of enslaved labor for fanning see Byrd 2016.

that only boys were placed in swings, due to their ability to wear pants. Though enslaved children under the age of ten typically only wore long shifts, regardless of gender, children who worked in the enslaver's house were often given nicer clothing, and young boys who worked in the household generally wore pants. These children were better attired because they would have been more visible to visitors and guests, and fine clothing demonstrated an enslaver's wealth and status.[130]

Enslaved children also utilized fly brushes simply standing behind or beside their enslavers, both at the dining table and in any other situation that their enslavers demanded. Both boys and girls did this job. Addie Vinson, who was enslaved in Georgia, recalled that she had to stand behind her enslaver's elderly mother and fan her with a turkey feather fan to keep the flies away from the table (FWP Vol. Georgia Part 4 1936:101). As a young boy, Henry Coleman, who was formerly enslaved in South Carolina, sat up in a swing and fanned the flies away from the dining table with a peacock feather. However, when he grew older and became a house boy, his enslaver's wife took the swing down and instead, forced a "little gal" to stand behind her chair and fan away the flies. She told her husband that the style had changed – swings were no longer in fashion (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 1 1936:212). Henry Coleman's story emphasizes the ways in which enslaved individuals, and especially enslaved children, were considered nothing more than pieces of furniture. They were utilized in certain ways to fit the current trend or style that would demonstrate the wealth and power of the enslaver and then switched out when that was deemed no longer fashionable.

[130] Wilma King cites the story of a visitor to a New York household who observed that "four black boys, eldest about 11 or 12, the youngest about 5 or 6 years old, clean and well dressed but barefooted in a livery green turned up with red, waited about the table [during breakfast]" (Williams-Myers 1994:25 cited in King 2011:79-80).

Chimney sweeping

While most domestic tasks for young children were gender-blind, historically, chimney sweeping was a job reserved exclusively for young boys. King states that chimney sweeping was reserved for small boys under the age of twelve years old (2011:100). An 1863 statement from a master-sweep in England claims that "the best age for training boys is about six," though boys as young as four and five were known to train as chimney sweeps (Strange 1982:15). This was probably the case for young American enslaved children as well. The boys had to be quite small and agile in order to fit into the chimney flues in order to clean them. The job was extremely dangerous, as it involved climbing great heights and the children were exposed to toxic waste elements from fire, tar, and smoke (King 2011:100).[131] Additionally, the chimney sweeps had almost no protection from these hazards, as they typically worked barefoot, wearing only their undergarments and a special stocking cap. This chimney sweeping cap covered the entire face and had holes for the eyes, it was "made of coarse cloth" and was "double or threefold" (Strange 1982:13). A notation from one of George Washington's household account ledgers indicates that on April 16, 1791, a "Cap for Richmond to sweep the Chimneys" was purchased (Lear 1790-1791). The use of plural "Chimneys" indicates that Richmond was responsible for sweeping multiple chimneys in the building – probably all of them.[132] This would have been a laborious, time-consuming, and dangerous task for one boy to complete.

Fieldwork before age ten

[131] There are multiple serious health risks associated with chimney sweeping, including cuts becoming infected with soot and developing into callouses, soot becoming imbedded into the scrotum and causing cancer, soot becoming imbedded in the eyes and causing them to be perpetually red, and the danger of tuberculosis from soot in the lungs (Gilje and Rock 1994:524).
[132] Richmond was the son of George Washington's enslaved chief cook, Hercules Posey. He would have been thirteen years old in April 1791.

The age at which enslaved children began working in the field varied widely, typically based on enslaver, plantation or farm size, and region. It seems that a gradual introduction to fieldwork was the common practice, with the exceptions being large short-staple cotton plantations in the Lower South. For example, on the Lowcountry rice plantation that Olmsted visited, enslaved children did not begin "regular field-work" until they turned twelve years old, at which time they were classified as quarter-hands (1856:424). Before then, the children were "charged with some light kind of duty, such as frightening birds from corn" (Olmsted 1856:424). Children on that plantation also worked as water carriers, with one child to fulfill that job attached to each working gang. The practice of tasking enslaved children with these field chores was frequent in both the Lowcountry and the Upper South. Additionally, enslaved children living on Lowcountry rice plantations generally began regular work in the fields later than children living in the Upper and Lower South due to the health hazards of the Lowcountry environment. Enslaved children in the Lowcountry had a higher mortality rate than the southern average, which may have been due to constant malaria epidemics and the extremely hot climate (Pargas 2011:487).

In the Upper South, enslaved children also performed various tasks in the fields before starting regular fieldwork, which generally began at a younger age than children living on plantations in the Lowcountry. Georgina Giwbs [Gibbs?] was formerly enslaved in Virginia and began working in the field when she was eight years old, using two paddles to keep the crows from eating the crops (FWP Vol. 17 Virginia 1936:16). As an enslaved child in Maryland, James V. Deane was forced to work on the farm "with other small boys," doing tasks like thinning corn and watching the watermelon patches before he was old enough to work in the wheat and tobacco fields (FWP Vol. 8 Maryland 1936:6). These jobs were likely meant to familiarize

children with the work and environment of agricultural labor. The children would be exposed to agricultural work, the way that the working gangs operated, the directions of the enslaver or overseer, and other aspects of working outdoors such as the constant heat and lack of shade.

Young children in the Upper South were also often tasked with picking the tobacco worms off of the tobacco plants and killing them. John Brown, who was enslaved in Virginia, wrote that this was "the principal occupation of the children, from the time they could get about to do any thing at all, until they grew old and strong enough to go to harder work" (Brown 1855:12). Little children were the "ideal workers for the distasteful task of plucking and killing tobacco worms" because of their small stature (Wiencek 2012:92). This chore involved killing the worms (which can grow up to four inches) so that they would not move on to damage other tobacco plants. Brown described the worms as "tough and 'blobby,'" and "very filthy things to handle" (1855:183). Precilla Gray, who was enslaved in Tennessee, said that she was afraid of the worms at first until her Aunt Frankie taught her how to remove their heads (FWP Vol. 15 Tennessee 1936:24). Nancy Williams, who was formerly enslaved in Virginia, recalls picking the worms off of tobacco leaves with the other children when she was around five or six years old. She ignored a few of the worms instead of picking them off and killing them, and when her enslaver saw this, he stuffed a handful of the worms into her mouth as punishment (Perdue et al. 1976:322). This was a common punishment for enslaved children who were not meticulous in conducting this task and is another example of how even very young children were harshly and physically punished for making minor mistakes.[133]

Many formerly enslaved individuals discussed being introduced to fieldwork through jobs or chores that were related to agricultural work but that did not necessarily take place in the

[133] For more examples see Brown 1855:183; Thompson 1856:18; and Perdue 1976:281.

fields. For example, at the Georgia plantation where Shade Richards was enslaved, young boys were tasked with assisting the fieldhands by carrying water, as well as fetching and returning tools to the shop (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:201). Boys under the age of twelve years old were also responsible for driving wagons of corn and wheat to the mill, where they were ground. On other plantations, instead of driving a cart or wagon, the boys simply rode on a horse or a mule with the sacks of grain balanced on the back of the animal. Typically, the mill was located a good distance away from the plantation, and a boy would have to travel three to five miles alone to complete the chore. Often, the sacks of grain on the backs of the animals would become unbalanced and fall off at some point during the journey. Because the boys were so young, and therefore small-statured, they were unable to lift the heavy sacks alone.

As a child, Booker T. Washington was forced to take the corn to the mill once a week, alone and on horseback. He wrote, "This work I always dreaded" (Washington 1901:6). During these weekly trips, the heavy bags of corn frequently fell off the back of the horse, as did Washington himself. He would then have to wait, sometimes for hours, until a good Samaritan came by to help him replace the bags. "The hours while waiting for some one were usually spent in crying. The time consumed in this way made me late in reaching the mill, and by the time I got my corn ground and reached home it would be far into the night" (Washington 1901:6). The road to and from the mill was not a popular one, and ran through thick forests. "I was always frightened," Washington recalled. When this occurred, the situation was made worse by the fact that Washington knew that he would be punished (sometimes physically) for coming home late (Washington 1901:6). That multiple formerly enslaved men recalled having this exact experience

highlights the fact that many enslavers forced young children to complete tasks that they were sometimes physically incapable of accomplishing on their own.[134]

Enslaved children living on small farms in the Upper South began regular fieldwork much earlier than children living in the Lowcountry. Pargas notes that the age when children transitioned from working exclusively with other children to regular fieldwork with adults varied according to the enslaver, but that the average age was between eight and nine years old (2011:484). These farms primarily grew crops including wheat, oats, rye, and corn, though many still produced tobacco on a smaller scale. On larger plantations in the Upper South, enslaved children may have began working in the fields a bit later than those on smaller farms, around the age of ten or older. Plantations had more enslaved laborers whereas farms with less enslaved workers required children to perform fieldwork as soon as they were physically able.

In the Lower South, the age when children began regularly working in the fields alongside adults was extremely varied. On some plantations, enslaved children did not do fieldwork until they were twelve or even fourteen years old. On others, children began picking cotton as young as age four. On Leak plantation in Mississippi, the children's picking group consisted of children from four to twelve years old, with around eight and half years old being the average age of a picker (Metzer 1975:135). Richard Crump, who was enslaved in Mississippi, said that the first thing he knew anything about was picking cotton. "I was a little bitty old fellow with a little sack hangin' at my side. I was pickin' beside my mother. They would grab us sometimes when we didn't pick right. Shake us and pull our ears" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:63). Richard was born in 1858, and would have been six or seven years old

[134] See Rev. Henry Clay Moorman's interview in FWP Vol. 5 Indiana, p. 137 and William Curtis' interview in FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma, p. 50 for similar experiences.

when the Civil War ended. Therefore he must have been extremely young when he first began picking cotton with his mother.

Charles Ball was enslaved on a cotton plantation in South Carolina after he was sold away from his family in Maryland. He wrote that children began working in the cotton fields with the adults at eight years old, as "children under seven years of age are of little use in picking cotton, and it is not supposed that their labour [sic] can repay the expense of clothing them in a manner to fit them to go to the field" (Ball 1837:271). Ball said that men and women picking cotton took one row each, "and two, or in some cases where they were very small, three of the children had one" (1837:148). On a day when the overseer fixed the work at fifty pounds of cotton, boys and girls were expected to pick twenty-five pounds each (working as half-hands) and "several children had ten pounds each as their task" (Ball 1837:217). These children may have been very small, as the amount of work assigned was less than what would be considered a quarter-hand's work.

Enslaved children aged seven and younger only worked in the fields on days when the weather was warm (because they were not given clothes, and were therefore naked). They picked a few pounds of cotton, "for which their parents received pay, and were obliged, in return, to find the children in bedding for the winter" (Ball 1837:272). These very young children were considered too young to work regularly but picked cotton on warm days so that their parents would be able to purchase bedding for them, as children aged seven and younger were not given any clothing or blankets, which would have been their only form of protection from the cold during the winter months (Ball 1837:270).

Patience Campbell, who was enslaved in Florida, remembered working with the other children when she was around seven or eight years old, removing the cotton seeds from the

picked cotton.[135] After this was done, the cotton was weighed and bound in hemp bags (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:59). Other formerly enslaved individuals said that picking the cotton seed from the cotton was the first serious task that they were assigned as children. Charlie Davenport, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi, recalled that he was first sent to the fields as punishment for retaliating against the overseer's daughter, who hit him with a stick. He said that he was "too little" for fieldwork, but the next morning he was forced to chop cotton (FWP Vol. 9 Mississippi 1936:37). Chopping cotton involves using an extremely sharp hoe to remove weeds and thin the excess cotton plants so that the remaining plants will thrive. This must be done to every row of cotton, and is an arduous and laborious process. Charlie Davenport never mentioned his age at the time of this event, only that he was too little for fieldwork but was sent to the field regardless.

Though he did not mention his age at the time, Thomas Cole, who was formerly enslaved in Alabama, remembered that he and the other children had to pick cotton every fall. He remembered that the big baskets weighed seventy-five to a hundred pounds each, but the children just added the cotton that they picked to an enslaved adult's basket (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:225). Because the children were simply adding the cotton that they picked to an adult's basket rather than being given one of their own (which would be weighed at the end of the day) it is likely that they were very young. Another formerly enslaved man, Andrew Moss, discussed working as a child but also did not mention his age at the time. Andrew was enslaved in Georgia. He told his interviewer about the little hoes ("handles 'bout de size of my arm") that

[135] Patience Campbell was enslaved on a farm with "very few slaves," and therefore the cotton seeds had to be removed by hand. Cotton gins were common on larger plantations, but smaller farms either used enslaved labor to manually remove the seeds or took their cotton to ginners and paid them to remove the seeds.

were made for the little children to use. He recalled that as a child, he followed the adult fieldhands up and down the rows of cotton, using his little hoe to chop around the corners where the soil was soft enough for the little children to hoe easily (FWP Vol. 15 Tennessee 1936:50). Although Andrew did not mention his age, it is clear that he (and the other children) were quite young when they began working in the fields, as they were not yet big enough to use standard-sized hoes and required child-sized tools in order to work.

Solomon Northup observed the labor of enslaved children when he was hired out by his enslaver to work on a sugar plantation in Louisiana (1853:211). He describes the sugarhouse, or sugar mill, where the sugarcane was manufactured into granulated sugar. Enslaved laborers cut the sugarcane in the fields and brought the cane in cartfuls to an open shed attached to the sugarhouse. The children stand on either side of a conveyor belt (Northup describes it as an "endless carrier") and their job is to take the cut cane out of the cart and place it upon the belt, which transports it to the main building to be processed. Northup does not mention the ages of the children, only that this specific job was conducted exclusively by enslaved children. Northup's brief observation is significant because it demonstrates the work of enslaved children as integral to the sugar manufacturing process at that plantation.

Routinized work: jobs for children aged ten and older

Typically, by the time an enslaved child turned ten years old, he or she would be tasked with more steady, routinized work. The jobs that enslaved children were given at this time were usually the jobs that they would continue to hold for the rest of their lives. Additionally, more of the jobs for early adolescents (aged ten to fourteen) were separated by gender. Jobs such as those performed by enslaved artisans or craftsmen were almost exclusively reserved for men and boys. Jobs that included skilled textile work such as spinning, weaving, knitting, and sewing, or

domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning were principally filled by enslaved women and girls.[136] Of course, enslaved adolescents who worked in the fields were typically responsible for the same tasks, therefore fieldwork continued to be a largely gender-blind job.

Fieldwork for early adolescents

As stated earlier in this chapter, some enslaved children began routinely working in the fields as young as age four (though this seems to be atypical) but more commonly around eight years old. However, others did not become fieldhands until the age of ten or older, when they were typically classified as quarter-hands, meaning that they were responsible for completing one-quarter of the work that a full-hand completed in one day. As children grew older and stronger, they were classified as half-hands, and then three-quarter hands, and finally, when they reached young adulthood, they were considered full-hands. Interviews with formerly enslaved individuals indicate that it was most common to routinely begin fieldwork between the ages of twelve and fourteen years old. Rosina Hoard, who was enslaved in Texas, told her interviewer that the "big" children were required to pick cotton. Their overseer was an enslaved man called Old Junus and he was extremely mean to the children. "He carry a stick and use it, too" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:142). Mary Raines, who was formerly enslaved in South Carolina, said that she began fieldwork alongside the enslaved adults when she was twelve years old. She was responsible for hoeing one acre of cotton and picked 150 pounds of cotton each day (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 4 1936:2).

[136] Documentary evidence suggests that the majority of enslaved cooks were women. However, this was not always the case. Notable exceptions include James Hemings and his brother Peter Hemings, who were enslaved by Thomas Jefferson, and Hercules Posey, who was enslaved by George Washington. It should be noted that the roles of enslaved cook (and formally trained enslaved chef) at Monticello and Mount Vernon were also performed by women, depending on the time period.

In the Lower South, enslaved children aged ten and older assisted with the cotton ginning process. Jacob Branch, who was formerly enslaved in Texas, began ginning cotton when he was ten years old. He recalled that the cotton gin on the plantation was operated by a hand crank, and when he ginned enough for "a lapful" he would place it in a tow sack and deliver it to a woman who would turn it into twine. Jacob said that he had to warm up and dampen the cotton in front of the fireplace before he started ginning it (Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:140). A wood engraving printed in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1854 depicts a group of enslaved workers operating a large cotton gin in a gin-house. A man pushes cotton from the packing room down a chute and into the gin while a young girl pushes the cotton through the gin using a rake. A little girl holding a bucket atop her head stands by and watches the process. The illustration demonstrates that a number of enslaved children may have worked in a gin-house, assisting the adults.

Plowing was commonly thought to be a job reserved for enslaved boys and men. "Plowing signaled an adolescent boy's entry into manhood" because plow-boys wore pants, rather than the unisex shifts that almost all enslaved children wore before they began routinized work (King 2011:95). Lewis Mundy, who was enslaved in Missouri, told his interviewer that when he was "small" he rode one of the oxen and harrowed the fields. "When I was about ten or eleven I plowed with oxen," he said (FWP Vol. 10 Missouri 1936:258). However, Lewis also recalled wearing a long shift until he was around twelve or fourteen years old, making it probable that he did not wear pants when he began plowing. According to King, in actuality, many enslaved women also plowed. "The size of a household and its owner's needs determined who did or did not plow" (King 2011:95). FWP interviews confirm that enslaved girls and women did plow on certain plantations. Laura Redmoun, who was enslaved in Tennessee,

recalled that her mother's enslaver forced her mother to "wear breeches and tote big, heavy logs and plow with oxes" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:231). Enslaved boys, girls, men, and women all plowed regardless of their attire.

Before he was responsible for ginning cotton at the age of ten, Jacob Branch remembered that he and the other children were tasked with tending the cattle and feeding the horses and hogs (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:138). Additionally, Emma Knight, who was enslaved in Missouri, recalled that as a young girl of eight or nine years old, she and her sisters had the job of feeding the stock, sheep, hogs, and calves on the farm, "because de young masters wouldn't do de work" (FWP Vol. Missouri 1936:218). While both young boys and girls were tasked with driving the horses or cows up from the fields as well as feeding the livestock, the overall care of the livestock on the plantation or the farm was typically handled by adolescent enslaved boys and men. Formerly enslaved in Florida, Douglas Parish became a stable boy when he was twelve years old. The elderly enslaved man in charge of the stables taught him how to groom and care for the horses, as well as keeping the various carriages clean (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:258). Jacob Stroyer also worked in the stables, but he was a small boy when he first began. His father was charged with taking care of the horses and mules on the South Carolina plantation where they were both enslaved. Jacob wrote, "I was around with him in the barn yard when but a very small boy; of course that gave me an early relish for the occupation of hostler, and I soon made known my preference to Col. Singleton, who was a sportsman, and had fine horses" (Stroyer 1885:19). As was the case with many other jobs, small enslaved children of both genders were assigned to do more menial tasks such as feeding or driving the livestock. However, when it came to specialized jobs such as that of stable hand or groom, it became a gendered role, filled

almost exclusively by boys and men.[137] This may have been due to the fact that only men served as coachmen or wagoners and therefore would have had to be at least somewhat familiar with the livestock that pulled the vehicles, such as horses and mules.

Domestic work for early adolescents

In general, enslaved boys and girls working within the enslaver's household would be very familiar with how things functioned and their enslaver's expectations of them by the time they reached early adolescence. As discussed previously, enslaved domestic workers were usually brought into the enslaver's home at a very young age, in order to be trained so that they would be capable of taking on larger roles with more responsibilities when they grew older. The jobs that small children (under the age of ten) worked gradually progressed into the jobs that they would hold for the majority of their adult lives. For example, a very young errand boy whose tasks may have differed from day to day depending on what his enslaver needed might next become a house boy with greater responsibilities. A house girl might next become a scullery maid or a chamber maid. By the age of ten, boys and girls working within the household may have been entrusted with certain duties that smaller children would have been incapable of accomplishing. These older children would be more familiar with how the household functioned and may have been considered more trustworthy by the enslaver or the enslaver's family as a result of having worked within the home for a number of years. Additionally, it was at around the age of ten that enslaved children working in domestic contexts might be considered for other

[137] Working as a groom would have been considered a skilled trade (these are discussed later in this chapter). However, I have chosen to discuss it in this section to demonstrate how tasks for young enslaved children that were gender-blind (such as feeding and driving livestock) became gendered as the job became more specialized (and as children became early adolescents).

important roles on the plantation such as cook, spinner or weaver, blacksmith, wheelwright, or carpenter, among other positions.

Many of the enslaved individuals who were forced to be personal servants to their enslavers or their enslaver's wives worked within the household as early adolescents.[138] Paul Jennings, who was formerly enslaved by James and Dolley Madison, began working at the White House during Madison's presidency when he was ten years old. In his *Reminiscences*, Jennings mentions that one of his jobs at the White House was to set the table.[139] As a footman, his other jobs may have included waiting on the table and greeting any visitors to the house. Later, when Jennings was eighteen, he began serving as Madison's personal manservant, assisting him with numerous tasks each day. He wrote, "I was always with Mr. Madison till he died, and shaved him every other day for sixteen years" (Jennings 1865:18).

As a ten-year-old footman, Jennings would have learned the intricacies of working in a large and busy household. He also would have interacted with the Madisons frequently. By the time Jennings was eighteen, Madison would have ascertained whether he would be a capable and trustworthy manservant. In this way, enslaved children were not only trained to perform multiple tasks within the home, but at the same time were scrutinized and evaluated for future jobs. Enslaved children working in domestic contexts would have been constantly working, as they may have been called to work by their enslavers at any time of the night or day. Additionally, these children would often be separated from their parents at young ages, especially if their parents did not work in the enslaver's household. When their enslavers were traveling, the

[138] These job titles included lady's maid (for women), and body servant, manservant, or valet (for men).
[139] "When the British did arrive, they ate up the very dinner, and drank the wines, &c., that I had prepared for the President's party" (Jennings 1865:13).

children might be taken with them to other cities, far from their homes on the plantation and the enslaved community there. As a boy, Paul Jennings most likely arrived in Washington, D.C. (a city that was foreign to him and extremely different from the environment at Montpelier) without his mother.[140] Like other young enslaved household servants, Jennings would have been forced to adapt to his new life very quickly.

Another position that enslaved adolescents typically held was that of kitchen scullion. A plantation kitchen was a dangerous place for very young children. There were often a number of workers besides the main cook, and many kitchens did not yet have stoves, but instead cooked using open fires and hot coals. People were constantly getting burned, the cotton garments that many enslaved people wore were extremely flammable, and enslaved children working as scullions were usually small and typically barefoot.[141] Multiple dishes would be cooking at the same time and each had to be tended to separately. The job of the enslaved cook was extremely important and he or she heavily relied on the various assistant cooks and scullions in order to successfully cook each component of every meal. Enslaved children working as kitchen scullions worked in a high-stress environment – a sweltering kitchen filled with multiple individuals all attending to different jobs. The kitchen workers had to be in constant communication in order to precisely time the preparation, cooking, and presentation of the dishes so that they could be delivered to the house where enslaved footmen would serve them at the dining table. The job of kitchen scullion was integral to the success of the meal and of the cook.

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[140] It is unclear whether Jennings' mother accompanied him to Washington, D.C. He does not mention her in his *Reminiscences* regarding his time at the White House. Additionally, only two enslaved servants can be confirmed as traveling to D.C. with the Madisons from Montpelier – Paul Jennings and Sukey, Dolley Madison's twelve-year-old enslaved lady's maid.
[141] Leni Sorensen, telephone conversation with the author, 2019.

Young enslaved children between around the ages of six to eight years old would have been recruited to work in the kitchen doing tasks like bringing firewood and water in and throwing ashes out. Adolescent children working as scullions could be trusted with slightly more important tasks. Later, some would advance to more important culinary roles as they became more knowledgeable.[142] Working in the kitchen was a laborious and high-pressure job, especially on the large plantations of wealthy enslavers, who often held extravagant dinners and expected multiple courses at each meal. Emmaline Heard, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, described what would happen if the enslaver's wife was dissatisfied with the cook. "Just before dinner, the mistress would come in to inspect the cooking. If the food in any of the pots was not cooked to her satisfaction, she would sometimes lose her temper, remove her slipper and strike the cook" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:150). Therefore, only those children who were of the right temperament and capable of following instructions would have been chosen to work in the kitchen as scullions (that would later be trained to become cooks).

Edith Hern Fossett worked as one of Thomas Jefferson's head cooks at the White House and at Monticello, but she likely started working in the Monticello kitchen as a scullion. Her duties might have included fetching wood and water, picking herbs, washing and preparing the vegetables, and any other small tasks that the cook needed. Edith was probably chosen to work as a scullion after she worked as a baby-minder for Sally Hemings' infant, starting when she was eight years old. She would have lived on Mulberry Row, in close proximity to the house, and was the right age. "It fits that she would have been a scullion during James' [Hemings] tutoring of Peter [Hemings] and then after 1796 worked in the kitchen with Peter, and thus been prepared

[142] Not all scullions would be trained to become cooks. Some scullions simply did the kitchen chores that needed to be done, such as turning the spit, shelling peas, and plucking chickens (Leni Sorensen, telephone conversation with the author, 2019).

with enough kitchen experience to be taken to the President's House in 1801."[143] It is likely that someone took notice of Edith's maturity, skills, and disposition while she worked as a baby-minder and concluded that she would be capable of working in a busy kitchen as a scullion.

Skilled trades for boys aged ten to fourteen

Enslaved boys who worked in or near the enslaver's household were often chosen to train as skilled tradesmen or artisans on the plantation. The boys might train to be coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, joiners, stonecutters, or gardeners, depending on the size and location of the plantation and its needs. Often, enslaved boys and men might receive training in a number of different trades so that they could complete multiple jobs on the plantation. An enslaved adolescent boy who trained to become a wheelwright may have also acted as wagoner, driving to and from nearby cities or towns to collect general store orders for his enslaver. He probably would have been somewhat familiar with the horses or mules that pulled the wagon, and therefore may have had experience working with livestock. Enslaved tradesmen therefore were most likely knowledgable about a variety of trades beyond their primary job. For the purposes of this dissertation, the discussion regarding skilled trades for adolescent boys will focus primarily on the enslaved boys who were forced to as nailmakers in Thomas Jefferson's nailery. Archaeological excavations at the site provide more information about the lives of enslaved children working in a skilled trade. Additionally, the abundance of archival documentation regarding the enslaved boys who worked in the nailery provides more information regarding the conditions that the children were forced to endure.

[143] Leni Sorensen, email message to author, November 15, 2019.

At Monticello, Jefferson stipulated that enslaved boys between the ages of ten to sixteen must work in the nailery, which was in continuous operation from 1794 to 1810.[144] There, around a dozen enslaved boys worked between ten and fourteen hours a day in a stifling, smoky forge producing about 1,000 nails each.[145] The conditions were horrendous. The boys were surveilled by an overseer to ensure that they reached their daily quotas, and an 1801 letter from Jefferson's son-in-law revealed that the youngest nailers, whom he referred to as "the small ones," were whipped by the overseer for "truancy," indicating that corporal punishment was utilized in order to keep the children obedient and productive (Randolph 1801).[146] An account from Isaac Granger Jefferson, who was enslaved by Thomas Jefferson and worked as a boy in the nailery before becoming a blacksmith on the plantation, confirms that the young enslaved nailers were treated differently from other laborers. They received "a pound of meat a week, a dozen herrings, a quart of molasses & a peck of meal" (Logan 1951:35). This amount was twice the weekly ration for field hands (Gordon-Reed 2008:510). Jefferson also offered rewards to the most productive nailers. According to Isaac Granger Jefferson, the boys who worked the best received "a suit of red or blue: encouraged them mightily" (Logan 1951:36).

In 1794, the enslaved boys (whom Jefferson called "nail boys") working in the nailery included David Hern Jr. (ten y.o.), Ben Hix (ten y.o.), Burwell Colbert (eleven y.o.), Barnaby Gillette (eleven y.o.), James Hubbard (eleven y.o.), Shepherd (twelve y.o.), Wormley Hughes

[144] The shop reopened in 1815, though it operated on a much smaller scale than it had previously (Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia online, Nailery entry).
[145] From 1794 to 1796, Jefferson weighed the nail rod and the amount of nails each boy produced each day. For an example see his Farm Book (1774-1824), page 111.
[146] Records indicate that some enslaved individuals worked in the Nailery into their early twenties, though working as a nailer was typically not their sole occupation. Those working in the nailery ranged from ten-year-old boys to men in their early twenties, with twelve to fourteen individuals working there each day.

(thirteen y.o.), Joseph Fossett (fourteen y.o.), and Moses Hern (fifteen y.o.) (Jefferson 1824:111). They produced huge quantities of a range of different sized nails, created by heating nail rod in a forge until it was red hot and then hammering it into the correct shape and then cut. Jefferson worked these children extremely hard, and he fully recognized their youth, referring to them as "little boys" in a letter from April of 1795 (Jefferson 1795a). Additionally, he wrote that he chose nailmaking in particular as an endeavor during his retirement "because it would employ a parcel of boys who would otherwise be idle" (Jefferson 1800). Jefferson intentionally chose to pursue this specific business in order to steal labor from members of the enslaved community that he felt should be or could be generating more income for him – children. In another letter written three months later, in 1795, Jefferson states, "A nailery which I have established with my own negro boys now provides completely for the maintenance of my family, as we make from 8. To 10,000 nails a day and it is on the increase" (Jefferson 1795b). The nailery was so profitable that two months of labor stolen from the enslaved boys covered the cost of the entire annual grocery bill for Jefferson's family (Wiencek 2012:94).

Archaeological excavations at Jefferson's nailery revealed that a number of domestic artifacts were present alongside artifacts relating to nailmaking. Kelso (1997) hypothesized that the presence of domestic wares in the nailery indicated that the adolescent nailers were possibly residing in the structure at times (as opposed to the blacksmith's shop, which contained a much smaller amount of domestic artifacts). The presence of tableware such as plates, bowls, and cups demonstrate that at the very least, regular food consumption was occurring in the nailery. Whether the enslaved nailmakers actually occupied the structure as a residence at any time remains unclear.

McVey (2011) analyzed the ceramic vessels found in the nailery and sorted them into three categories: tableware, teaware, or utilitarian. The ceramics were also categorized as refined or coarse earthenware (as utilitarian ceramics are more likely to be coarse, rather than refined). McVey hypothesized that if the abundance of refined and utilitarian artifacts were similar to or higher than the abundance of those artifacts at other dwelling sites on Mulberry Row, it would indicate that the young nailers were participating in both food production and consumption (2011:v-vi). If the abundance of those artifacts were lower than in other buildings, it would indicate that the nailers had a lower level of "householdness," or participated less in household activities than enslaved individuals living in other structures on Mulberry Row. McVey's research indicated that there was a high abundance of refined ceramics and glass present in the nailery and a low abundance of utilitarian and coarse earthenware ceramics, which include the vessels required to cook and store food items (2011:vi). Therefore, she concluded that while the nailers were consuming food within the nailery, they most likely did not prepare or cook their meals there.

It is extremely possible that the weekly rations allotted to the enslaved boys who worked in the nailery may not have been cooked by the boys themselves. Rather, their rations may have been given to the enslaved cook on the plantation who may have prepared their meals in the kitchen. The boys may have come to the kitchen to collect their meals and brought them back to the nailery to eat, or perhaps their meals were delivered to the nailery by scullions. Alternatively, the boys may have given their rations to their families, and their mothers may have cooked meals for them to collect from the quarters to bring back to the nailery. The presence of tablewares indicates that the boys were certainly eating meals in the building, and the lack of utilitarian wares and cooking implements suggests that they were probably not cooking in the building. As

some of the enslaved nailers were as young as ten years old, they may not have been capable of preparing and cooking their own meals in the first place. Furthermore, the enslaved boys working in the nailery were producing nails for ten to fourteen hours a day. They may have been too exhausted to cook their own meals at the end (or beginning) of the workday, or they simply may not have had an adequate amount of time to prepare the food.

While the hypothesis that the enslaved young nailers may have been living in the nailery cannot currently be proved, it is clear that the amount of domestic artifacts within the building support the conclusion that the boys were regularly eating meals in the building. They may still have come home to the dwellings where their families lived in the evenings, but the artifacts suggest that the boys spent much of their time in the nailery. It is also possible that their meals were delivered straight to the nailery by family members, because the nailers may not have been allowed an adequate break for their mid-day meal. Regardless, the archaeology reveals that the enslaved boys working in the nailery participated in other activities in the building besides nailmaking, including the consumption of food.

The enslaved nailers may also have lived (and worked, for a short time) in Building *l* on Mulberry Row, described by Jefferson as "a storehouse for nailrod & other iron" (Jefferson 1796). Building *l* may have initially housed a whitesmithing shop before being utilized as a small nailery as well as a living quarter for enslaved laborers (Hill 2003). Kelso dated the construction of the site to between 1790 and 1796, using the presence of Annular Pearlware (TPQ:1790) and the date of Jefferson's first documented shipment of nail rod (1794) (Scholnick, Wheeler, and Neiman 2001:10). The presence of artifacts associated with nailmaking as well as domestic artifacts and faunal remains indicate that Building *l* was used for other purposes beyond storing nailrod, though archaeologists have been unable to identify evidence of distinct phases of

industrial and domestic activity at the site. It seems that the space may have been utilized for both, concurrently.

Faunal remains from the site analyzed by Crader (1984) demonstrate that pig and cow were the most commonly represented animals in the Building *l* faunal assemblage, and that the body parts found represent lower quality cuts of meat that the Jefferson family would not have eaten. Higher quality cuts of meat that the Jefferson family would have consumed (such as complete long bones) are noticeably absent from the assemblage (Crader 1984:546). Crader also found that many of the remains, including cranial specimens, vertebrae, and ribs, were highly fragmented and broken down to fit into a pot of a specific size, suggesting the likelihood of stews or one-pot meals (1984:546). The patterning in the faunal assemblage from Building *l* is "suggestive of the bone refuse of a slave quarter site," indicating that the structure was utilized in a domestic capacity (Crader 1984:548).

While I do believe that the building functioned as a quarter (while it was also being used as a nailery and afterwards), I also believe that Crader's findings may indicate that meals were prepared and cooked elsewhere, but consumed in Building *l*. First, the presence of lower quality cuts of meat that may have come from the same animal body parts that the Jeffersons were eating (though they were eating the high quality cuts) suggests that the animals were butchered elsewhere and the low-quality cuts were set aside for the enslaved workers. Second, Crader mentioned that in regard to the presence of highly fragmented long bones (and absence of complete long bones) "it seems possible that the inhabitants of the Storehouse may have obtained an occasional discarded or leftover ham or roast bone from the Jefferson household, which they broke apart and used in the preparation of stews" (1984:546).

Next, she notes that only a very small percentage of remains from the Storehouse exhibit evidence of burning, indicating that the meat was not roasted over an open flame, but likely cooked in a pot. Finally, the spatial distribution of the bone demonstrates that the bones were swept outside the door of the building rather than into an open hearth (Crader 1984:548). If the building was functioning as a nailery as well as living quarters, it is logical that the refuse would be deposited outside of the building rather than into a hearth, because archaeological evidence suggests that there was no fireplace. Rather, it has been concluded that the presence of a mortared brick box feature at the site served as a foundation for a small smithing forge (Scholnick, Wheeler, and Neiman 2001:7). These conclusions support the possibility that enslaved nailers who may have been residing in Building *l* either while it functioned as a nailery or storehouse may have been directly provisioned from Monticello's kitchen. Further analysis of the ceramic ware types and other domestic artifacts excavated from Building *l* may provide further insight into this possibility.

Considering the sheer amount of income that the enslaved boys working in the nailery generated for Thomas Jefferson, it is highly plausible that special accommodations would have been made for them. They worked long hours and were incentivized with larger rations and other rewards, such as fine clothing. Additionally, the boys would not have had the time (and for the younger boys, the ability) to cook multiple meals for themselves each day. Therefore, it is highly likely that the enslaved adolescent nailers were being directly provisioned from the plantation kitchen or having their meals cooked by other individuals in the enslaved community at Monticello. Further research into these possibilities may provide more information about the experiences and lives of the young enslaved nailers.

Skilled textile work for girls aged ten to fourteen

While enslaved young boys and elderly men sometimes assisted in certain activities such as spinning or carding, it was primarily enslaved girls and women who were responsible for performing skilled textile work. This work included weaving, spinning, and carding as well as sewing, knitting, dyeing, and other skills. Enslaved girls and women were often involved in the entire process of turning cottonseed into woven fabric, as many of them worked as fieldhands cultivating cotton during the day but were forced to spin or weave in the evenings. On large plantations, different rooms or outbuildings were dedicated solely to various stages of textile production, mainly carding, spinning, and weaving (Hampton 2000). Though some enslavers ordered cloth (and sometimes ready-made clothing) for their enslaved workers from factories in New England, many made members of their enslaved workforce create the clothing for everyone on the plantation.[147]

It was not uncommon for enslaved girls and women to construct the clothing for not only the entire enslaved population on a plantation, but the enslaver and his or her family as well. The clothing that enslaved domestic servants wore differed from the clothing that enslaved field laborers wore and the clothing that the enslaver's family wore, meaning that the enslaved seamstresses responsible for constructing garments from the woven fabric would have had to sew an assortment of different pieces of clothing of different styles. Additionally, clothing was not the only product that enslaved textile workers created. They also wove blankets, towels, carpets, curtains, and many other goods that were either used on the plantation by enslaved individuals, by the enslaver's family, or sold.

[147] See Rockman 2018 for information about New England factories producing and selling cloth and clothing specifically intended for enslaved people to wear.

First, it may be helpful to briefly describe the process of creating cloth from cottonseed, so that one can better understand just how laborious this process was and the extreme amount of labor that enslaved individuals were forced to perform in order to create the finished product.[148] The first step after the cotton was cultivated and harvested was to clean it and gin it – that is, removing the cotton fibers from the seeds. Short-staple cotton seeds are very sticky and removing them from the fibers was highly labor intensive. On plantations that did not have a cotton gin, the seeds had to be removed by hand. This work was typically done by enslaved children, but enslaved men and women on smaller farms would have also done it. Next, the cotton was carded by hand using combs to stretch out and separate the fibers. Some plantations had carding machines, though interviews with formerly enslaved individuals suggest that using these machines was not as common as carding by hand. After this, enslaved women would spin the carded fibers into thread or yarn using a spinning wheel. The spun cotton thread was reeled into cuts and then taken to a loom, to be woven into fabric.[149] Finally, the fabric may have been washed, bleached, or dyed various colors to suit the purposes of the intended final product – pants, dresses, shirts, blankets, etc.

It is clear that understanding and executing the steps needed to create finished fabric would have required both knowledge and experience. In this section, I will not only discuss enslaved adolescent textile artisans but also very young enslaved girls, because training in textiles began much earlier than age ten. I have chosen to include this information in this section

[148] This description is intended as a simple and straightforward overview and does not cover the details or specifics of the complex process.

[149] The amount of thread per cut seems to vary – this may depend on the type of reel used. One source states that some reels took 120 threads to make a cut (5 cuts was 1 yard), and others took 100 threads to the cut (and 6 cuts equaled 1 yard) (Jones 1920:27). One formerly enslaved individual, Mingo White, said that there were 144 threads to the cut (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:416).

because it provides a more comprehensive discussion about the experiences of enslaved girls and women in regard to their expertise in textiles. While this section mainly focuses on the production of cotton textiles, it should be noted that on many plantations and farms, enslaved individuals also created textiles from materials such as sheep's wool or hemp. Finally, this section will end with a case study on thimbles excavated in enslaved contexts at James Madison's Montpelier.

In the Lower South, short-staple cotton was cultivated on both large plantations and small farms. As discussed earlier in this chapter, very young enslaved children were almost always involved with the cultivation of cotton and creation of fabric. Enslaved children as young as four years old may have assisted in harvesting cotton, while children as young as five years old were expected to card and spin cotton.[150] Cordelia Thomas recalled that at the Georgia plantation where she was enslaved, it was the children's job to spin the thread while their mothers wove the cloth. Enslaved children and women made all of the cloth on the plantation, which was used for clothing everyone, including the white people. Cordelia could not remember the exact age when she began spinning thread, but she must have been quite young. "'Fore de end of de war, whilst I was still so little I had to stand on a box to reach de spinnin' wheel good, I could spin six reels a day" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 4 1936:16). Mary Flagg, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi, also began working with textiles at a young age. At four years old, Mary was taken away from her mother by her enslaver, to be her "body servant" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:312). Mary was taught how to do housework as well as sewing, and she was responsible for doing all of the sewing for her enslaver's family. "I started sewin' and weavin' when I was just big enough to reach the treadles" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 2 1936:313). Like Cordelia

[150] Federal Writers' Project interviews confirm that enslaved children also carded and spun wool.

Thomas, Mary Flagg did not state the age at which she began to sew and weave, but remembered how little she was in comparison to the machinery that she was required to use.

Many enslaved girls and women were forced to card, spin, or weave, in addition to their other daily jobs and tasks, which often caused them to work late into the night. Enslaved adolescent girls and women who worked in the fields during the day were forced to complete a certain amount of textile work in the evenings. The punishment for not meeting the nightly quota was often corporal. Emmaline Heard, who was enslaved in Georgia, recalled that every enslaved woman on the plantation was tasked with a specific amount of spinning and weaving at night after they came home from the fields. Her mother's job was to card bats in the evening so that Emmaline's two older sisters could begin spinning the next morning. The enslaved women were forced to work until midnight, when a bell was rung and they could stop. They were woken at four o'clock A.M. each morning to begin fieldwork (FWP Vol. Georgia Part 2 1936:149). Mandy McCullough Cosby, who was enslaved in Alabama, stated that after the girls and women came in from the fields, they would eat supper and then spin, reel, and weave cotton until ten o'clock each night. She remembered that there were spinning wheels in every cabin (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:91).

Many formerly enslaved individuals remember helping their mothers to complete their tasks in the evenings because they were unable to finish the work by themselves. William Henry Towns and Mingo White, who were both enslaved in Alabama, told their interviewers how they often stayed up late at night in order to help their mothers with their tasks (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936). They both did the carding for their mothers so that the women were able to complete their spinning tasks. Mingo's mother was tasked with spinning and carding four cuts of thread each night. If she did not finish, she was given fifty lashes (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:416).

Although skilled textile work was primarily done by enslaved girls and women, young children of both genders assisted with tasks such as carding, which required less skill than spinning.

On large plantations where many individuals were enslaved, skilled textile work was a full-time position, rather than allocated to a number of enslaved women who primarily worked other jobs. While many enslaved fieldhands were tasked with nightly spinning and carding, the weaving and sewing was done by enslaved domestic servants. Some women were full-time weavers who worked at the loom creating fabric from the cotton threads. Others were seamstresses. Thomas Jefferson established a textile workshop for the sole purpose of creating the clothing for the entire enslaved community at Monticello and its outlying farms. The majority of workers were enslaved girls between the ages of ten and sixteen, but enslaved women and young enslaved boys also worked in the workshop. The annual goal for the enslaved carders, spinners, and weavers was 1,200 yards of cloth made from purchased cotton and the wool and hemp produced on Jefferson's farms.[151] The enslaved children and women worked from nine to fourteen hours a day, and by 1815 they were producing 2,000 yards of cloth each year (Jefferson 1815). As with the enslaved boys working in the nailery, Jefferson boasted in letters to colleagues of the materials that "he" was producing, by employing "a few women, children & invalids who could do little in the farm" (Jefferson 1815). He considered these individuals to be "the least useful" members of the enslaved community (Jefferson and Randolph 1814).

Betty Cofer, who was enslaved in North Carolina, detailed the jobs of enslaved textile workers and the products that they created on the plantation. Two women sewed and many others did the spinning and weaving. "We raised our own flax an' cotton an' wool, spun the

[151] Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia online, Textile Workshop entry.

thread, wove the cloth, and made all the clothes," including the men's shirts, pants, and coats (FWP Vol. North Carolina 1936:168). One enslaved woman was tasked with knitting all of the stockings for everyone on the plantation – the enslaved community and the enslavers. Betty said, "I mind she had one finger all twisted an' stiff from holdin' her knittin' needles" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina 1936:169). They wove cotton and linen to be made into sheets, pillow cases, and tablecloths. They wove candlewicks and wool blankets. After the enslaver's wife cut the clothing from patterns, the enslaved girls sewed them into garments (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina 1936:169).

Enslaved girls and women trained in textile work were required to understand the entire complex process of turning raw fibers into finished garments, which included carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing, sewing, and knitting. Not all fabric behaves the same way and must be handled differently. The clothing for enslaved fieldhands would have been much coarser, rougher, and sturdier to accommodate for the heavy wear and tear of the job. Enslaved domestic servants often wore clothing that was lighter and of better quality than the fieldhands, as their jobs within the household exposed them to visitors whom their enslavers wished to impress. The clothing for the enslaver and his or her family was often much more complicated and difficult to construct.

Some seamstresses sewed the garments for only the enslaved community, while others created clothing for everyone on the plantation. Wealthy enslavers sometimes kept one enslaved seamstress to sew garments solely for the enslaver and his or her family. Amanda McCray, who was formerly enslaved in Florida, sewed hooped dresses for her enslaver's wife, made of "fine muslins and silks." These dresses sometimes had as many as seven petticoats, and the laces to trim the petticoats and pantaloons were imported (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:214). Enslaved

seamstresses like Amanda were extremely sought-after within the domestic slave trade for their sewing expertise and ability to craft fine, fashionable garments.[152]

Case study: thimbles from enslaved contexts at James Madison's Montpelier

It has been established that enslaved girls learned to card, spin, and sew from very early ages.[153] While the importance and significance of the labor of enslaved children in general has been either ignored, undervalued, or overlooked, the subject of enslaved girls and adolescents in regard to sewing is particularly interesting, because it is an activity that can be easily identified archaeologically through thimbles sized specifically for children. Thimbles have been made for children over one thousand years.[154] While no standardized measurement exists that defines the size of a child's thimble versus a teenager's or adult's thimble, Burn defines a children's thimble as having a maximum external diameter of 12.5 millimeters, or 0.49 inches (1995:vi). She notes that thimbles with diameters between 12.55 millimeters and 14 millimeters (0.55 inches) are considered maid's or maiden's thimbles, termed by manufacturers in the nineteenth century to describe thimbles that were larger than child's sizes but smaller than adult's (Burn 1995:vi). Because no age parameters are given to describe the difference between a (girl) child and a maiden or a maiden and an adult woman, the category of maiden is ambiguous. If the maiden category was utilized to describe thimbles that were smaller than adult-sized thimbles, it may be useful to simply group maiden's thimbles with children's thimbles.

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[152] For more information about enslaved seamstresses see Keckley 1868; Finley 2020.

[153] Thus far in my research, the youngest enslaved child mentioned in association with sewing was a girl named Lydia, who was apprenticed out to a milliner at the age of "two or three years old" so that she could learn to sew (*Tuttle v. Rembert* in Catterall v2 1929:406). In interviews, narratives, and newspapers, there exist multiple examples of four- and five-year-old enslaved girls sewing.

[154] The earliest example of closed-top child's thimble dates to eleventh century Spain. Of Hispano-Moresque design, it is made of bronze and was probably used for stitching leather, rather than cloth (Burn 1995:1).

As Hume noted in 1969, "Brass thimbles are among the most common of the smaller domestic objects found on colonial and later sites, but so far they have received no careful study" (255). This fact remains true today. Aside from one article and one book chapter, the subject of thimbles remains largely untouched by historical archaeologists (Hill 1995; Beaudry 2006:86-114). However, a comprehensive study on thimbles found in archaeological contexts would provide a better understanding of a site's occupants, how a site may have been used, and may help to date the site. Thimbles can be dated according to their manufacture technique as well as their shape and size. Any decoration may also aid in identifying a date range. Indentations or alterations may indicate patterns of use, including fine needlework and tailoring, and may also suggest the age and gender of the thimble owner (Hill 1995:91). Additionally, an analysis of thimble diameters would be helpful in categorizing thimble sizes, which were not commonly marked until around 1880 (Beaudry 2006:106).

Brass or copper alloy thimbles, which are the most common types of thimbles found in archaeological contexts, were produced in three basic sizes: *girls', maids', and women's* (Beaudry 2006:106). A fourth size, *large*, was available for tailors and/or men and women who "engaged in heavy sewing" (Beaudry 2006:106). Unfortunately, there are no standard measurements attributed to any of these sizes, making it difficult for archaeologists to identify the age range of the individual who may have used the thimble. And because girls in the United States began sewing at very young ages, there would have been multiple sizes of thimbles that could be categorized as child-sized – a five-year-old has smaller fingers than a ten-year-old, but both are still children.[155] Therefore, this case study on thimbles excavated at James Madison's

[155] After 1880, when size marks on thimbles became common, shops in the United States categorized sizes 1 through 5 as children's sizes, which were often sold in graduated sets

Montpelier will contribute data necessary for understanding the graduated sizes of thimbles and possible age correlates.

Beaudry notes that until some point in the twentieth century, almost all young girls were taught to sew by their mothers, meaning that the demand for very small thimbles was constant (2006:106). These thimbles were often constructed of copper alloy, an inexpensive material, because the child would quickly outgrow her thimble (Beaudry 2006:106). In general, children's thimbles would have received less wear, except in institutional settings such as sewing schools, where girls were required to sew and knit their own stockings by the age of five (Beaudry 2006:106). Considering American slavery as an institution, it may also be the case that children's thimbles found in enslaved contexts would also be quite worn, as they may have been used daily and by multiple children over time.

Thimbles from Montpelier

The thimbles that I will discuss were excavated from quarter sites at James Madison's Montpelier. The purpose of this case study is to compare thimble diameters in order to understand the range of measurements and to ascertain which thimbles were potentially used by children. Because the dataset is quite small, the results of this case study are limited. Therefore, it is not the results of the study that are most significant here, but the process. I will primarily be discussing thimbles from 44OR249 and 44OR333, with a focus on children's thimbles. 44OR249 is the site name for the Main House and Grounds. I have chosen to focus on excavation areas strongly associated with the enslaved community, such as the South Yard, which includes three duplexes for enslaved domestic servants, a kitchen, and two smokehouses. The three duplexes

(Beaudry 2006:106). A September 1921 catalogue from Chicago business Benj. Allen & Co. lists children's sizes as 1 through 4 (Benj. Allen & Co. 1921:6).

and two smokehouses were constructed in the late 1810s, as part of the construction that Madison initiated before his retirement in 1817 (Greer 2012:3). The detached kitchen, also referred to as the South Kitchen, dates to the 1760s and was also used as housing for enslaved domestic servants. It was occupied into the nineteenth century (Brock 2021:10).

The North Dwelling served as another housing structure for enslaved workers. It was located on the northeast corner of the South Yard Complex and also dates to the 1760s. Occupied into the nineteenth century, the North Dwelling was demolished sometime in the 1840s with the rest of the buildings (Brock 2021:24). The Stable Quarter Complex was located south of the South Yard Complex and was comprised of a stable and at least one quarter for enslaved people. It is believed that this structure housed enslaved artisans who would have worked in the stable or in the formal garden. The dwelling in the Stable Quarter Complex was located at the northern edge of the Stable Yard, which dates from the 1790s through the 1830s (Reeves and Greer 2012:71).

44OR333 is the name of the Home Farm Complex, which dates from the 1790s to the 1840s. It includes the Field Quarter, which is part of the larger Tobacco Barn Quarter, the farrier or blacksmith's shop, and the overseer's house. The Tobacco Barn Quarter was first utilized as a tobacco barn, then as short-term housing for enslaved field laborers, and finally a wheat-threshing barn (Trickett 2014). The thimbles discussed here are associated with houses located in the Field Quarter – House Site 1 and House Site 2. These sites were occupied by enslaved field workers and their families. The structures were of log construction and both sites were identified by the presence of subfloor pits. Excavations also revealed the presence of yard-based activities such as cooking (Trickett 2014:10).

Holmes' Type III or Lofting-style Thimbles



Figure 4. Lofting-style thimble with machine-knurled circular pattern and circumferential basal plain band.

Photo by Catherine Brandon
Courtesy of the Montpelier Foundation

The majority of child-size thimbles found at Montpelier may be classified as Holmes' Type III cast copper-alloy domed thimbles, also called Lofting-style thimbles. These thimbles were of one-piece construction and were cast in molds. They are domed and made of copper alloy with mechanically knurled circular indentations and a characteristic stamped waffle-shaped crown pattern (see Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6). As one can see from Figures 4 and 5, there are some slight variations between the knurled circular patterns, suggesting different molds and different manufacturers. Many Lofting-style thimbles have basal lateral rims and circumferential basal plain bands, though some are rimless (Read 2018:67). They are typically short or squat in height. Stylistically, child-size thimbles of this type are basically identical to those of adult-size.

The Holmes' Type III thimble was invented in the Netherlands and most likely introduced into England by John Lofting, a Dutchman who established the first English thimble mill (Read 2018:67; Beaudry 2006:96). Holmes' Type III thimbles (also called Lofting-style thimbles) "dominated the exports to the American colonies until the middle of the eighteenth century, and many thimbles found in North American excavation contexts dating from the



Figure 5. Variation in the machine-knurled circular indentations. This example has a fish scale pattern.
Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

mid-1690s to about 1750 likely are products of Lofting's factory" (Beaudry 2006:96). However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, there were more than a dozen English thimble manufacturers exporting products to the colonies, many of whom produced the Lofting-style thimble.[156]



Figure 6. Waffle-shaped indentation pattern on crown.
Photo by Catherine Brandon, Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

The Lofting-style thimble was produced in England between c.1730 and c.1800 and it is likely that Lofting was the first manufacturer to mass-produce thimbles specifically for children (Read 2018:67). Burn mentions John Locke and his 1697 proposal of "working schools" for impoverished children between the ages of three and fourteen years old (1995:10). These "working schools" were not actually schools but workhouses that provided accommodations and food for orphans and those who were unable to support themselves as payment for labor. The conditions were usually abominable and even the youngest children were forced to work for meals that were often insufficient in both quality and quantity. Institutions such as these, as well as orphanages, would have required considerable amounts of thimbles for the child-laborers who may have been engaged in needlework.

[156] It is not possible to differentiate Holmes' Type III thimbles made by Lofting from Dutch thimbles of the same style or from other English manufacturers (Reading 2018:67).

Methodology

The thimbles discussed in this case study do not represent all of the thimbles that have been found archaeologically at Montpelier. Thimbles that were clearly manufactured post-1840 were not included in the study. Additionally, I only utilized thimbles that were relatively undamaged, meaning that they were not crushed and therefore had viable diameters which could be measured and compared. Very few thimbles retained their exact original shape as most were slightly dented in some way. I retrieved as many thimbles from Montpelier's collection as I could and remeasured the diameters of those thimbles using a digital caliper. Thimbles that I could not physically locate were only included in the study if there were photographs demonstrating that they were not crushed and therefore had diameters which could be compared. Therefore, of the 39 thimbles excavated from 44OR249, only 14 were included in this study. And of the 19 thimbles excavated from 44OR333, only 6 were included in this study.[157] The total number of thimbles excavated from 44OR249 was just over twice the total amount found at the Home Farm Complex, which is coincidentally reflected in the number of thimbles from each site that fit the criteria for inclusion in the case study. A complete table of all thimble heights and diameters from this case study can be found in Appendix F.

In this case study, diameter refers to the internal diameter measured at the base or opening of the thimble. Because this study is concerned with the potential owners or users of the thimbles, the internal diameter is a more accurate measurement than the external diameter because it indicates the finger size of the user, which may suggest the age and sometimes the gender of the user. Height refers to the measurement of a thimble from the top of the thimble to

[157] Thimble count includes both whole thimbles and fragments that were clearly identifiable as thimbles. In cases where two fragments were catalogued together and were clearly two pieces comprising one thimble, they were counted as one thimble.

the base. Figure 7 demonstrates the size differences in a few of the thimbles from the case study. The smallest thimble is a cast Lofting-style thimble with a diameter of 0.41 inches and a height of 0.5 inches. The middle thimble has a diameter of 0.56 inches and a height of 0.8 inches. The largest thimble has a diameter of 0.65 inches and a height of 0.93 inches. Both the largest thimble and the middle thimble were manufactured using the mechanical deep-drawing method, which produced thinner, longer thimbles.



Figure 7. Size variation in thimbles.
Photo by Catherine Brandon, Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

Figure 8 is a plot of the thimbles according to height and diameter.[158] This is helpful for visualizing whether thimbles may have been manufactured according to standard heights and diameters, though from this data, this does not seem to be the case. The data represented in Figure 8 has a correlation coefficient of 0.461, meaning that there is a moderate positive association between thimble height and thimble diameter. The scatter plot also demonstrates that the thimbles excavated from 44OR333, where enslaved field laborers were housed, generally

[158] Two thimbles from the case study are not included in the Figure 8 plot because their heights were not recorded, only their diameters, and they could not be located for remeasurement. However, these two thimbles are represented in Figure 9, which focuses solely on diameters.

have larger diameters or greater heights than the thimbles excavated from 44OR249, where enslaved domestic laborers lived.

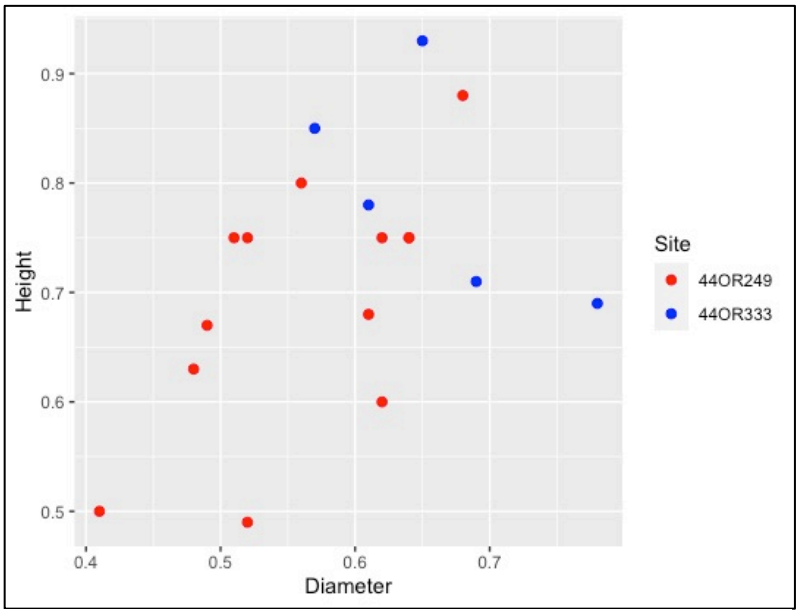


Figure 8. Heights and diameters of thimbles.

Figure 9 is a histogram exhibiting the thimble diameters and the number of thimbles per each recorded diameter. Viewing the data in this manner, it is easier to see whether any thimbles had the exact same diameter as well as the range of diameter measurements. The thimble with a diameter of 0.41 is clearly the smallest and there is a gap of 0.07 millimeters between that thimble and the second smallest, which has a diameter of 0.48 inches. One can also see that there are multiple thimbles with diameters between 0.48 and 0.52 inches before the next gap in sizes. These may all be considered child-size thimbles. Finally, it is clear from the histogram that the majority of thimbles excavated from 44OR333 have diameters greater than 0.6 inches, the largest of which has a diameter of 0.78 inches. This suggests that the thimbles from 44OR333 were used by adults, and considering their size, most likely by adult men. Like the smallest thimble, the two largest thimbles are located farther from the clustering in the middle of the graph, suggesting that these sizes may have been less common than others.

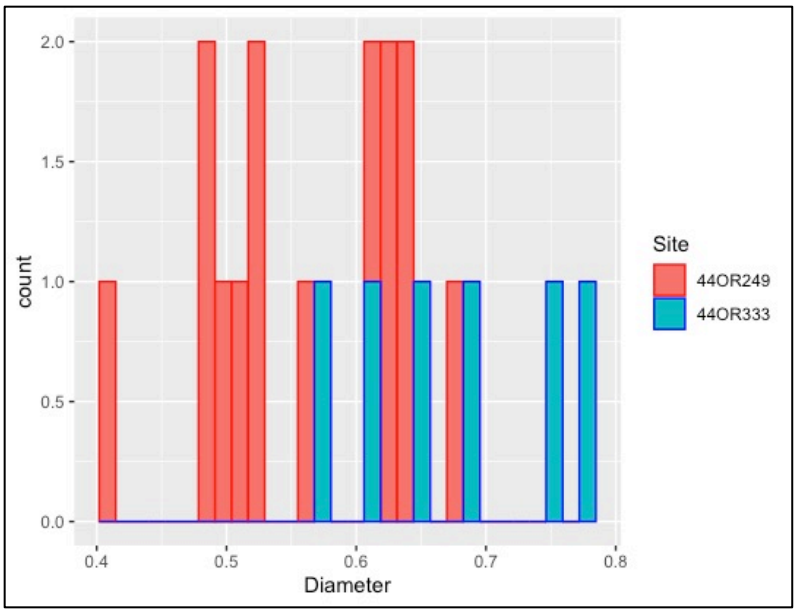


Figure 9. Thimbles according to diameter.

Finally, Figure 10 is a box and whisker plot, or a boxplot, of the distribution of the thimble diameter measurements. This is useful for comparing the batches of thimbles excavated at each site. Figure 10 clearly demonstrates that the diameters of thimbles from 44OR333 are much larger than those found at 44OR249, as the smallest diameter from 44OR333 (0.57 inches) is larger than the median thimble diameter from the other site (0.54 inches). Additionally, one can see that there is a larger range of thimble diameters from 44OR249 and therefore a wider distribution or larger variance than the thimbles found at 44OR333. This

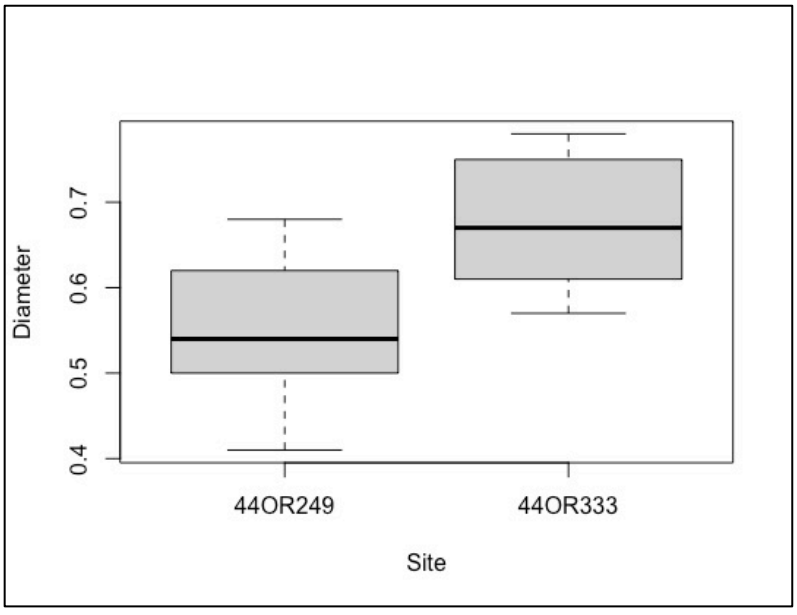


Figure 10. Distribution of thimble diameter measurements.

may be due to the fact that there were simply more thimbles from 44OR249 included in the case study.

Child-size thimbles at Montpelier

All seven of the potential children's thimbles were excavated from 44OR249, in areas associated with enslaved domestic workers. Three of these thimbles match Burn's parameters for a child-size thimble – an external diameter of 0.49 inches or less. The other four thimbles have diameters that are slightly larger. One thimble measures 0.5 inches at the opening, one measures 0.51 inches, and two thimbles measure 0.52 inches. I argue that although the diameters of these thimbles are slightly larger than 0.49 inches, they may still be considered child-size thimbles. Thimbles are typically worn on the distal phalanx of the middle finger and sometimes the index finger. An anatomical study of the diameters of children's fingers may therefore be helpful in understanding the potential range of sizes for child-size thimbles.

A 2009 study focused on the lengths, girths, and diameters of children's fingers from three to ten years of age (Hohendorff et al. 2010). The children in the study were of German nationality living in the twenty-first century, and children today tend to be more robust than children in the past. However, I believe this information is still useful. The study found that all finger dimensions increased with age and that the average diameter of each finger increased by 20% from age three to ten (Hohendorff et al. 2010:157). They also found that there were no differences between the sexes for length, girth, and diameter, as the average measurements between boys and girls were either the same or had a difference of only one millimeter (Hohendorff et al. 2010:157).

The measurements that are relevant to this case study in particular are the diameters of the distal phalanges of the middle and index fingers, where thimbles are worn. I utilize the

average measurements for girls because although some enslaved boys did sew, archival evidence suggests that sewing was primarily considered a female activity.[159] Additionally, for the purposes of this case study, a size difference of one millimeter does affect data interpretation. The documentary record indicates that enslaved girls as young as two or three years old were taught to sew. The study found that at three years old, the average diameter of a girl's index finger was 10 millimeters or 0.39 inches and 11 millimeters or 0.43 inches for the middle finger (Hohendorff et al. 2010:160). The smallest thimble included in this case study had a diameter of 0.41 inches and may have been used by a child around three years of age. The two thimbles from Montpelier with diameters of 0.48 and 0.49 inches may have been used by girls between four and nine years old, depending on which finger the thimble was worn on. These three thimbles all fit within Burn's parameters. However, the 2009 anatomical study demonstrates that the average diameter of a ten-year-old girl's index finger is 13 millimeters or 0.51 inches, and 14 millimeters or 0.55 inches for the middle finger (Hohendorff et al. 2010:160). A ten-year-old girl is typically considered to be a child, meaning that the thimbles measuring 0.5, 0.51, and 0.52 inches in diameter should still be considered child-size thimbles.

Because the study regarding children's finger diameters was only conducted on children up to age ten, there is no reliable data representing the diameters of the distal phalanges of the index and middle fingers for children from eleven to fourteen years of age. Therefore, I will not discuss the thimbles with diameters greater than 0.55 inches (the average diameter of a ten-year-old girl's middle finger) because I am not confident about the finger diameters of children older than ten years old. Additionally, I could not find any data regarding this information for adult

[159] It is important to note that this discussion is based on the averages, not the range of measurements. Averages as well as the ranges from the Hohendorff et al. 2010 article are included in Appendix G.

men and women, which would be extremely helpful for potentially delineating the difference between a thimble that is firmly categorized as child-size and a thimble that is used by both older children and adults.

Case study conclusions

Although thimbles are typically considered unimportant or mundane artifacts, there is still much to be learned by studying them. Thimbles are capable of providing much information about the thimble user – the size of the thimble may give one clues about the age or gender of the user, the material of the thimble may tell one about the social status of the user, and signs of wear may indicate how frequently the thimble was used. And because thimbles are frequently present in the archaeological record, there are many opportunities to compare them in order to learn more information. This case study focused specifically on the internal opening diameters of thimbles from two sites associated with enslaved individuals at Montpelier. The purpose of this study was to compare thimble diameters in order to determine if thimbles used by children could be clearly identified. I believe that Burn's definition of a child-size thimble as having a maximum exterior diameter of 12.5 millimeters is too conservative as it focuses on very young children and excludes older children, such as ten-year-olds, who sometimes have larger finger diameters. Ultimately, I was unable to ascertain the exact diameter at which child-size thimbles ended and adult-size thimbles began – a category which in the past was simply referred to as maid's or maiden's thimbles. Because the dataset I utilized was so small, I did not expect that the results would be very enlightening. However, I believe that conducting another study with a larger dataset including thimbles from similar contexts may produce more definitive answers to questions regarding thimble size and thimble users. In the future, it may be possible to establish

standard measurements for thimble diameters that archaeologists might use to potentially determine the age ranges of thimble users.

Practicing critical fabulation

The primary goal of this chapter was to demonstrate just how much labor enslaved children were responsible for and why it is so difficult to associate certain artifacts, especially utilitarian ones, with children. The interviews, narratives, and letters cited in this chapter indicate that enslaved children were extremely capable of doing a variety of labor, both manual and skilled. Additionally, they were not treated as children by their enslavers. They were treated the same way that enslaved adults were treated, and they were very aware of this fact. As Mingo White told his interviewer, "I warn't nothin' but a chile endurin' slavery, but I had to wuk de same as any man" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:414). Work, or labor, was a large part of enslaved childhood. It informed the experiences of enslaved individuals from the moment that their labor was first stolen. For many individuals, work began as soon as they could walk.

It is extremely important for historical archaeologists to understand the relationship between labor and childhood under enslavement because work deeply affects the material aspects of a child's life. In order to develop the most accurate interpretations possible, archaeologists must realize that enslaved children were present in most places on the plantation landscape. The absence of toys at a quarter site means nothing in terms of indicating whether an enslaved child lived there, because not all enslaved children possessed manufactured toys that would survive in the material record. However, all enslaved children did work, and that work generally had a tangible, material aspect to it. Frequently, the items or artifacts associated with work are utilitarian. Sometimes, they may be associated with gender. Rarely are utilitarian items associated with age, thimbles being a notable exception. Archaeologists must find other ways to

interpret artifacts such as these. Through a critical reading of the archives, Saidiya Hartman's concept of critical fabulation provides a framework for considering artifacts in new or different ways. The intent of critical fabulation is not to give voice to the enslaved, but to imagine what cannot be verified.

Some historical archaeologists have practiced critical fabulation in their work. Though they may not have called it by that exact term, the methods that they use and the intentions behind them align with Hartman's explanation of critical fabulation. Janet Spector's *What This Awl Means* (1993) is an excellent example of this. Instead of writing an archaeological report or scholarly article, Spector chose to tell a story about an awl that was excavated from a trash dump at the Dakota site where she was working. She did this very deliberately as a response to traditional archaeological writing, which she felt was cold, boring, biased, and filled with too much technical jargon which excluded non-archaeologists from learning. Spector mentioned seeing anthropologist Renato Rosaldo speak about writing ethnography and his call to write anthropology in new ways. ""Allowing forms of writing that have been marginalized or banned altogether to gain legitimacy, Rosaldo suggested as an alternative, would "enable the disciple to approximate people's lives from a number of angles of vision" and apprehend "the range of human possibilities in their fullest complexity"" (Rosaldo 1986:33 cited in Spector 1993:34). Spector's three reasons behind writing *What This Awl Means* were 1) communicating findings in an easily accessible way; 2) highlighting women's activities and topics that were usually ignored in archaeological writings; and 3) incorporating Dakota "voices, visions, and perspectives into the story" (1993:17).

In *What This Awl Means*, Spector tells a story about an awl handle, an artifact that would have otherwise been briefly documented and then ignored. The awl handle was about three

inches long, made of antler, and incised with dots and lines, some of which were painted with a red pigment. It was excavated from a midden on the site. This is the only information that Spector had about this specific artifact, yet her story about it conveys so much more. In her story, the awl belongs to a young woman named Mazaokiyewin, who received it as a gift from her mother, Hazawin. The story answers questions about where the awl came from, why it was decorated in the way that it was, what it meant to its owner, and how it was lost and ultimately buried in the midden. Mazaokiyewin and Hazawin were real people who lived during the time that the awl would have been deposited in the ground, but there is no record of either of them ever visiting that site. Spector used the archival record and information about Dakota practices to craft a story that brought life to the artifact. She wrote about a possibility that was impossible to prove. The reality is that nothing in Spector's story can be verified. However, that is not the point of the story, which was to present a possible narrative focused on the awl handle and more importantly, on the girl who owned the awl.

Spector wrote about engaging "students' archaeological imaginations – to stretch their thinking about people in the past and to counter the limitations of many written sources. [She] want[ed] them to appreciate the constraints of knowledge based on fragmentary remains, to expand their thinking about what they would like to know, and to face some of the problems of crossing time and cultural barriers" (Spector 1993:62). Spector quoted the author Toni Morrison's essay "Site of Memory," where Morrison explained her research methods for writing her novel *Beloved*. Morrison called it "literary archaeology" (Morrison 1987 cited in Spector 1993:78). Like Spector's "archaeological imaginations," Morrison's "literary archaeology" is another name for the concept of critical fabulation. Of course, the intentions and motivations of all three women are not exactly the same. However, they all share a similar goal in endeavoring

to tell a story that represents something that could have, and probably did happen, but that cannot be proven. In this way, people in the past become easier to see. When applied archaeologically, critical fabulation shifts the emphasis to individual human beings, rather than their things.

What does it look like when critical fabulation is applied to a single child-size thimble excavated at Montpelier?[160] The facts about the thimble tell very little about the lived experience of its user, so one must delve deeper to understand what it may have meant to that individual. The small Lofting-style thimble, made of copper alloy with a knurled fish scale pattern, was most likely manufactured in England and imported to the American colonies sometime during the second half of the eighteenth century. It was probably purchased from a local merchant, possibly the Barbour Johnson Store, where enslaved individuals from Montpelier purchased goods, including thread, cloth, straight pins, and thimbles (Schafer 2021). The thimble was recovered during excavations of the South Kitchen, which was originally built in the 1750s and remained in use through the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Brock 2021:23). Other sewing-related items excavated around the South Kitchen include straight pins, clothing fasteners, a bobbin head, sewing scissors, and three other thimbles, one of which was also child-sized (Smith 2015:71). The South Kitchen also served as a dwelling for enslaved domestic servants. It is thought that the building was originally built as a planter's cottage and was later used as an office or laundry before it became a kitchen in the early nineteenth century.

The thimble's diameter suggests that its user was a young girl, probably between five and ten years old. Perhaps it belonged to Joanna, the eldest daughter of Eliza. Eliza and her five children were enslaved by James Madison Sr (Hicks 2021). It is unclear whether Eliza worked as a field hand or a domestic servant, but it is quite possible that she worked in or around the

[160] The specific thimble referred to here can be seen in Figure 5.

mansion house. Eliza is never listed as having a husband, so he may have been an enslaved or free man who did not live at Montpelier. In the summer of 1781, Joanna would have been eight years old. Her younger siblings, Dianna, Demas, and Pendar would have been six, four, and two years old, respectively. And her mother Eliza would have been thirty-one years old and pregnant with her last child and Joanna's youngest sibling, Webster, who would be born in September of 1781.

In the summer of 1781, Eliza may have been working as a laundress at Montpelier. She and her four young children may have lived in the building known as the South Kitchen, which possibly functioned as a laundry building at that time. One can imagine that Eliza, who would have been heavily pregnant, relied on Joanna's help in caring for the younger children while she was busy washing, drying, ironing, and repairing clothing, linens, and bedding for the Madison family. At the time, eight-year-old Joanna was not old enough to work in the fields. She may have been assigned small tasks in the mansion, but because she had three younger siblings her main responsibility would have been caring for them during the day while her mother worked.

The Joanna and her six-year-old sister Dianna must have known that their mother was extremely tired. The job of washing, drying, mending, and ironing all of the clothing and linens for the Madisons was a terribly arduous one that was physically exhausting for any adult, but especially for a woman who was pregnant. Maybe Joanna and Dianna sewed small baby clothing in anticipation of the arrival of their new brother, Webster. Joanna would have known how to sew and would have helped her younger sister to sew while also keeping an eye on Demas and Pendar, who played nearby. She may have differentiated her thimble from Dianna's by the fish scale pattern decorating it – Dianna's thimble was only slightly smaller than hers but had tiny circles instead of scales. Or perhaps, at night when the younger children were asleep and Eliza

had finished working for the day, she and Joanna may have sewed together by the fireplace, creating and mending clothing for their family, rather than their enslavers. It was something that Joanna may have looked forward to – time she was able to spend with her mother by herself.

The true story behind the thimble will likely never be known. However, it is not impossible to imagine that a young enslaved girl used that small thimble when sewing with her sister or her mother. By imagining what can never be verified, the thimble is transformed from a mundane sewing tool to a representation of the relationships and responsibilities that existed for many young enslaved girls.

Chapter 6: Childhood Joy as Resilience

This final chapter is about the resilience of enslaved children, but it is also about the resilience of the enslaved family – of mothers, fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers, brothers, and sisters. It is about how the enslaved community, including non-blood relations, endeavored to preserve aspects of childhood that could not be claimed by the enslaver. While is impossible to know exactly how enslaved parents living in the nineteenth century American South conceived of the concept of childhood, or whether they treated their children as children, it is clear that many enslaved parents went out of their way to create joyful experiences for them. As Wilma King wrote, "If enslaved girls and boys enjoyed a childhood, it was because their parents and fictive kin made that possible" (2011:30).

This chapter is about the lives of enslaved children away from the eyes of the enslaver or the overseer. It is about the conscious and subconscious resistance to oppression by seeking and creating moments of joy and love. Archaeologically, these moments may be most obviously represented by the presence of toys. However, in terms of material culture, these aspects of childhood were largely either intangible or ephemeral – they are represented largely through toys and games, through religious rituals or herbal remedies, and through oral histories and folktales. Much of the material culture that does survive in the archaeological record is difficult to associate with childhood specifically and therefore may have multiple meanings and potential interpretations.

I have titled this chapter "Childhood Joy as Resilience" because it is important to recognize that the lives of enslaved children – and of all enslaved individuals – were not flat or one-dimensional and cannot simply be understood through the lens of labor or violence. Enslaved children brought joy to their parents and their community, simply by being children.

They also experienced joy and certain aspects of childhood to the extent that it was possible. This does not mean that they did not experience the pain and suffering associated with enslavement, but rather that their lives were extremely nuanced and can only be understood by acknowledging the multifaceted nature of human identities. In this chapter, I argue that the moments of love and joy created by and for enslaved children through a number of different ways (such as toys, ghost stories, make-believe playtime, and protective charms) represent resilience to oppression and the preservation of culture.

Additionally, I believe that these aspects of childhood and community can, in certain situations, be understood as acts of resistance. According to John Blassingame, "The more his [the slave's] cultural forms differed from those of his master and the more they were immune from the control of whites, the more the slave gained in personal autonomy and positive self-concepts" (1979:105). Of course, very small children were not consciously or intentionally resisting their enslavers by playing games or having fun. However, older enslaved children and enslaved adults were sometimes actively resisting the desires and the demands of their enslavers by experiencing and creating moments of childhood joy through various cultural forms. These cultural forms "lightened their burden of oppression, promoted group solidarity, provided ways for verbalizing aggression, sustaining hope, building self-esteem, and often represented areas of life largely free from the control of whites" (Blassingame 1979:105). This dissertation seeks to better understand the experience of enslaved children. Therefore, I focus on cultural forms that children directly participated in, or forms that were exclusive to children.

Archaeology: Children's Toys at Plantation Quarter Sites

The archaeological presence of children at sites of enslavement has primarily been identified through the existence of toys. While I argue that discussing enslaved children solely in

relation to toys is insufficient for accurately interpreting their experiences and roles within the community, I do not mean to suggest that archaeologists should disregard them at all. The archaeological presence of toys at sites of enslavement can reveal many things about the lives of the enslaved children and their relationships and should absolutely be analyzed and evaluated. My argument is that toys are certainly important artifacts that can tell archaeologists about the inhabitants of a site, but that they are not the only artifacts that can or should be associated with the presence of enslaved children. The issue is that children are often only included in site interpretations based on the presence of toys, but an absence of toys does not mean that children did not live there. Because the vast majority of excavated quarter sites are located on the plantations of prestigious, wealthy, or politically significant enslavers, the archaeology is biased towards the experiences of enslaved individuals who lived on large plantations and may have had access to objects or materials that enslaved people living on small farms did not. The enslaved children living on those farms that belonged to less wealthy enslavers may not have had formal toys such as dolls, and therefore must be identified archaeologically in other ways.

Historical archaeologist Colleen Betti (2017, 2022) has done extensive research on the relationship between toys and gendered socialization for enslaved children in particular by conducting a comparative study of toys found at numerous plantation quarter sites primarily located in the Upper South.[161] Betti's study focuses on gendered formal toys including porcelain dolls (doll parts) and ceramic or pewter toy dishes including saucers and teacups for enslaved girls. Enslaved boys were associated with artifacts such as marbles and military toys (Betti

[161] Betti (2022) utilized data from thirty-six sites located on eleven different plantations catalogued in DAACS (The Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery). Fairfield, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Palace Lands, Poplar Forest, Richneck, Stratford Hall, and Utopia are located in Virginia. The Hermitage is located in Tennessee, Stagville is located in North Carolina, and Yaughan is located in South Carolina.

2022). Military toys include a lead toy horse, toy cannons, and iron wheels (Betti 2022:118). With the exception of some marbles, all of the toys in the study would have been manufactured and then purchased by either the enslaver or an enslaved individual.

By the early 19th century, toys in the United States were largely utilized as tools for preparing children for the societal roles that they would assume in the future. Toys represented "adults' attempts to suggest and enforce certain norms of behavior for a child based upon gender, age, socioeconomic class, and even sociocultural ideals of beauty" (Wilkie 2000:149). Toys like dolls and miniature tea sets were created to teach middle- or upper-class white girls how to be proper mothers and homemakers. Toys such as marbles or tiny military objects had less obvious messages but may have taught boys stereotypical male behaviors such as independence or competitiveness (Betti 2022:121). However, because these gendered toys were geared towards white children, rather than free or enslaved Black children, their meanings when recovered at sites of enslavement are less clear. As neither white nor free, enslaved Black children living on plantations would have been expected to fulfill roles that were different from those of white children, though they obviously owned the same kinds of toys.

Toys given to enslaved children either by enslaved adults or their enslavers "represent how enslaved children were being socialized by two sets of adults, each with their own motivations" (Betti 2022:125). Depending on the identity of the giver, the toys may have had different intended messages for enslaved children. For example, an enslaved father may have purchased a doll for his enslaved daughter in order to teach her to eventually be a mother, but it is just as likely that he purchased the doll merely because his child wanted one. Additionally, an enslaver may have gifted dolls to the small girls he enslaved for the purpose of preparing them for their future roles as the caregivers of his white children or grandchildren, or he may have

given them dolls as a way to gain their trust or to ensure obedience. Although it is almost impossible to trace the exact origin of an archaeologically recovered toy, it is important to consider the various potential meanings behind them.

Betti's analysis of the data collected from DAACS also yielded a number of interesting findings regarding enslaved children and formal toys. First, marbles were the most common toys recorded, making up 60.4% of the total (2022:117). This may be due to the fact that marbles were fairly cheap and easy to obtain but could also be made by hand (clay or colono marbles). Marbles were found in a variety of different contexts, including in subfloor pits (where they may have been stored or possibly lost) as well as in work areas, such as in nail-making debris at Monticello, meaning that boys were playing with and losing their toys while at work (2022:106). Betti claims that these findings align with gendered expectations. Marbles had a wider variety of depositional patterns when compared to doll parts, suggesting that boys were less responsible than girls with their toys and were also allowed to play with their toys in more places. Girls were expected to be responsible and careful, as evidenced by the fact that only 5.2% of doll parts were found in cellars or subfloor pits, meaning that they were less likely to be lost (Betti 2022:105). However, I believe that this could also be due to the fact that marbles are very small and roll away when dropped on the ground, and porcelain dolls were typically larger, more expensive, and immobile.

All of the doll parts found, with the exception of one fragment excavated at Stagville plantation, were excavated from sites with some evidence of sewing activities, such as straight pins, thimbles, and other sewing equipment. This may suggest that young enslaved girls who were playing with dolls were observing their mothers or sisters sewing or learning to sew themselves, as many of the doll parts found would have been sewed onto cloth bodies (Betti

2022:112). Additionally, while many doll parts were found at quarter sites located in close proximity to the enslaver's house where domestic enslaved servants lived, almost 40% of the doll parts catalogued were found at field quarter sites, indicating that the future labor roles of young enslaved girls did not necessarily impact the types of toys that they possessed (Betti 2022:113).

It was common for enslaved children to eventually perform the same work that their parents did – for example, the child of an enslaved cook might also eventually become a cook, and the child of an enslaved field laborer might also work in the fields as an adult, although this was not always the case. Therefore, one might expect that the daughters of enslaved domestic workers such as seamstresses or maids would be exposed to more sewing activity and would therefore learn to sew at a younger age, possibly practicing on dolls. The children of enslaved domestic servants would have also been living in closer proximity to the enslaver or the enslaver's children, which may have given them more opportunities to receive a doll as a gift or a hand-me-down. Finally, as the children of enslaved domestic workers or skilled craftsmen, their parents may have been able to earn some money in exchange for their skills, which would allow them to purchase toys for their children. One might assume then that enslaved children living near the enslaver's house would have been much more likely to own dolls. However, the data from DAACS demonstrates that it was not uncommon for children of enslaved agricultural workers to possess porcelain dolls, which could have been given by the enslaver or purchased by their enslaved parent. Additionally, these children were also exposed to sewing as indicated by the presence of sewing paraphernalia, and therefore may have also learned to sew at a young age by practicing on their dolls. Therefore, young enslaved girls may have been learning the same

skills at the same ages, regardless of where they lived on the plantation or the positions of their parents within the enslaved community.

Enslaved Children's Toys at James Madison's Montpelier

The DAACS data analyzed in Betti's study did not include any artifacts from James Madison's Montpelier because, with the exception of one site, Montpelier's artifacts are not catalogued in the DAACS database. In this section I will briefly discuss some of the toys found at Montpelier – at sites associated with enslaved domestic servants and skilled craftsmen within the Main House and Grounds (44OR249) and at the quarters for enslaved agricultural laborers on the Home Farm Complex (44OR333).

Formal toys found during excavations of the Main House and Grounds include sixty-three marbles, eight doll parts, three small metal wheels from military toys or toy wagons, and one toy cannon.[162] The marbles were found in a number of areas, including the Stable Quarter Complex, the South Yard Service Complex, North Kitchen, and Dolley's Midden, suggesting that the enslaved children played with marbles in many different places on the property, and that marbles were a common toy. Additionally, there were a number of different types of marbles, including colored glass marbles, clay marbles (handmade and mass-produced), limestone marbles, and ceramic marbles (Figure 11). The doll parts were all made of porcelain, and include arms, feet, and a leg (Figure

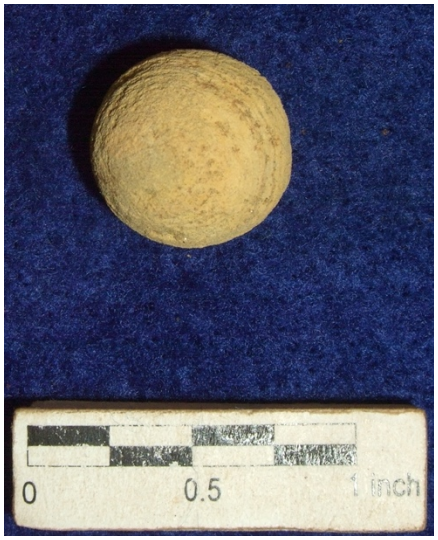


Figure 11. Handmade clay marble found near the South Kitchen.

Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

[162] A number of gaming pieces, including chess pieces, were also found. However, I do not consider these artifacts as toys because they were commonly used by adults.

12). Two of the toy wagon wheels were made of lead, and one was made of cast iron (Figure 13). Finally, the toy cannon was made of a copper alloy. The formal toys found in the areas where enslaved domestic workers and their children lived and worked near the main house are similar to the toys from quarter sites represented in the DAACS database. Gendered toys indicate that both enslaved girls and boys living near the main house were playing with these objects.[163]



Figure 12. Porcelain doll leg.

Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

The Home Farm Complex site (44OR333) includes the quarters for enslaved fieldhands and their families. In contrast to the number of different toys found near the main house, there was only one type of toy represented at the field quarter sites – marbles. The majority of the marbles were clay, though there were also a few limestone marbles and one glass marble (Figure 14). It is unclear as to why there is such a great discrepancy in the number and variety of toys between the two sites. The children living in the field quarters may have had less opportunity to receive formal toys than the children who lived within the vicinity of the main house, because those children had parents who may have been able to trade their skills (such as sewing or carpentry) for certain items or may have received some money for



Figure 13. Lead wheel from a toy wagon.

Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

[163] Historically, as well as in the WPA Narratives, marbles were associated with boys. However, a few interviews do indicate that girls sometimes played marbles as well. Additionally, one must consider the fact that young children do not always follow gender norms, meaning that some boys may have played with dolls and some girls may have played with toy wagons.

any extra work that they completed, either for Madison, visitors to Montpelier, or others in the area. Additionally, children living near the main house had a higher likelihood of interacting with the Madisons and with their visitors, who may have given them small coins or even toys.



Figure 14. Limestone marble from the Field Quarters.

Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

Enslaved field laborers may not have had the time or the specialized skills to do any extra work for payment after they finished their daily work, as fieldhands typically worked from dawn until after dusk. The children of enslaved fieldhands most likely stayed close to the vicinity of the fields and field quarters and would not have interacted with the Madisons or their visitors at the main house. Therefore, it is possible that the children of enslaved agricultural workers may have played more with homemade toys, which were often constructed of organic materials and do not survive for long in the archaeological record. Formerly enslaved individuals interviewed by the Federal Writers Project often discussed the toys that they made, which included rag balls, rag dolls or cornhusk dolls, and stick horses. The enslaved children living in the field quarters may have also preferred to play games, go fishing, or explore areas near the fields, as they may have had more opportunities to do these activities than the enslaved children who were under constant surveillance near the main house.

However, one artifact from the Home Farm Complex is particularly interesting and may reveal more about the life of an enslaved child living in the field quarters at Montpelier. Although the vessel is incomplete, there are enough sherds to indicate that it was once a small child's mug, measuring less than three inches in diameter (Figure 15). The sherds are made of white refined earthenware with a black transfer print decoration. The complete mug would have



Figure 15. Child's mug found in the Field Quarters.

Photo by author, Courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation

had a picture of a man in his shop (which is still partially visible in the mend of surviving sherds) and the phrase, "KEEP THY SHOP AND THY SHOP WILL KEEP THEE," a maxim from Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard Almanack*. Children's tableware (primarily small mugs and plates) printed with Franklin's maxims were popular during the early- to mid-nineteenth century and were produced by several different companies in England specifically for the American market. This particular mug probably dates to around the 1820s.

Although it is impossible to know where the mug came from or who purchased it, it is likely that an enslaved field laborer purchased the vessel for his or her child, possibly from a local general store.[164] One can imagine that the enslaved father or mother who purchased this mug must have earned some money or perhaps traded their produce or skills in order to buy it for his or her child, or children. Perhaps they chose this specific mug for its maxim. They may have wanted to teach their child that hard work and effort will result in positive payback, that maintaining their metaphorical shop meant that its business would in turn, take care of them. The mother or father may have very deliberately chosen this piece because it was created for a child and they wanted their own child to have a small luxury that free children may have had – a

[164] Records indicate that a number of enslaved individuals from Montpelier purchased goods from the Barbour-Johnson store in Orange County, either with money or by selling items or providing services in exchange for goods. It is feasible then that the mug may have been purchased by an enslaved worker from a nearby store.

specific cup that belonged to them alone. The mug may also have been a gift from an older sister or brother, a grandmother or grandfather, or another individual in the enslaved community. The true story behind how the mug arrived at the site will never be known, but more importantly, the mug's existence serves to demonstrate that someone must have cared for the young recipient of the mug immensely. They recognized the child as a child, and the mug represents the intention to preserve their childhood.

Formal Toys in the WPA Slave Narratives

Many of the formerly enslaved individuals who were interviewed for the WPA *Slave Narratives* talked about the formal toys that they played with as children, and typically shared how they acquired them. A number of people cited Christmas as a time when enslavers would give the enslaved children gifts, including toys such as dolls and marbles. Susan Castle, who was enslaved as a child in Georgia, said that on Christmas her enslavers would give the children "china dolls" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:181). And Mary Colbert, who was also enslaved in Georgia, told her interviewer that her enslaver's sisters would come into the quarters on Christmas Eve and fill the children's stockings with "candy, dolls, and everything you can imagine" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:221). Marbles were also common Christmas gifts from enslavers. Rias Body was enslaved in Georgia as well, and said that on Christmas, the enslaved children on the plantation were given gifts such as candy, raisins, Brazil nuts, balls, and marbles (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:87).

Some enslavers gave children toys as rewards or incentives. Douglas Parish was enslaved in Florida. His enslaver forced the young boys to race enslaved boys from other plantations, because the fastest runner would represent his enslaver at the Fourth of July races. The winner of the big race won a bag of silver, which was awarded to the enslaver of the boy, rather than the

actual winner himself. Douglas' enslaver trained the boys by making them run to the plantation boundary and back, rewarding the winner with a jack-knife or bag of marbles (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:257-258). The marbles that Douglas' enslaver gave the boys were most likely mass-produced and purchased from a store. However, Douglas mentioned that he and the other boys would also shoot marbles with ones that they had made themselves from lumps of clay baked in the fireplace (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:257). Douglas Parish's story provides just one explanation as to how different types of marbles may have arrived in the quarters for enslaved people.

While shooting marbles was generally considered a game that children played for fun, Lindsey Moore's enslaver figured out a way to make a profit off of Lindsey's skills as a marble shooter. Lindsey Moore was formerly enslaved in Georgia. His enslaver discovered that Lindsey and another enslaved boy were highly skilled at shooting marbles and began to take them into town to compete with other young boys who were enslaved by different men. The enslavers bet money on which child would win, with Lindsey's enslaver frequently winning money, as Lindsey and the other boy won games often. This is yet another example of an enslaver stealing labor from children, but in this case, a game that the children had previously played for fun had become work from which their enslaver could make a monetary profit. Lindsey was never given any of the prize money. However, he realized that by making small bets with the pennies that spectators sometimes tossed at him, he could make some money of his own, and was able to save a good amount (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:229-230).

Scott Hooper, who was enslaved in Texas, received presents from her father, who was enslaved on another farm about four miles away from Scott's mother and her eight siblings. Scott said that her father visited them every Wednesday and Saturday night. Her father's enslaver gave

him an acre of land and allowed him to sell whatever he cultivated. He planted cotton and sold it for cash, which allowed him to purchase his own pony and saddle. "…he brung us chillen candy and toys and coffee and tea for mammy" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:157). By the time the Confederates surrendered, Scott's father had saved around five hundred dollars. However, because it was Confederate money, it was worthless. "He give it to us chillen to play with" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:157).

Enslaved children received formal gifts such as dolls and marbles from both their parents and their enslavers, complicating the meaning of the artifacts. However, some enslaved children were able to purchase their own toys (or candy) with money that they earned themselves.[165] Lindsey Moore never told his interviewer how he spent the money he earned from the marble competitions that his enslaver forced him to participate in, but one can imagine that he probably used it to buy what many other children would have purchased – candy or toys. The archival record is full of examples of enslaved children earning their own money. Richard Macks, who was enslaved in Maryland, worked as a boy in both the field and in the stables, which gave him "an opportunity to meet people some of whom gave [him] a few pennies" (FWP Vol. 8 Maryland 1936:52). Richard earned money in this way and gave it to his mother. And James Hemings was only seven or eight years old when he sold Thomas Jefferson two mockingbirds for eleven shillings and six pence (Jefferson 1773).

It is clear that it was not uncommon for some enslaved children to earn small amounts of money at times. Individuals like Richard Macks may have given their money to their parents, in order to help their families. Other children preferred to spend their earnings at the general store,

[165] For more examples of enslaved children earning money for themselves (mainly through selling produce or small game) and purchasing candy or toys with said money see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

purchasing sweets, small toys, or other small, affordable goods such as jaw harps or fishing hooks. Therefore, formal toys that are recovered archaeologically may have been introduced into the quarters in a variety of different ways. They may have been given as Christmas gifts or rewards from enslavers as a means to earn the children's trust or loyalty, ultimately for the benefit of the enslaver. They may have been given as presents by enslaved parents, grandparents, or older siblings as acts of love. Finally, they may have been purchased by the children themselves, using the money that they earned on their own. The meaning of any artifact is highly dependent on context, and although it is not possible to know exactly how a specific artifact was deposited on a site, it is important to recognize that artifacts such as toys can possess multiple meanings beyond the most obvious interpretations.

Homemade or Improvised Toys in the WPA Slave Narratives

As mentioned previously, many of the toys that enslaved children played with were ones that they had constructed themselves out of available materials, which were typically organic and therefore do not survive in the archaeological record. William McWhorter was formerly enslaved in Georgia and described the games that the children played with items that they created themselves. "Games? Well, 'bout de biggest things us played when I was a chap was baseball, softball, and marbles. Us made our own marbles out of clay and baked 'em in de sun, and our baseballs and softballs was made out of rags" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:100). Adeline Blakeley, who was enslaved in Arkansas, remembered playing with the daughter of her enslaver, who owned and managed a stagecoach stop, where they lived. "We had a play house back of the fireplace chimney. We didn't have many toys; maybe a doll made of a corn cob, with a dress made from scraps and a head made from a roll of scraps" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 1 1936:11). Adeline Blakeley's account reveals what life may have been like for enslaved children who did

not live on large plantations with many other enslaved individuals. Both she and her enslaver's daughter (a girl a year-and-a-half older than Adeline) relied on their creativity to make toys from readily available materials. Finally, Sam T. Stewart, who was enslaved as a child in North Carolina, discussed bandy, "a game played like golf," that he and the other enslaved children played. "In striking the ball we knocked it at each other. Before we hit the ball we would cry, 'shins, cry,' then we would knock the ball at our playmates. Sometimes we used rocks for balls" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:322).

As children are wont to do, enslaved children regularly fabricated toys from materials that adults may have considered scraps or rubbish. A bunch of rags wound together served as a ball for baseball, softball, bandy, or playing catch. Corn cobs and rags proved to make adequate dolls for girls to play with and dress up. And when children wanted to play bandy and had no rag balls available, rocks made improvised balls. One reason as to why enslaved children, or children in general, are so difficult to identify archaeologically is because children do not think in the same way that adults do. Children often play unseen by adults. They rely heavily on their imaginations and interact with each other according to different rules. The majority of children's play and playthings occurred away from the direct supervision of adults and did not involve adult participants. Therefore, a substantial amount of imagination is necessary when considering the kinds of material culture that enslaved children were interacting with on a daily basis. The major issue is that these handmade toys do not survive. The other issue is that these items were often utilitarian or so commonly found that they do not register as significant artifacts. Does a rock that was used in a game of bandy look different from other rocks? Would there be wear marks or other attributes that might indicate that the rock was improvised as a ball?

As a child, Joe High, who was enslaved in North Carolina, played jump rope with the other enslaved children on the plantation (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:413). Ropes generally do not survive in the ground for hundreds of years, but under the right conditions, even if they were to be in a recognizable state when excavated, how would an archaeologist know that the rope was once used by children for jumping rope? They would not. And, in all likelihood, the rope would have been used for a number of things besides a jump rope. Charlie Hudson was formerly enslaved in Georgia. Growing up, he recalls pitching horseshoes with other enslaved children (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:229). Unlike ropes, horseshoes are artifacts that very often survive archaeologically. However, the problem with the horseshoe is the same problem that one would encounter with the rock and the rope – there is no one reliable way of identifying utilitarian objects that were once used as toys by creative children. Therefore, archaeologists must learn to think in the way that children think.

Children will often modify an artifact to serve a different function than the one for which it was originally intended. How might this be represented archaeologically? A good example comes from Jim Deetz's work at Flowerdew Hundred, a plantation in Virginia. Deetz discovered spoons with strangely bent handles, and after some consideration, concluded that they may have been bent by children who used them as small digging tools (Deetz 1993 cited in Bugarin 2005:14). This is one way to potentially identify the impact of children on the material record. Because children do not think or behave in the same way as adults, the objects that they used may be indicative of this fact. Interviews from formerly enslaved individuals confirm that children were constantly modifying objects or substituting them for others for the purpose of playing – either in individual play or group play. This means that in order to truly consider enslaved children when interpreting the artifacts at a site, one must intentionally think about

these objects in terms of how a child might view or use them. This method involves a way of thinking and questioning which does not come naturally to most adults and thus requires considering possibilities that others might deem improbable or far-fetched.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: Children's Games

In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO 2003). ICH is shared between generations and is often recreated, thereby providing communities with "a sense of identity and continuity" (UNESCO 2003). Intangible Cultural Heritage may be represented through many forms, including:

(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) performing arts;
(c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
(e) traditional craftmanship (UNESCO 2003)

In this section I will discuss childhood games mentioned by formerly enslaved individuals in the WPA *Slave Narratives*. I consider games as examples of intangible cultural heritage, as they are social practices. Because American chattel slavery did not exist in a vacuum, and enslaved children (and adults) interacted with white people on a daily basis, some of the ICH was not entirely exclusive to the enslaved community but was sometimes shared between all Americans – enslaved Black people, free Black people, and white people (enslavers and non-enslavers).

The majority of children's games fall under the category of shared ICH because white children also played these games. However, enslaved children may have approached and played these games differently from white children due to their status and their experience as enslaved

individuals. Therefore, although both white children and enslaved Black children may have played similar games like tag or hide-and-seek, one must understand that there may be slight differences and nuances in the rules or gameplay of the two groups that are a direct product of their contrasting experiences as free and white or as enslaved and Black.[166] On many plantations and farms, enslaved children often interacted with the white children of their enslavers, typically at young ages. These friendships would sometimes form when the children were too young to understand the complexities and power imbalances within their relationships. As they grew older, both the children of enslavers and the enslaved children became aware of the true nature of their relationships and the ways in which they were expected to behave towards one another.

Many formerly enslaved individuals discussed having white playmates when they were little children. Others were forced to be the nurses or companions of white children of a similar age to them. In some narratives, the white children understood that they had power over the enslaved children, and often utilized it. In other interviews, both sets of children seemed innocent and quite ignorant to their circumstances. In either scenario, the interactions between white and enslaved children resulted in certain forms of ICH being shared. Mary Ellen Johnson, who was formerly enslaved in Texas, said that some of her first memories were playing in the backyard with the three young children of her enslaver. "We used to make playhouses out there and sweep the ground clean down to the level with brush brooms and dec'rate it all up with little broken glasses and crockery" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:223). Mary Ellen Johnson's interview provides yet another example of how deposits of certain artifacts may be potentially explained or

[166] For the purposes of this dissertation chapter, I will not go into great detail explaining the considerable number of different games that enslaved children played. For more extensive discussions of this subject, see Webber 1978:180-190; Wiggins 1980; and King 2011:107-150.

interpreted – an area of swept yard with tiny shards of glass and sherds of pottery may be representative of a playhouse made by children.

Mumble peg (also called mumbly peg, mumblety-peg, or stick-knife) was one of the games that enslaved children played which operated according to a particular set of rules.[167] The game could be played by multiple players and the only equipment needed was a pocketknife.[168] The object of the game was to throw the knife down in a way that the point stuck fast in the ground. The players then went through several positions of throwing the knife with various degrees of difficulty (Newell 1884:189). If the knife did not stick in the ground, the next player took their turn, and the first to successfully finish the series of throws won. The winner then drove a peg into the ground with three blows from the handle of his or her knife, and the loser was forced to remove the peg from the ground with his or her teeth. This last act was the reason why the game was called "mumble peg" (Newell 1884:189). The game was popular with all American children during the nineteenth century. Both enslaved boys and girls participated in mumble peg.

Other popular games that enslaved children played often fell into distinct categories but were played with slight variations. Ring games, or ring dances, were a category of games where a group of children would form a circle, then sing, dance, or play along to hand-clapping songs or rhymes of particular rhythms (Wiggins 1980:24). These games were played frequently because they did not require any sort of equipment in order to play. Examples of ring games

[167] For examples see William Curtis' interview (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:48), James V. Deane's interview (FWP Vol. 8 Maryland 1936:8), and Chana Littlejohn's interview (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:58).

[168] Mumble peg is another example of a game where the associated material culture is a utilitarian tool. When recovered archaeologically, pocketknives are typically associated with men, rather than children. However, children clearly used pocketknives as indicated by the popularity of mumble peg.

included ring around the rosie, sail away Rauley, holly golly, and skip frog. The main premise of ring around the rosie and sail away Rauley was to hold hands with the other players and spin in a circle, moving faster and faster until one of the players falls down.[169] Charles Anderson, who was enslaved in Virginia, described how to play holly golly. "Well, they'd pass around the peanuts, and whoever'd get three nuts in one shell had to give that one to the one who had started the game. Then they'd pass 'em around again. Just a peanut-eating contest, sorta" (FWP Vol. 12 Ohio 1936:3).

Hagar Lewis, who was formerly enslaved in Texas, remembered playing a ring game called skip frog. "One game I remember was, 'Skip frog, Skip frog, Answer your Mother, she's callin' you, you, you.' We'd stand in a circle and one would be skip frog. We'd slap our hands and skip frog would be hoppin' just like frogs do" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 3 1936:7). Ring games had "infinite variations, but the general procedure was to draw a ring on the ground, ranging from fifteen to thirty feet in diameter; depending on the number of children engaged in the dancing ring" (Wiggins 1980:24). Wiggins notes that the songs that children sung in ring games often berated their enslavers or expressed their fears or worries (1980:25). From this perspective, ring games not only served the purpose of play, camaraderie, and joy, they were also a way for enslaved children to communally share their feelings in an acceptable way and may have provided them necessary validation.

Ball games were also immensely popular activities among enslaved children. Bat-and-ball games like baseball, softball, and town ball were all quite similar to one another, and

[169] For examples see Katherine Eppes' interview (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:120), Rachel Adams (FWP Vol. Georgia Part 1 1936:6), and James V. Deane's interview (FWP Vol. 8 Maryland 1936:8).

involved two competing teams and the use of bats and balls, which were often improvised.[170] A number of formerly enslaved individuals also recalled playing han'over ball, hail over, Anthony over, or anti-over – all different names for the game of ante-over. John Davenport, who was enslaved as a boy in South Carolina, told his interviewer how he and the other enslaved children played anti-over. "Dey played anti-over by a crowd gitting on each side of de house and throwing a ball from one side to de other. Whoever got de ball would run around on de other side and hit somebody wid it; den he was out of the game" (FWP South Carolina Part 1 1936:241). In another variation of the game, once a player was hit by the ball, he or she would have to join the team on the other side. The game was played until all players had been brought over to one side (Newell 1884:182). Bert Mayfield, who was enslaved in Kentucky, said that Sheep-meat was another ball game that he played as a boy. "Sheep-meat was a game played with a yarn ball and when one of the players was hit by the ball that counted him out" (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:15). Ball games were popular games for enslaved children because they could be played using readily available materials and were also typically played in teams. Rag balls or balls of yarn were often used when store-bought balls could not be acquired, and stout sticks made adequate bats or bandy sticks.

Outdoor games that could be played without any equipment at all were the most commonly mentioned games in the WPA interviews. Numerous formerly enslaved individuals remembered playing games including tag, hide-and-seek, hopscotch, leapfrog, and having racing contests. These games could be played with a small or large group of children and did not have many rules, meaning that very young children could easily understand and participate. Games

[170] For examples see William McWhorter's interview (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:100) and William Curtis' interview (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:48).

with more complex rules like base (sometimes called prisoner's base) and Molly's Bright (sometimes referred to as Mollie, Mollie, Bright) combined different aspects of hide-and-seek and tag with various rules. Base or prisoner's base is played very similarly to the modern game of capture the flag. The game is played in an open space with two teams. Each team has one prisoner from the other team. The goal of the game is to save the "prisoner" that is held by the other team without being tagged by a member of the opposing team. If the player is tagged while on the opposing team's side, he or she becomes a prisoner and must join the other prisoner until someone from their team comes to rescue them. The team that captures all of the players from the opposite team wins the game.

The game of Molly's Bright is less well-documented but seems to be a combination of base, tag, and hide-and-seek, sung to a rhyme. Mary Johnson, who was enslaved in South Carolina, explained the game in her interview. "Us slave children played base and jumped from one base to another before we could be caught; and we sing: 'Can I git to Molly's bright? Three course and ten. Can I get there by candle-light? Yes, if your legs are long and light'" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 3 1936:56-57).[171] And Callie Elder, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, described another variation of the game, referring to it as the children's 'hidin' game.' She remembered the song lyrics as "Mollie, Mollie Bright, three score and ten, Can I git dere by candlelight? Yes, if your laigs is long enough!" (FWP Vol. Georgia Part 1 1936:307). Molly's Bright also went by the name "Old Witch" or "Chickamy, Chickamy, Craney Crow" (Georges 1972:178).

[171] The lyrics to Molly's Bright are derived from the old English nursery rhyme "How Many Miles to Babylon?" For more on "How Many Miles to Babylon?" see Opie and Opie 1973:63-64.

"Hide the Switch" was another game played by enslaved children. A switch is a piece of flexible wood usually cut fresh from a tree or shrub. Children (both free and enslaved) were often hit with a switch (on their backsides or the backs of their legs) as a form of corporal punishment, though enslaved adults were also sometimes beaten with switches. Switches were less severe weapons than whips. In the game, one child would hide the switch while the other children counted up to a certain number. After that number was called, the rest of the children searched for the hidden switch. Whoever found the switch first would chase the other children in attempts to hit them with the switch.

One historian suggests that this kind of imitative play was "probably a means through which slave children helped themselves to cope with … their greatest fears" (Webber 1978:184). Additionally, "Slave children were not necessarily unique in their imitative play, but rather in the social events they chose to emulate" (Wiggins 1980:25). According to scholar David Wiggins, the imitative play of enslaved children possessed a number of distinct features: they did not necessarily re-enact events that enslaved adults found most enjoyable; they re-enacted events that they had witnessed or heard about rather than experienced firsthand; they imitated events that occurred within the enslaved community rather than within the enslaver's family; and finally, they utilized imitative play as a way to relieve specific anxieties or fears (1980:25).

While I find Wiggins' theories regarding the imitative play of enslaved children to be generally accurate, I disagree with the statement that children re-enacted events that they had witnessed or heard about rather than experienced themselves. For example, "Hide the Switch" was most likely played by some enslaved children who had already been on the receiving end of a switch themselves. The WPA interviews contain a multitude of evidence that demonstrates enslaved children were punished with a switch by their enslaver, their enslaver's wife, and

sometimes their own parents. Carrie Bradley Logan Bennet was formerly enslaved in Mississippi. She said that her enslaver's wife, a woman they called Miss Liza Jane, whipped the children often. "I seen Miss Liza Jane turn up the little children's dresses and whoop 'em with a little switch, and straws, in her hand. She 'mos blister you wid her bare hand. Plenty things we done to get whoopin's. we leave the dates open; we'd run the calves and try to ride 'em; we'd chunk at the geese" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 1 1936:150). And Daniel Taylor, who was enslaved as a child in Alabama, told his interviewer that when his mother sometimes punished him with a switch. "The hottest moments of my life were the ones in which my Mother got tight in behind me with a hickory (switch) and I always took to the woods" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:368). Therefore, while Hide the Switch was an example of imitative play, it may also have been the re-enactment of an event (or events) that the children had experienced before.

Additionally, historian Wilma King notes that only five percent of the WPA interviews mention "Hide the Switch," which is "hardly a representative example" (King 2011:117). King references the work of Bernard Mergen, who found that white children in America and Europe as well as Arawak Indians in Guiana often played whipping games, including Hide the Switch, Daddy Wacker and Rap Jacket (Mergen 1982 in King 2011:117). She notes that these whipping games were representative of the violence in societies globally and were not exclusive to the enslaved community in the United States. "Enslaved children, like other children around the world, probably played the games because of the excitement of anticipating a whipping and the challenge of successfully avoiding it. No doubt some children used the same tactics when faced with whippings by adults" (King 2011:117). Daniel Taylor's account of running into the woods to escape his mother and the switch may have also been a tactic used by children when playing Hide the Switch.

Ultimately, the games played by enslaved children were typically quite similar to the outdoor games played by white children. Rather, they may only have slightly differed in the rules of the game or in the materials used as game equipment. Wiggins claims that "One of the significant features about the play of slave children is the apparent absence of any games that required the elimination of players… Their "frivolous" play life was one area of their existence in which they could be assured that their companions would not be suddenly removed or excluded from participating" (1980:29). I do not think that this is entirely accurate. It is possible that on smaller farms, enslaved children did not eliminate losing players from their games simply because there were not very many children and ending the game and starting over was more logical than attempting to play the game with less players. However, on larger plantations where many enslaved children lived, eliminating players may have added more excitement to the game as it raised the stakes and there would have been no shortage of available players. Just as there are interviews where the informants state that players were never "out" and that the game merely started over when a player lost, there are also interviews that indicate that the players would be "out" of a game if they lost, and that the game would continue on without those players.

In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Frederick Douglass wrote "SLAVE-children are children, and prove no exceptions to the general rule" (1855:39). He wrote this in reference to the feelings of enslaved children – "Children have their sorrows as well as men and women…" (1855:39). However, I believe that Douglass' point is relevant here because besides feeling sorrow, enslaved children could also feel competitive or aggressive. They, like all children, were individuals capable of the range of human emotions and behaviors – both positive and negative. Their status as enslaved did not necessarily prevent them from acting like children, and this can be seen quite distinctly in the interviews recounting the childhood games that people played

when they were enslaved. Therefore, firsthand accounts of the play of enslaved children offer insights into and examples of situations or events where children were able to act as children and experience their childhoods, to the best extent possible, away from the oppression of their enslavers.

Enslaved Family and Community in the Creation of Childhood

This section is about the role of the enslaved family and community in the creation and encouragement of childhood. I associate the use of herbal remedies and/or charms (specifically in regard to children) with the enslaved family and community because the knowledge that was shared and then applied was typically held by the elders in the community and then taught and passed down to each successive generation. In this way, cultural traditions and practices were preserved and sustained. Family and fictive kin were essential to the existence of a childhood for enslaved children, as they were the individuals who actively recognized and valued the children as children, not as property or machines for profit. "While the form of family life in the quarters differed radically from that among free Negroes and whites, this does not mean that it failed to perform many of the traditional functions of the family – the rearing of children being one of the most important of these functions" (Blassingame 1979:151). The family (including non-blood relations) was integral to the survival of enslaved people.[172]

Fundamentally, enslaved parents sought to protect their children from harm. "Parents, whether together or alone, taught their youngsters how to tolerate inhumane acts and degradation while maintaining their humanity and keeping their spirit intact" (King 2011:170). They had "an

[172] Beyond the nuclear and extended family, "family" might also refer to any individuals "who, for reasons other than kinship by blood, felt a familial responsibility to help nurture, protect, and educate any given black child…It is this larger grouping of persons which was the primary educational instrument of the quarter community and which was the quarter child's family under slavery" (Webber 1978:157).

unusually heavy responsibility," as they were responsible for their own survival as well as the survival of their children, in a system where slavery was inherited, and constant and arbitrary violence was the primary mechanism of control. "Such a system demanded that mothers, fathers, and others teach boys and girls how to be slaves and children simultaneously" (King 2011:33). Enslaved parents strived to teach their children how to survive under the institution of slavery in ways that would not garner negative attention from enslavers. As they were also enslaved, parents knew that both their fates and the fates of their children were dependent upon the whims of their enslaver. Additionally, they had to learn how to be parents, and teach their children to be obedient to them, but also to be obedient (to an extent) to the enslaver, which often made their relationships with their children difficult to navigate.[173]

It is impossible to adequately convey the significance of enslaved mothers to their children. Innumerable narratives and interviews from formerly enslaved individuals recount how their mothers were the most important people in their lives. A profound example of this comes from the WPA interview of Adeline Willis, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia. She was asked about the very first thing that she remembered. She replied, "The first thing I recollect is my love for my Mother – I loved her so and would cry when I couldn't be with her, and as I growed up I kept on loving her jest that a-way even after I married and had children of my own" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 4 1936:162). Enslaved mothers were typically their children's primary caregivers, except perhaps on plantations where the children were kept in a nursery during the day. Even so, mothers would wake their children every morning, preparing them for their day and perhaps cooking and feeding them something before dropping them off at the nursery building. In the evenings, after a full day of field work, mothers picked up their children and

[173] For examples see Jacobs 1861:17; Stroyer 1885:35

cooked and fed them supper before putting them to bed and inevitably starting yet another task for their enslaver, such as spinning cuts of thread.

Enslaved mothers taught their children the most basic and vital survival skills, such as how to behave when dealing with their enslaver, how to care for their younger siblings, how to do certain tasks such as cooking or sewing, how to do hard labor in the fields, and most importantly, how to withstand enslavement. This last lesson was often taught by teaching their children about their culture, including religious beliefs and folktales. Mothers also taught their children to resist slavery through love. When Frederick Douglass' mother defended him against Aunt Katy, who threatened to "starve the life" out of him, he recognized that she was protecting him from one of the cruelties of the system. "That night I learned the fact, that I was not only a child, but somebody's child" (Douglass 1855:56). His mother gave him a sweet cake in the shape of a heart – demonstrating that not only would he be fed, but that she felt he deserved the best food. Douglass wrote that he felt "prouder, on my mother's knee, than a king upon his throne" (Douglass 1855:56). For enslaved children, their mother's love confirmed that they were wanted or worthy simply because they existed. Oftentimes their mother's love for them and hopes that they would one day be free encouraged the desire for freedom and knowledge in young children. Through their mothers, enslaved children learned how to outwardly act in ways that satisfied their enslavers while simultaneously maintaining the belief that they were not slaves, but individuals who had an inherent right to freedom and who would one day be free. Enslaved mothers taught their children how to physically and spiritually survive under the oppression of slavery.

Fathers also played integral roles in the lives of their young enslaved children and provided for their families in myriad ways. Formerly enslaved individuals discussed the

importance of their fathers' hunting and fishing activities, and how they consistently provided their families with much-needed meat and fish to supplement their inadequate rations. Louisa Adams, who was enslaved in North Carolina, said that her father "partly raised [his children]" on the wild game that he hunted, which included rabbits, raccoons and possums (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:3). Elderly men who were enslaved as children recalled their memories of going raccoon or possum hunting with their fathers at night, which meant a great deal to them.[174] Enslaved fathers also cultivated their own garden patches or raised poultry (if the enslaver allowed them) to either feed their families or to sell for cash. When possible, fathers would also earn money for their family by selling objects that they crafted. Green Willbanks, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, remembered, "Pa had a little trade; he made shoes and baskets, and Old Boss let him sell them" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 4 1936:138). Additionally, they often crafted furniture and other items for their cabin and taught their children useful skills such as whittling, basket-making, or even carpentry.

Enslaved children whose parents were enslaved by different people lived with their mothers, and therefore only saw their fathers once or twice a week. However, for many children, their father's visits were the highlight of their week. People remembered their fathers visiting them and surprising them with small gifts like candy or toys. A number of individuals recalled that sometimes their fathers would make visits to them without permission from their enslavers, which was a large risk. Samuel Boulware was formerly enslaved in South Carolina. His father was only allowed a pass to visit his family once a week, and if he wanted to visit them more often, he would have to clandestinely travel the two-mile journey through the woods in order to

[174] See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for examples of children learning to hunt or fish from their fathers, grandfathers, and other men in the enslaved community.

avoid the slave patrollers. “If they ketched him widout a pass, he was sho’ in for a skin cracklin’ whippin. He knowed all dat but he would slip to see mammy anyhow, whippin’ or not” (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 1 1936:68).

Like enslaved mothers, enslaved fathers had to learn how to parent their children in a system where family separations were rampant. The domestic slave trade destroyed one in three or over thirty percent of first marriages between enslaved couples in the Upper South (Tadman 1996:171). Though enslaved fathers (and mothers) had no control over their fate regarding separations, they maintained their roles as parents and heads of their families to the greatest extent possible. “Poor as the slave is, and dependent at all times upon the arbitrary will of his master, or yet more fickle caprice of the overseer, his children look up to him in his little cabin, as their protector and supporter” (Ball 1837:274). While enslaved children recognized their fathers as their protectors, the children also supported their fathers in any way that they could. Louisa Adams, who was formerly enslaved in North Carolina, told her interviewer, “I have greased my daddy’s back after he had been whupped until his back wuz cut to pieces. He had to work jis the same” (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 1 1936:5). Enslaved fathers loved their children deeply and taught them both necessary and practical skills that demonstrated the value of independence and self-sufficiency. Through their own actions and behaviors, they modeled resilience and gave their children the ability to survive on their own.

Grandparents and elders in the community also played an important role in the lives of enslaved children. Superannuated enslaved men and women who were unable to continue working in the fields or the enslaver’s house cared for children in nursery buildings or in their own homes in the quarters. For many enslaved children, these elderly enslaved men and women may have been their primary caregivers, the people with whom they spent the majority of their

time with, as their parents likely worked in the fields or the main house all day and sometimes into the night.

Perry Sid Jamison, who was formerly enslaved in Alabama, remembered his grandmother with great affection. “I thought der wasn’t a better friend in all de world den my grandmother. She would do all she could for her grandchildren” (FWP Vol. 12 Ohio 1936:50-51). On the plantation where Perry was enslaved, there was no food allowance for children who were too young to work, so his grandmother fed him and her other grandchildren out of his mother’s and her own allowance. Formerly enslaved in South Carolina, Aaron Ford’s grandfather taught him both practical and moral lessons for survival. He taught Aaron how to catch otters and set traps for wild game, ensuring that he would be able to feed himself and provide for others, if necessary. His grandfather also gave him advice: to never take things that were not his (such as corn), as he could be whipped for stealing (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 2 1936:75-76). In this way, Aaron’s grandfather taught him to be self-reliant and ensured that Aaron would be able to acquire food without stealing, thereby avoiding conflict and potential violence with the enslaver.

Besides physically caring for and nurturing the children, it was frequently the case that enslaved grandparents were the individuals who taught the children about religion, conjure, herbal medicine, and songs and stories about life in Africa (Webber 1978:175). Elderly enslaved individuals therefore served the important role of the cultural educators of the enslaved community. By teaching young enslaved children about their culture, grandparents demonstrated that they had an identity. They taught the children that they were not slaves. Rather, they were people who were enslaved, and they had a specific history with stories, traditions, and rituals that the enslaver could not claim or take away from them. In short, they had their own culture,

separate from the enslaver. Enslaved children were taught these things when they were young in order to instill the importance of a sense of identity and belonging which the enslaver and the institution of chattel slavery constantly attempted to strip away. It is much easier to convince a person that they are a slave when they have no knowledge of their family, their past, or their culture. However, the spirit of an individual who knows his or her identity is much more difficult to break. Cultural forms such as religion, conjure, folktales, herbal remedies, and oral histories gave enslaved children distinct identities and taught them multiple survival mechanisms, including both resilience and resistance.

Enslaved parents and fictive kin "stood between children and slaveholders or others who sought to control boys and girls psychologically and break their will to resist" (King 2011:30). They served as the children's protectors, advocates, caregivers, and teachers, regardless of whether they were blood-related or not, and these actions manifested in both tangible and intangible ways. In terms of material culture, the protection and love for children may be physically represented through child-specific charms or herbal remedies. Charms and herbs may be considered as evidence of ritual or religious traditions, but this was not always the case. Certain salves, sachets, poultices, or teas may not have been related to any religious beliefs whatsoever but instead may have been related to traditional medicine or folk knowledge transmitted generationally. Through this material culture, enslaved adults were sharing and preserving cultural knowledge with the younger generations.

Although enslaved parents, grandparents, or other adults may have been unable to protect enslaved children from all forms of harm, including acts of violence from the enslaver, enslaver's family, or overseer, they protected and healed their children in other ways. Charms worked to protect children from many dangers, both physical and spiritual. The correct herbs

could also protect children as well as heal them from certain illnesses or physical injuries. While there have been many archaeological examples of charms found at sites of enslavement, I will primarily be focusing on charms and folk medicines that are generally considered to be either child-related or child-specific.[175]

Material Culture

Pierced Coins

Pierced coins as protective or healing charms were frequently mentioned in interviews with formerly enslaved individuals. Both enslaved adults and children wore pierced coins around the ankle, which protected against a number of ailments or dangers, including poison, conjure, and rheumatism. Multiple types of coins were used, including copper pennies and silver dimes.[176] Some individuals mentioned that the coin had to be copper, others mentioned that it should be a dime, and some mentioned the specific ankle which the coin should be tied around. Pierced coins may have protected one from conjure altogether or may have simply acted as a warning that the person wearing the coin had been conjured. Tildy Collins was formerly enslaved in Alabama. At the time of her interview, she worked as a midwife and a "doctor man." Tildy said that "Iffen you gits conju'ed, de dime turn black, an' you kin go to de conju' doctor an' git de conju' took off" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:86). In this case, the charm merely worked as a signal so that the person could attempt to rid themselves of the conjure as quickly as possible, but they were still conjured until they visited the conjure doctor. Another formerly enslaved woman, who was only identified as "Mrs. Duncan" (her first name was not recorded) said that all of her children wore silver dimes on a string tied around their legs, "to keep off the

[175] See Fett (2000) and Hazzard-Donald (2013) for more information on African American herbal medicine and religious traditions.
[176] Interview with William Henry Towns (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:391).

witches spell" (FWP Vol. 7 Kentucky 1936:35). For Mrs. Duncan and her children, the charm automatically shielded them from any conjuring that was performed against them, so that no further action was necessary.

For children specifically, pierced coins worn around the neck protected and healed babies who were teething, as many people at the time believed that this stage in an infant's life could be particularly dangerous. "The fear of an infant's teething period should not be underestimated for throughout the American South both African and Euroamerican populations believed that the condition of teething and the process of weaning made a child more prone to life-threatening diseases" (McMillen 1990:151 cited in Wilkie 1997:87). Teething can begin as early as three months old, though it typically starts at around the six-month mark, and can last until the baby is nearly three years old. Therefore, the widespread belief that teething made infants more vulnerable to illness and death was likely due to the high infant mortality rate, especially among the enslaved population (Kiple and Kiple 1977; Steckel 1986; Coelho and McGuire 2000).

Emma Jones, who was enslaved in Georgia, told her interviewer the cure for a baby who was having a difficult time teething. "Jus' putt a string of coppers roun' he neck an' he won't have no trouble at all. Us useta to dat to de little white chilluns an' de black uns to; 'specially in hot weather when dey jus' seem to have de misery" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:236). While Emma mentioned that multiple pierced copper coins should be used to aid in teething, other individuals offered slightly different advice. Stephen McCray, who was formerly enslaved in Alabama, said that a single dime was tied around a baby's neck "to make it tooth easy, and it sho' helped too" (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:208). Interviews with other informants suggest that besides protection against the dangers associated with teething, pierced coins may also have been used to protect against illness in general. Cornelia Robinson, who was enslaved in

Alabama, remembered that the enslaved children wore pennies around their necks to "help [them] not git sick" (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:332). While wearing pierced coins was practiced by both adults and children, the WPA interviews suggest that children typically wore the coins around their necks, while adults tended to wear the coins on their ankles.

Archaeologically, pierced coins have been found at a number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sites associated with enslaved people (Singleton 1995:131).[177] One interesting example was excavated at a quarter site at Poplar Forest, a plantation in Bedford County, Virginia (Lee 2011:113). Of the four pierced coins found there, one of the coins, a 1780s Spanish half real, "is heavily worn and bears two deep impressions that some dental experts have identified as probably teeth marks" (Lee 2011:113). The teeth marks are significant because they indicate that the wearer (probably a teething child) actually utilized the coin as a device to physically soothe their gums. Descriptions from the WPA interviews are unclear as to whether the coin (as a teething charm) was meant to be actively chewed on or whether it simply acted as a kind of passive mechanism (such as amber teething necklaces today). Because the coin was both pierced and had teeth marks, it is likely that the coin was primarily used to aid in teething. However, because of the coin's alternate use as a protective charm, the coin may have been utilized for both reasons, thereby "simultaneously maintaining well-being in two ways" (Lee 2011:114).

Multiple pierced coins were also found at Freedman's Cemetery, in Dallas, Texas (Davidson 2004). Although the burials date to after emancipation (1869-1907) they still offer interesting details regarding the use and wear of pierced coins. Fifteen burials contained pierced

[177] Examples include the Hermitage in Tennessee, Mount Calvert in Maryland, and Montpelier in Virginia, among many others.

coins, all coins were Liberty Seated Dimes or Half Dimes, and all were recovered at either the individual's neck or ankle (Davidson 2004:23). Of the fifteen burials, ten (or two-thirds) were subadults, or children, who died when they were two years old or younger. Four of the ten individuals were ascertained to be female children, and six were unable to be ascertained. In all ten of the child burials, the pierced coins were recovered at the individual's neck, suggesting that the coin was worn as a necklace.[178] Additionally, the pierced coins in three of the five adult burials were also recovered at the individual's neck – in the other two burials, the coins were recovered at the left ankle of both individuals (Davidson 2004:24).

Findings from the Freedman's Cemetery confirm the idea that young children only wore pierced coins around their necks, rather than their ankles. Adults wore the coins both around their necks and ankles. It is interesting that both coins that were recovered at the ankle were specifically found on the left ankle of the individual. In the WPA interview of Doc Quinn, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi, he states that as a preventative against "being tricked or hoo-dooed, punch a hole through a dime, insert a string through the hole, and tie it around the left ankle" (FWP Vol. 2 Arkansas Part 6 1936:7). It is unclear whether there was an association between dimes (as opposed to other kinds of coins) and the left ankle, but for both burials with coins recovered at the ankle, the specific coin was a Liberty Seated Dime.

Charms to Ease Teething

Other teething charms remembered by formerly enslaved individuals included a number of different kinds of necklaces.[179] Easter Huff, who was enslaved in Georgia, said that they

[178] Four of the subadult burials also contained multiple kinds of glass beads, which may have been utilized as charms for protection or possibly for teething (Davidson 2004:24,31; Lee 2011:111-112).
[179] See Puckett 1926:345-347 for more examples collected by folklorists.

"strung hollow treadsass (treadsalve) roots on strings lak necklaces and hung 'em 'round de babies' necks to make 'em teethe easy (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:250). Willis Easter, who was formerly enslaved in Texas, recalled his mother always tying a leather string around the babies' necks when they were teething, to make them have an easy time. He also said that she used a dry frog or a piece of nutmeg, as well (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:3). Possibly, the frog or the nutmeg were also tied around the baby's neck, but it is unclear how they exactly were utilized. In Alabama, Lucindia Washington said that in order to make the babies "teethe easy," nine little black bugs were tied up in rags around their necks (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:410). Amanda McCray, who was enslaved in Florida, told her interviewer that "children wore moles feet and pearl buttons around their necks to insure [sic] easy teething" (FWP Vol. 3 Florida 1936:213).[180] Wayman Williams, who was formerly enslaved in Texas, said that a buzzard's claw tied around the baby's neck made teething easy (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4 1936:184).[181]

Aleck Trimble was enslaved as a child in Texas. His young granddaughter was present during his interview, and he showed the interviewer the charm he had put around her neck to help her with teething. The charm was made of horsehair, rolled up in a cloth. Aleck said that this charm was also good for stomach and bowel trouble and would keep a fever away as well. He said, "I gwine to let her wear it 'till she finish cuttin' her teef. I jis' put dat rag 'roun it to keep it from stickin' her. You kin see how healthy she is" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4 1936:112). Aleck Trimble's interview demonstrates how cultural knowledge – the knowledge of how to

[180] The practice of tying mole's feet around a teething baby's neck was considered a widespread belief. Puckett claims that the association between moles and teeth troubles may have a probable European origin, because folk beliefs in England include "a little bag with mole's feet in it to cure toothache and a moleskin about the neck to assist teething" (1926:345-346).
[181] Laurie Wilkie notes, "Each of these magico-medical charms would leave an archaeological trace, although in the context of a midden assemblage, their exact use may not be readily apparent" (1997:87).

make charms or herbal remedies – is passed down through generations. Besides a horsehair charm, he also said that rabbit brain applied directly to the child's gums was another remedy for teething. Other herbal remedies for teething included elderberry tea and camphor (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:217; FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:51). Additionally, turpentine and castor oil were rubbed on the babies' gums to help them "teethe easier" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:85).

Charms and Herbs to Protect Against Illness

Enslaved children were also given charms and specific herbs to protect against general illness. However, in many of the WPA interviews, it is unclear whether it an enslaved parent or grandparent administering the medicine or the enslaver. During the nineteenth century, many people utilized herbal or traditional medicine, so it is sometimes difficult to ascertain who was giving the children medicine, or whether the medicine was being given to the children on the orders of someone other than their parents or caregivers. Therefore, I have attempted to utilize examples where it is clear that the herbal charm or medicine is coming from an enslaved person. I will note any examples that are ambiguous or where the enslaver is involved.

Asafoedita sacks are the most frequently stated example of an herbal charm or remedy worn by enslaved children. Commonly referred to as asafetida or assifidity sacks in the WPA interviews, the name comes from the *Ferula Asafoedita* plant, the strong-smelling resin of which was stuffed into small bags and worn around children's necks. Formerly enslaved individuals stated that the asafetida sacks were meant to keep off disease or sickness in general. Others said that the sacks protected against specific illnesses, such as measles, chickenpox, whooping cough,

influenza, and smallpox.[182] Stephen McCray, who was enslaved as a child in Alabama, said they wore "asafetida or onion" around their necks, "to keep of diseases" (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:208). Possibly, onions were used when asafoedita was unavailable because onions are also known to have an extremely pungent odor, similar to asafoetida gum.[183] Sometimes the asafetida was combined with other plants or herbs, potentially to make it more effective. Cheney Cross, who was also enslaved in Alabama, said that when the children caught any kind of sickness or disease, they were made to eat asafoetida and garlic, as well as wear it around their necks (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:98). Elisha Doc Garey was enslaved in Georgia and remembered drinking asafetida and pinetop tea as a child (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:7). Although asafoetida was typically worn in a sack around the neck, Cheney Cross and Elisha Doc Garey's interviews indicate that it was consumed in multiple forms, such as in combination with garlic (possibly as a paste of some kind?) or in combination with pine tops (another term for pine needles) in a tea.

Interviews demonstrate that in general, the asafetida sacks were a medicinal charm administered by someone in the enslaved community – a mother, a grandmother, or some of the elders. Fewer interviews mention that on certain plantations or farms, it was the enslaver and/or his wife who made the enslaved children wear the asafetida sacks. However, some enslavers were extremely against the use of asafetida sacks. Prince Johnson, who was formerly enslaved in Mississippi, said that his enslaver, whom he referred to as "Old Mis,'" wouldn't stand for such things as voodoo and "ha'nts" (ghosts). "When she 'spected us once a week, you better not have no charm 'roun yo'neck neither. She wouldn' even 'low us wear a bag o' asfittidy. Most' folks

[182] See Susan McIntosh (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3 1936:85); Ann Hawthorne (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 2 1936:123); Cheney Cross, and Angie Garrett (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:98; 135) for examples.
[183] In some parts of Europe asafoetida carried in the pocket acted as a preventative for smallpox, and sliced onions were put in sick rooms to absorb infections (Puckett 1926:392).

b'lieved dat would keep off sickness. She called such as dat superstition. She say us was 'lightened Christian Presbyterians, an' as such us mus' conduc' ourse'fs" (FWP Vol. 9 Mississippi 1936:79). Prince's enslaver associated asafetida sacks with voodoo or haints, which she clearly believed were un-Christian. He implied that some members of the enslaved community may have worn charms but took them off before their enslaver's weekly inspections. In this way, continuing to wear charms that were explicitly forbidden was a way of resisting the oppressor.

Many other herbal remedies given to children were consumed, rather than worn.[184] Enslaved children were often given herbs that would treat illnesses common to children, such as worms. Children living on plantations or farms were particularly susceptible to intestinal worms such as hookworm because hookworm infections are primarily transmitted by walking barefoot on soil that has been contaminated. Enslaved children did not receive shoes until they were around twelve to fourteen years old, and therefore walked around completely barefoot before that time. Additionally, the soil on plantations or farms may have been contaminated by free-roaming animals like pigs or chickens eating human feces from unsanitary privies and spreading the hookworm eggs through their own feces. (Coelho and McGuire 2000:236). The soil may also have been contaminated by toddlers or young children already infected with hookworm defecating outdoors. "Slave infants and children, diaper-less and barefoot, wearing only shirts, defecated randomly. Diarrhea made the situation even more favorable to the transmission of numerous geohelminths that spread widely among slave children during the warmer months of the South" (Coelho and McGuire 2000:235). Due to these conditions, intestinal worms such as

[184] There are a number of teas made from herbs that were used by both children and adults in the enslaved community, but this section only discusses herbal remedies for children, specifically.

hookworms were a constant problem for enslaved children. Enslavers did not understand that forcing the children to go barefoot only increased the transmission and spread of the parasites.

Esther Green, who was enslaved as a girl in Mississippi, said that her mother gave them tea made from the root of the chinaberry tree. “It made good tea for worms, but it was to be used only at certain times of the moon. My ma also used Jerusalem Oak seed for worms” (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:167). Henry Barnes was enslaved in Alabama, and he said that the children were given Jerusalem Oak candy that was full of seeds in order to rid them of worms (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:20). Charles Hayes was also enslaved in Alabama and described how the candy was made from Jerusalem weed cooked with molasses and then given to the enslaved children to cure them of worms. They would also boil the root into a tea, for the same purpose (FWP Vol. 1 Alabama 1936:174).

Enslaved parents, grandparents, and other caregivers utilized religious or spiritual charms in conjunction with traditional medicine in order to keep their children healthy and safe, both physically and spiritually. Charms such as pierced coins had multiple qualities – they aided with the difficulties of teething in babies but also protected babies, children, and adults from harm by conjure. Herbal medicines such as asafetida were traditionally utilized in the form of charms and were worn in small sacks around the children’s necks, but asafetida was also eaten, sometimes in combination with other herbs, like garlic. Similarly, the root of the chinaberry tree was made into a tea to cure children of intestinal worms, but it could also be worn, for a different purpose. Rosa Washington, who was enslaved in Texas, said that when she was a child, she was able to see ghosts. They scared her, so her mother gave her a necklace of chinaberry beads to “keep her well” (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 4 1936:137). The chinaberry beads protected her from the ghosts or spirits that may have meant her harm. Different parts of the same tree (roots and berries) were

utilized for entirely different purposes that resulted in protection of some sort – protection from infectious disease and protection from spiritual harm.

The use of charms, herbs, and medicines to both heal and protect children in the enslaved community represents the love that enslaved parents, grandparents, and fictive kin had for the children. The enslaved community preserved their culture by sharing various practices with their children or grandchildren, who then utilized and passed on that same knowledge. Harriet Collins was born after emancipation, but she recalled how her mother taught her about charms and herbal remedies. "Dere been some queer things white folks can't understand. Dere am folkses can see de spirits, but I can't. My mammy learned me a lots of doctorin', what she larnt from old folkses from Africy, and some de Indians larnt her" (FWP Vol. 16 Texas Part 1 1936:245).

Harriet noted how these beliefs and traditions were distinct and separate from the beliefs of white people, as well as how they were shared and passed down. The practices that Harriet's mother taught her could be traced to enslaved individuals who were kidnapped and brought over from Africa. The traditions could also be connected to certain Native American practices, as they had also taught Harriet's mother. The knowledge of charms and herbal medicine passed down from generation to generation demonstrates the importance of culture to the formation of identity and the creation of resilience, all of which were essential to a child's survival under the institution of American chattel slavery.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: Folktales and Oral Histories

The purpose of this section is to discuss how folktales and oral histories functioned as methods to preserve both culture and a childhood. Just as there an innumerable number of games that enslaved children played, there are quite a lot of folktales associated with the enslaved

community. I cannot discuss each and every one of these tales, though I will address some of the recurring characters and the potential meanings or lessons present in the stories.[185]

Folktales are a form of intangible cultural heritage. They may have influenced the way that enslaved children behaved or understood their own identities. They also may have simply functioned as fun or scary stories, meant to elicit feelings of excitement or joy from both the storytellers and the children as their audience. They may have served both purposes. However, the primary purpose of including a discussion of folktales and oral history in this chapter is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the enslaved community made an intentional effort to provide a semblance of a childhood to their children through storytelling and the lessons taught within those stories. Formerly enslaved people, when recollecting or describing their childhoods, mention stories or storytelling far too often for the traditions to be insignificant. Whether it was the stories themselves, the time spent with their families, or a combination of both, storytelling seems to have been an important childhood memory for many formerly enslaved individuals.

Narratives and interviews very often contain descriptions of how the children would spend their evenings with their parents or grandparents, who told them folktales, stories about their lives before enslavement, or stories about their ancestors who had passed on. For example, Matilda Poe, who was enslaved in Oklahoma, recalled that her grandmother told the children ghost stories after supper (FWP Vol. 13 Oklahoma 1936:48). Stories, including folktales and oral histories, were another way of preserving and sharing cultural knowledge. The act of storytelling

[185] There is an immense amount of literature regarding African American folktales, many of which may be traced to the enslaved community. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, Black folklorists J. Mason Brewer and Zora Neale Hurston collected a great number of tales from formerly enslaved individuals. For more information see Brewer (1968) and Hurston (1990).

was also incredibly important because it was done during one of the only times of the day (or evening) that enslaved families were able to spend together. Enslaved children typically did not see their parents during the day, as their parents were either working in the fields, the enslaver's house, or as tradesmen on another part of the plantation. Children who were fortunate enough to have a grandparent watching them during the day may have been able to hear stories more frequently than children in other circumstances, whose grandparents may have continued to work during the day or who had been sold or passed away. Therefore, evenings (and perhaps one day of the weekend) were generally the only times that enslaved families were able to spend together.

Oral Histories

"At the end of the day, while in their own cabins, children learned about their culture from older Africans or their descendants, who passed recollections from one generation to another keeping with their oral tradition" (King 2011:175). The WPA interviews were recorded in the late 1930s, meaning that all of the formerly enslaved informants would have been born after around 1840, at the earliest. The transatlantic slave trade ended in 1808, so it is likely that many enslaved children learned about Africa from grandparents or great-grandparents who were born there and had clear memories of it. Other enslaved children learned about their African ancestry from their mothers or fathers, who learned about it from their parents or grandparents. "These stories…served not merely to transmit values and attitudes to each new generation but, by linking children to their ancestors, helped cement family ties" (Webber 1978:163). By teaching children about their ancestry, enslaved adults helped the children to recognize that they had a distinct identity, a shared culture, and a history. Enslaved children learned that slavery was not natural or inevitable, and this helped to build resistance against their enslavers.

In his narrative, Charles Ball described his experiences with his grandfather, who had been captured in Africa and sold as a slave in Calvert County, Maryland in 1730 (Ball 1837:15). Ball was sold away from his mother and siblings at around the age of four or five years old. Soon after, his father self-emancipated in order to avoid being sold further south. "After the flight of my father, my grandfather was the only person left in Maryland, with whom I could claim kindred. He was at that time an old man, as he himself said, nearly eighty years of age, and he manifested towards me all the fondness which a person so far advanced in life could be expected to feel for a child" (Ball 1837:21). Ball's enslaver allowed his grandfather to visit him as often as he wanted and would sometimes allow him to bring the young Charles home to his cabin. There, his grandfather taught him about religion and about his life as a warrior in Africa.

Charles Ball's childhood was deeply influenced by his relationship with his grandfather and the stories he told about Africa, as evidenced by his thoughts when he was first sold South as an adult. He was separated from his wife and children and believed that he would never see them again. During one of the most desolate times of his life, Ball was thinking of his grandfather "and the long nights [he] had passed with him, listening to his narratives of the scenes through which he had passed in Africa" (Ball 1837:38-39). His memories of his grandfather's storytelling provided a source of both strength and comfort to him, and in some way, helped him to survive the ordeal of being separated from his family. The knowledge that he was a person with a family and a history served as a buffer against the efforts of enslavers who sought to break his spirit.

Raw Head and Bloody Bones

In the WPA interviews, the only folktale or story that is mentioned directly in relation to childhood is that of Raw Head and Bloody Bones. This is perhaps due to the fact that other tales, such as the trickster animal tales or tales of John or Jack, would be considered offensive to the

white interviewers. “Although practically every intensive study of these cultural elements reveals much antiwhite sentiment, rarely does this attitude surface in the WPA collection. Many of the secular songs are lullabies or hunting songs; the white-hating trickster slave Jack almost never appears in the tales” (Blassingame 1975:484). Blassingame notes that while Black folklorist J. Mason Brewer collected tales during the same time period from the same class of informant, his stories “have a relatively high antiwhite content and many Jack or John stories,” indicating that the lack of folktales in the WPA collection was largely due to the racial dynamic between the white interviewers and Black informants. The formerly enslaved informants were “carefully editing what they told whites” (Blassingame 1975:484).

There is also one other reason as to why these specific folktales may be missing from the WPA interviews. White Federal Writers Project editors and journalists were purposefully censoring certain interviews that they believed had a “racial bias” which they felt presented an “inaccurate” version of history (Stewart 2016:139-142). In reality, there is no reason to believe that the interviews which were later censored were inaccurate – they simply told the truth, which depicted white enslavers in an unflattering light. The numerous mentions of Raw Head and Bloody Bones may therefore be due to the fact that it had no antiwhite sentiment and thus was considered to be innocuous enough to tell the white interviewers.

The origins of Raw Head and Bloody Bones can be traced to sixteenth-century England (Taylor 1956:114). Though the name implies two separate entities, references to Raw Head and Bloody Bones both in England and in the Southern United States indicate that it was one male creature and was viewed in the same way as the boogeyman. There are various descriptions of what the creature was supposed to look like – Susan McIntosh, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, “just thought he was a skelerpin, with no meat on him” (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 3

1936:85). Dosia Harris, who was also enslaved in Georgia, described him as a skinned cow's head. "Old folks used to ax us: 'Has you seed Raw Head and Bloody Bones?' Us would run over one 'nother tryin' to git dar fust to see him, and it allus turned out to be jus' a old skint up cow head. Den in de nighttime us would have wild dreams 'bout dem old skint cow heads" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:111).

In both England and the Southern U.S., Raw Head and Bloody Bones was typically a scary story or fearsome entity used by parents or nurses when threatening children who were misbehaving (Taylor 1956:175). The folktale may have been brought to the Southern United States by white enslavers from England, or who had English ancestry. Isaac Johnson, who was formerly enslaved in North Carolina, remembered "Marster would tell de children 'bout Raw Head and Bloody Bones an' other things to skeer us" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:18). Both enslavers and enslaved parents used Raw Head and Bloody Bones as a way to scare the enslaved children into good behavior. Also enslaved as a child in North Carolina, Jane Lassiter said that her mother told her a lot about Raw Head and Bloody Bones, "an' when I done mean, she say, 'Better not do dat any more Raw Head an' Bloody Bones gwine ter git yo'" (FWP Vol. 11 North Carolina Part 2 1936:40).

Raw Head and Bloody Bones was also a device that was used in an attempt to make children go to sleep. Jefferson Franklin Henry was formerly enslaved in Georgia and recalled "Grown folks used to scare chillun 'bout Raw Head and Bloody Bones, but that was mostly to make chillum git still and quiet at night" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 2 1936:189). Other interviews confirmed this. When asked specifically about it by her interviewer, Mary Colbert, who was enslaved in Georgia, said "Honey, there is no use to ask me about Raw Head and Bloody Bones. When folks started talking about that, I always left the room. It is a shame how

folks do frighten children trying to make them get quiet and go to sleep" (FWP Vol. 4 Georgia Part 1 1936:222). References to Raw Head and Bloody Bones from the WPA interviews indicate that it was not a creature that children told stories about to other children, rather, it was a fictional boogeyman-type monster that adults used to threaten young children into obedience.

Animal Tales: Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, Brer Bear, and Others

Animal tales told by enslaved adults to children often revolved around trickster characters, the most famous of which is Brer Rabbit. In many of the tales, he is accompanied by the enemy characters of Brer Fox, Brer Bear, and Brer Wolf, each of whom had specific personalities. Brer Fox was sly, Brer Bear was stupid, and Brer wolf was powerful (Bontemps 1959:ix). These stories originated from African folktales, brought over to the Southern United States by enslaved Africans (Bontemps 1959:viiii). Over time, the folktales became African American – they were still trickster tales with their roots in African folktales, but their characters and meanings had changed and evolved in order to better fit the storytellers, audiences, and environments in which they were told.

Brer Rabbit was the hero of these tales. He was smaller than the other animals, but he was also smarter. "He became in their stories by turn a practical joker, a braggart, a wit, a glutton, a lady's man, and a trickster. But his essential characteristic was his ability to get the better of bigger and stronger animals. To the slave in his condition the theme of weakness overcoming strength through cunning proved endlessly fascinating" (Bontemps 1959:ix). Brer Rabbit was the underdog who always managed to win. However, Brer Rabbit was more than just a rabbit who outwits his larger and stronger enemies. The stories about him were allegorical and contained deeper meanings. Brer Rabbit symbolized the enslaved individual, and his enemies were the white enslavers. "Whenever the rabbit succeeded in proving himself smarter than

another animal the slave rejoiced secretly, imagining himself smarter than his master" (Brewer 1968:4).

In telling enslaved children these tales, the enslaved storyteller was demonstrating to them the moral ways in which they might overcome their enslaver. The tales were "a distillation of folk wisdom and were used as an instructional device to teach young slaves how to survive" (Blassingame 1979:127). Enslaved children, being the smallest and most powerless individuals on the plantation, may have recognized themselves in the character of Brer Rabbit. The children listening to these stories may have felt a sense of victory when Brer Rabbit outsmarted one of his many enemies. They may have been comforted by the idea that it was possible for a small hero to overcome his larger oppressor.

Additionally, in a more practical sense, by presenting these tales using animal characters, enslaved adults were ensuring that the young children who heard them (and who would most likely repeat them) would not get into trouble should the enslaver or the enslaver's children hear these stories. The enslaved community knew the true meanings behind these characters, but the white people did not. It was important for the enslaved children to both hear and understand the Brer Rabbit stories. "Folktales furnish models of behavior and satisfy the need for alternatives through dreams" (King 2011:176). The folktales functioned to entertain young children while also teaching them important lessons about values and morals. In identifying with Brer Rabbit, the children could better relate to one another and to other members of the enslaved community, resulting in solidarity.

John or Jack Tales

John or Jack tales were another category of folktales told within the enslaved community. These tales were much more explicit and less allegorical than the animal tales. John (or Jack)

was an enslaved man who lived on a plantation and whose enemies were the enslaver (called Ole Master) and his wife (called Old Miss), as well as slave "patterollers," and sometimes the devil (Bontemps 1959:x). While many scholars assert that these tales were told during enslavement, others claim that the folk figures of John or Jack were created after emancipation, to replace the character of Brer Rabbit (Brewer 1968:28). According to Zora Neale Hurston, John, also referred to as High John de Conquer, had previously existed on the plantation "as the laugh provoking Brer Rabbit. So Old Massa and Old Miss and their young ones laughed with and at Brer Rabbit and wished him well. And all the time, there was High John de Conquer playing his tricks of making a way out of no-way" (Hurston 1959:95). This was just another way that the trickster was able to outwit his oppressors – John had always existed right under the noses of the enslavers, disguised in the form of Brer Rabbit.

In the folktales, sometimes called "John and the Old Master" stories, John was originally depicted as a trickster, and much like Brer Rabbit, was able to outsmart his oppressors. However, John was slightly different in that he was an enslaved man, meant to represent those who told and listened to his stories. And unlike Brer Rabbit, John was not always the constant victor. "He did not always succeed, but the happy ending was when he avoided a whipping or, better still, obtained his freedom. In the course of the tales the story tellers poked as much fun at themselves as they did at their masters, but pretentiousness was unfailingly exposed" (Bontemps 1959:x). Some of the situations described in the "John and Old Master" stories were not very far-fetched and could have been encountered by enslaved people in their daily lives. Often, they involved direct conflict and confrontation with the enslaver. Sometimes, the conflict was the fault of the enslaver, who attempted to trick John. At other times, John was the one responsible for the conflict. John was also capable of pulling tricks on his fellow enslaved people. "John was, in

other words, a multidimensional character, thought to be the possessor of the same strengths and vulnerabilities to which every man is subject" (Dickson 1974:422). John was a character that enslaved people could immediately identify with, as he was one of them, and experienced similar situations.

Folklorist John Roberts speculated that the invention of John as a folk hero signaled that, at a certain point, enslaved African Americans needed to redefine their conception of a folk hero "to maintain the behaviors associated with this character as a symbol of their differential identity and a model of behavior within their community" (Roberts 1989:45). John may have been created as a figure that the community could better-identify with, and his dealings with his enslaver were often humorous and entertaining, rather than containing lessons about morals or values, as the Brer Rabbit stories often did. Additionally, John's stories were invented by African Americans – individuals who were born in the U.S. and enslaved here. The Brer Rabbit stories have their roots in African animal trickster tales, but John's stories are different. While John continued to utilize the same methods that Brer Rabbit did to outsmart his enemies, the meanings and tone of the stories were different because John was a direct representation of the enslaved community who faced the same problems that they did.

John was meant to represent the everyman, but he was also very distinctly a folk hero. His stories allowed enslaved people to directly express how they felt about their enslavers and about the institution of slavery. Hurston wrote that the sign of John was a laugh, and his singing-symbol was a drumbeat. "It was sure to be heard when and where the work was the hardest, and the lot the most cruel. It helped the slaves endure. They knew that something better was coming. So they laughed in the face of things and sang, "I'm so glad! Trouble don't last always," and the white people who heard them were struck dumb that they could laugh. In an outside way, this

was Old Massa's fun, so what was Old Cuffy laughing for?" (Hurston 1959:94). As Hurston wrote, the ability for the enslaved people to laugh upset and confused the enslavers. In a way, the laughter subverted their power over the enslaved people. John's stories were outlets for storytellers and listeners to express their anger and contempt towards enslavers. They could laugh at their enslaver's mistakes and ridiculousness. They could inject their own experiences into the stories and have John do what they wished they themselves could have done. Ultimately, John's stories were a method of survival.[186]

The Purpose of Folktales

Within the enslaved community, folktales served a variety of purposes. First, they were a means of gathering together and bonding – whether with one's own family or with the larger quarter community. Second, folktales fulfilled people's need to creatively address situations in their own lives which they felt they had very little or no control over. "By objectifying the conditions of his life in the folk tales, the slave was in a better position to cope with them" (Blassingame 1979:129). In this way, folktales acted as a form of both individual and group therapy. Storytellers may have coped with their own feelings by creating new stories or changing old ones, and listeners may have related to them. Third, folktales were utilized as tools specifically for teaching young children about important lessons and values. In the tales of Brer Rabbit, young enslaved children were able to recognize that there were always way for those who were smaller and weaker to overcome large and powerful enemies. By seeing themselves in the character of Brer Rabbit, the children may have gained self-esteem or self-confidence as well

[186] Because these stories were so explicit in their meanings, the John tales were never told in the presence of white people. Therefore, it is probable that only older enslaved children who were mature enough to understand that they could not repeat certain things in front of the enslaver, his family, or the overseer, may have been told the John stories. The risk of a young child repeating the stories might be too great.

as the ability to cope with enslavement. As a form of intangible cultural heritage, folklore aided in the preservation and creation of a shared cultural for enslaved people in the Southern United States.

Conclusion

Due to their status, enslaved children were exposed to a wide range of awful and distressing situations and circumstances that deeply impacted how they were treated and their experience of childhood. However, narratives and interviews of formerly enslaved individuals indicate that many people did experience aspects of childhood, to a certain extent. By this I mean that as children, people recall that they were treated in a manner appropriate to that stage of life. Any kind of childhood under enslavement was largely due to the efforts of enslaved parents and other members of the enslaved community who sought to provide children with some measure of joy. Many of these efforts revolved around numerous cultural forms, including toys and games, religious traditions and herbal knowledge, and folktales. These cultural forms played a large part in the creation of enslaved childhoods, but the main driver was love for family and community. In the memories of formerly enslaved people, the material culture and intangible cultural heritage they describe come second to the relationships and feelings that they associate with those things.

Sabe Rutledge was formerly enslaved in South Carolina. He told his FWP interviewer about his experience of enslavement as a young boy, sharing a story about Brer Rabbit. However, the emphasis of his story was not on the folktale, but on the circumstances regarding how he heard the tale. After supper, Sabe and his three siblings had to stay up late to continue working with their mother and father. They would light a fire in the fireplace and his mother would spin while the four children picked seeds out of the cotton. They worked until ten o'clock at night and then had to get up early the next morning, so his mother and father told them stories

to keep their eyes open. Sabe told his interviewer a short story about Brer Rabbit and Brer Partridge, and immediately after began talking about the situation in which the story was told. "When Father and Mudder tell them story we chillum noddin'! Some cackle out and all jump up and go back to picking out cotton seed!" (FWP Vol. 14 South Carolina Part 4 1936:67-69).

Sabe Rutledge's story demonstrates the role that culture – in this specific case, intangible cultural heritage – played in the formation and experience of enslaved childhoods. His interview also reveals that it was not the Brer Rabbit story that was most memorable or important to him, but the way that he was told the story. He was told the story by his mother and his father while he sat in front of the fireplace with his siblings. Family, and the actions of enslaved parents, were crucial to that memory and the genuine happiness that he described while sharing it. However, the various cultural forms that are often discussed are evidence of a separate and unique culture. According to Blassingame, "Having a distinctive culture helped the slaves to develop a strong sense of group solidarity" (1979:147). Therefore, material culture and intangible cultural heritage are integral to the creation of group solidarity, which was the primary method of survival for enslaved individuals. Ultimately, by intentionally creating and preserving a childhood for enslaved children, enslaved adults provided them with a cultural identity that built resilience and ensured their survival as individuals.

Conclusion

Imagine that you are an archaeologist excavating the quarters for enslaved people at a 19th century plantation site in Central Virginia. As you dig, you uncover a number of different artifacts. First, you find a white clay tobacco-pipe stem and you wonder about the last person who smoked from it. Next, you come across an iron fishhook and you think about who used it and what kinds of fish that they caught with it. Finally, you find a cut iron nail and envision the nailer, cutting countless nails in a stifling forge each day. Who did you imagine? Who was the pipe smoker? The fisher? The nailer? Would you be surprised to learn that the owner of the pipe was a woman, or that the last person to use that fishhook was an eight-year-old girl? Did an eleven-year-old boy immediately come to mind when you thought about the nailer in the forge? The most common answers to these questions would probably be "yes, yes, and no." It is likely that, for each scenario, the individual that you pictured in your mind was a man.

Archaeologists have a tendency to automatically associate general artifacts with men or adult male activities. Of course, artifacts that are culturally considered feminine or childish are attributed to women and children, respectively. However, the majority of artifacts encountered in the archaeological record are not gendered or associated with any specific age group. Why then, do archaeologists assume that these artifacts necessarily represent the presence of men? Why does the field require a higher standard of evidence when it is suggested that a child, rather than a man, might be associated with an artifact? I attempted to find diagnostic artifacts related to enslaved children before realizing that it is an unnecessary endeavor. If archaeologists were to treat evidence of children in the same way that they treat evidence of men, there would be no need to identify artifacts that are specifically or exclusively related to children. In other words, if men are assumed to have interacted with a wide range of artifacts, why cannot the same be true

for children? It is true that men smoked pipes, men fished, and men forged nails. But archaeologists must acknowledge that women and children did these things as well, and that their presence becomes less visible or even invisible when they are not seriously considered as the users or creators of such items.

Men are treated as intrinsic cultural actors – they are the standard or the norm. Therefore, women and children become secondary. This is a reflection of the way many societies, including the United States, operate today. Gender norms in the past and in the present affect the way that archaeologists understand and interpret archaeological artifacts and sites. This is inevitable. However, what I am suggesting here is for archaeologists to recognize this bias or way of thinking, push past initial assumptions, and consider all of the individuals who may have interacted with the artifacts – people including women, children, and the elderly, among others. Archaeologists have a responsibility to ensure that the lives of those who are often passed over or dismissed are represented. This dissertation focuses on the most marginalized members of an already marginalized population – enslaved children. Therefore, the following discussion centers on children rather than on other marginalized groups within the enslaved population.

In the dissertation, I aim to demonstrate why the archaeological study of enslaved children is fundamental for understanding the institution of American slavery at large. Additionally, I provide multiple explanations as to why enslaved children have typically either been ignored or misrepresented in interpretations of archaeological sites of enslavement, and how this phenomenon may be corrected. My research addresses the American public's widely held misconceptions regarding the realities of a childhood in enslavement and how lies regarding enslaved children have been perpetuated historically, resulting in a general ignorance of the history of American chattel slavery and its continuous impact on the country. Next, my

dissertation provides archaeologists with a number of different methods by which to identify the presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record and the importance of doing so. Ultimately, my dissertation project is an endeavor to properly recognize a group of individuals who have been largely ignored or dismissed as insignificant within the field of historical archaeology.

First, a number of twentieth-century historians asserted that enslaved children were rarely, if ever, separated from their parents and sold within the domestic slave trade (Phillips 1918; Fogel and Engerman 1974; Genovese 1974). These conclusions were either intentional falsehoods rooted in Lost Cause propaganda or findings based off of skewed data sets and resulted in the widespread belief that enslaved children were hardly ever sold and therefore, did not necessarily experience the cruelties of enslavement. Historian Michael Tadman disproved these claims by demonstrating that in actuality, enslaved children constituted a significant portion of the interregional slave trade, with children from infancy to fourteen years old sold without either parent making up nearly one-quarter of those sold within the trade between 1830 and 1850 (1996:151).

Enslaved children were "hardly less than a staple in the trade" (Bancroft 1996:208). In other words, enslaved children were not always purchased in combination with their mothers – many children were deliberately separated from their mothers in order to satisfy the specific demand for children in the market, sold singly or in groups with other children. However, the falsehoods promoted by earlier historians have seemingly persisted in the American public's current understanding of slavery, and the idea that children were never separated from their parents or sold somehow implies that because of this, they experienced normal childhoods which were not heavily affected by enslavement. Although this has been disproven numerous times, the

damage inflicted by the lies of historians in the twentieth century is immense, resulting in the belief that enslaved children were treated as ordinary children and that they did not do work or contribute to their families, their enslavers, and the economy in general. Archaeologists have perceived them as they perceive children in general – "as unimportant and invisible" (Baxter 2008:172). This has led to their exclusion from the archaeological record.

Another reason as to why enslaved children are not adequately or accurately included in archaeological interpretations is due to the tendency to subconsciously conflate modern, Western ideologies regarding children and childhood onto children in the past. "Because our culture believes that childhood is biologically defined and thus universal, we also tend to assume that our cultural expectations of childhood can be readily applied to other societies" (Kamp 2001:3). However, childhood is not universal, and nineteenth-century ideas about children largely differed from current beliefs. Further, children in the nineteenth century were treated differently based on their class and status. The children of wealthy enslavers experienced childhood differently from the children of poor farmers, who would have been responsible for working on the farm alongside the adults starting at a young age. And these children, though required to work, were free, and therefore treated differently from children who were enslaved.

Children, in general, have been notoriously difficult to "find" archaeologically, due to the fact that children interact with their environment and with material culture in ways that adults find unpredictable or unexplainable (Kamp 2001; Baxter 2005, 2008). Enslaved children may be considered even more difficult to identify in the archaeological record due to their status as both children and as enslaved, which may have affected their relationships with material culture in ways that are not immediately obvious to archaeologists. Enslaved children may have utilized equipment and objects that are typically not associated with children at all, and a lack of

knowledge regarding this fact results in their exclusion from the archaeological study of American slavery. In order to correctly and sufficiently include enslaved children in archaeological interpretations, archaeologists must be aware that enslaved children experienced childhood differently from free children, as well as from children today. Furthermore, they must be thoroughly educated about the realities of slavery, including the extraordinary amount of labor that enslaved children were forced to complete each day, their roles within the enslaved community and on the plantation, and the various ways in which they resisted oppression. Numerous aspects of a childhood in enslavement may be identified through materials recovered archaeologically, allowing for the presence of enslaved children to be more evident.

In her discussion of the archaeology of childhood, Baxter claims that "the lived experiences of children may be investigated through a variety of evidence types," but in order to do so archaeologists must reconsider their preconceived notions about the archaeological record and invent new techniques and approaches (2008:172). Interpreting the presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record must be conducted in a way that acknowledges their identities as children with the status of enslaved. These two facets of their identities shaped their experiences. Gender is another aspect to consider, especially for older enslaved children. If enslaved adults were infantilized by enslavers and regarded as children, then how were enslaved children treated? How did they react? How did they survive? An archaeology focused on children requires one to think outside of the box and to ask new questions, which others may deem unorthodox or insignificant. In *Critical Historical Archaeology* (2010), Leone wrote about how he utilized his emotions to fuel his work, despite the fact that scholars and scientists are taught that emotions have no place in serious research. His emotions motivated his questions – "I have learned to use my emotional reaction: Call it to consciousness and let it be a guide, but not a

destructive one, rather a conscious one" (Leone 2010:16). I have learned to take this approach as well, and it has inspired many new questions and provided me with answers that ideology has covered up, hidden, and attempted to erase.

Emotions such as anger, shock, and despair have motivated many of the questions behind this dissertation. The dominant American ideology concerning slavery has been successful in presenting the peculiar institution as a mundane historical fact. It is discussed in a manner devoid of any genuine or strong emotions. It was certainly terrible, but it is dead, and therefore it does not matter. Slavery is often treated as an inappropriate topic of discussion. This pervasive attitude has made me feel increasingly angry and sometimes distraught, prompting me to search for the reasons behind its occurrence. One main reason, which I mentioned earlier, is that for a long time, the prominent and respected texts regarding the history of American slavery were rife with inaccuracies. They whitewashed slavery, painting it as less horrific than it really was. And because the authors of these texts were historians at elite institutions of higher education, most people believed what they wrote without question, and this information made its way to the general public and influenced opinions on slavery which are still held today.

For example, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974) by Eugene Genovese was considered one of the seminal texts on the history of American slavery for many years. The problem is that Genovese presented slavery as a paternalistic institution, dulling the violence inherent in and imperative to its existence. This made me angry. Of enslaved children, he wrote, "The southern slaveholders knew, too, that their slave children fared closer to the style of their own pampered children than to that of the children of nonslaveholders, who had to help their parents by doing rough work at early ages" (Genovese 2011:504). Genovese was comparing the conditions of enslaved children living in the antebellum South with child-laborers working in English cotton mills. Clearly, he

felt that enslaved children were treated better, even writing that young children under the age of ten were pleased by fieldwork. “In the fields, with little expected of them and with normal childish pride in doing the work of adults, they often enjoyed themselves” (Genovese 2011:503). He claimed that enslavers treated the children that they enslaved well. “The better impulses of the master class combined with a good deal of solid economic rationality to bring the slave children to maturity slowly and in a manner designed to guarantee their eventual maximum productivity” (Genovese 2011:504). But perhaps the most appalling statement from Genovese was that enslaved individuals had a “prolonged childhood,” when in fact many scholars of slavery argue that they had no childhood at all (2011:505). These lies, which won Genovese the Bancroft Prize from Columbia University in 1971, trickled out of academia and into the general public, where they influenced the opinions of many Americans.

I felt shocked when I pursued a line of questioning regarding how enslaved children were raised on larger plantations, particularly in the cotton-producing states of the Lower South. In reading through the interviews and narratives of formerly enslaved individuals, letters and plantation manuals of enslavers and overseers, and agricultural journals featuring advice from enslavers I realized that in the decades preceding the Civil War, enslaved children were raised in almost the exact same manner. Although many of these practices were more prevalent in the Lower South and Lowcountry, there is evidence that these techniques were employed on certain wealthy plantations in the Upper South. The recollections of formerly enslaved individuals, as well as the archival documents indicated that enslavers were adhering to a sort of standardized method of raising enslaved children *en masse* – either for sale on the market or for eventual labor on their own plantations. This was very shocking to me, because these documents were not very difficult to find. They were easily accessible to anybody interested in finding them, and yet

nobody was discussing it for what it was – a clearly identifiable set of practices, a protocol for raising enslaved children. Enslavers shared their advice on the topic both privately and publicly. They boasted about how their methods for raising enslaved children were the most economical or the most successful. An 1837 publication of *Farmers' Register* featured one South Carolina enslaver sharing his advice for rearing enslaved children. He wrote, "from nursing the plan I have laid down, I am confident that I raise more of them than where a different system is followed" (Breeden 1980:282). Enslavers writing in these agricultural journals and magazines frequently referred to enslaved children in the same manner that they would discuss livestock.

Across the Lower South and Lowcountry, enslavers dressed their enslaved children in the same clothing, built and allocated specific buildings for their care during the day, fed them the same diet, and even practiced the same method for feeding them. This method was so inhumane that I have never seen it printed in any publication or included in any private letters. It is only discussed in the reminiscences of formerly enslaved individuals. On countless plantations, enslaved children were fed from a trough like livestock. Utensils were typically not provided, and therefore the children were forced to eat with their hands or to improvise utensils out of oyster shells, hollowed out gourds, or wooden shingles. Many formerly enslaved individuals recalled the feeling of constant hunger and discussed how they would often have to fight off yard animals such as dogs or ducks, who would also attempt to eat from the trough. This method of feeding children was obviously the cheapest and most efficient from an economic standpoint, but it was also barbaric and sadistic. The enslavers viewed the children whom they enslaved as livestock and raised them in the same manner. That this practice was only discussed by formerly enslaved individuals and never mentioned by enslavers indicates that enslavers knew, on some level, that this treatment was too appalling and loathsome to admit in print.

The archival record demonstrates that enslavers had formulated the most efficient and economical methods for raising groups of enslaved children. Utilization of this protocol ensured the highest profit and enslavers readily shared their advice with one another, publicly and privately. This standardized protocol was practiced on plantations across the Lower South, and much of it was not a secret. American slavery created American capitalism. Enslavers were experts in the commodification of the human body – historian Walter Johnson described this as "turning people into products" (1999). Enslavers controlled the relations of production. They controlled the means of production, the mode of production, and the products themselves. When discussing the production of human beings for ultimate sale on the market, all of these things are the same thing – enslaved human beings. This revelation should sicken people. It should disgust people that this occurred on a massive scale across the South, but people do not know any of this because Americans are not taught about slavery and because we do not discuss slavery. This brings me to my final point.

The ultimate goal of this dissertation, of archaeologists, and of all scholars is to expose the current ideology at work in order to produce enlightenment and achieve emancipation from coercion, thereby allowing for real social change. The history of slavery in this country is masked by ideology. It is downplayed and dismissed, presented as something vague and unfortunate that was done to a nameless and faceless mass of people hundreds of years ago. It is presented this way on purpose. In this dissertation, I utilized the first-person testimonies of formerly enslaved individuals as much as possible. Each individual whom I have quoted experienced enslavement as a child. Their stories directly rebuke the idea that slavery was far in the past, or that it happened to unknowable individuals. Some of these stories are very emotional. People discussed their lives as enslaved children. They talked about their families, about pain

and sorrow, but also about joy and love. The narratives of formerly enslaved individuals are deeply moving and demonstrate that the lives of enslaved people were not one-dimensional, but multi-faceted and very human. It is impossible for someone to read these narratives and continue to view slavery as something inconsequential to Americans today. I believe that in order for people to truly understand what slavery meant, they must read the words and the emotions of those who survived it. Their emotional reactions will guide them to ask questions about the past and its impact on the present.

"The past is thought up, not dug up" (Leone 2010:167). If the ultimate goal is to unmask ideology in order to produce social change, the answers to the questions we ask in service to this purpose can be found through archaeology. "People's questions about their past, questions that can be addressed by historical archaeologists, are not about facts from bottles, tin cans, and broken dishes; they are about a legitimate past and are posed so that people can achieve and maintain self-respect – hope, in other words" (Leone 2010:49). Many archaeologists want the artifacts to speak for themselves, for the answers to be evident in the data. This is a very Western way of approaching archaeology. People give objects true meaning, and without people, many objects are meaningless. To unmask the ideology that claims enslaved children did not work or experience the brutalities of slavery or that they were unimportant, I consult the stories of those individuals who were there. They tell us that enslaved children began working as soon as they could walk and were forced to learn to adapt quickly. Enslaved children had many skills. They learned to sew from their mothers and to hunt from their fathers. They contributed to their family and community through subsistence activities and had an intimate knowledge of the natural environment. They played with toys and games They preserved the cultural traditions taught to them by enslaved elders. The experiences of enslaved children had material components which

survive in the archaeological record and which can then be interpreted. In this way, archaeology can serve to reveal the truths that ideology deliberately hides.

This dissertation seeks to unmask the popular ideology regarding American slavery, specifically the notion that enslaved children were unimportant and experienced relatively carefree childhoods. This idea implies that if enslaved children were able to enjoy their childhoods, then the institution of slavery was not so terrible. Revealing the truth that this ideology functions to conceal allows for a deeper understanding of American slavery and its impact on our society today. It is only by revealing the exploitation and violence of the past that people will be able to recognize and acknowledge the inequality that persists in the United States today and which can be traced directly to the institution of chattel slavery. Once this occurs, meaningful social change may be realized.

Contributions

This dissertation is the first archaeological study of childhood during enslavement. The formative years of an individual's life occur during the early stages of childhood and are the most fundamental stage of development in children. During the 19th century, the majority of enslaved adults in the United States also experienced childhood under enslavement. Therefore, learning more about the lives of enslaved children provides us with more information about American chattel slavery, how it functioned, and how childhood prepared enslaved individuals to survive enslavement as adults. I have discussed the reasons as to why a comprehensive study of this topic has never been conducted archaeologically. This dissertation project, then, is an endeavor to change the current ways of thinking about American slavery, archaeologically, in order to pursue more accurate interpretations of sites of enslavement.

This research has provided a number of different methods for identifying the potential presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record. In the Lower South and Lowcountry, purpose-built nursery buildings were constructed to house enslaved children and an enslaved nurse during the daytime, while enslaved parents worked in the fields or the enslaver's house. Accounts indicate that these nurseries were located in the quarters for enslaved people and were structurally similar to the other buildings in the quarters, making them difficult to identify archaeologically. An archaeological investigation of a positively identified nursery building has not yet occurred, though at least one attempt has been made (Averhart 2018). Therefore, it is possible that some nursery buildings have actually been excavated but were likely mistaken for enslaved housing. Nurseries have associated material culture such as iron cooking pots and implements that may help archaeologists to distinguish them from other structures in the quarters. A lack of artifacts that are commonly found in housing for enslaved individuals may also indicate the existence of a nursery building rather than a domicile. Possible excavations of nursery buildings in the future may yield further information regarding the daily lives of enslaved children on large plantations in the Lower South.

Another approach for identifying the presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record is through faunal and macrobotanical remains. Faunal remains are a material class that enslaved children were previously unassociated with. Enslaved children living on plantations or farms and who were not confined to a nursery building during the day likely had a higher degree of autonomy than the children who were raised under those conditions. My findings suggest that these enslaved children were capable of supplementing inadequate rations through small game hunting and fishing as well as through wild plant foraging, and should therefore be considered by archaeologists interpreting faunal or macrobotanical remains. The model that I created to predict

the likelihood of a child being able (both physically and in terms of access) to hunt or trap certain taxa may be applied to other archaeological sites, including those which are not sites of enslavement. In addition to contributing to the diets of their families and communities (thereby providing necessary nutrients such as extra protein and fiber), enslaved children sometimes traded their fish or game for other items or sold them for cash, engaging in the local economy. This finding provides another opportunity for enslaved children to be considered archaeologically. Artifacts like toys or jaw harps may not have been purchased by enslaved adults for their children. Instead, they may have been purchased by the children themselves.

Next, the exploitation of labor is a major aspect of a childhood under enslavement that is not often discussed. Most enslaved children were forced to work as soon as they could walk. Many of their jobs required physical strength or skill. Different jobs required children to interact with different types of material culture, meaning that certain artifacts would have been handled regularly by children who may then be included in their interpretation. Labor provides another avenue for archaeologists to consider how enslaved children may be represented in the archaeological record. What tasks were children responsible for completing? What are the material components of these jobs and how might they have played a role in the daily lives of enslaved children? By approaching artifacts in this manner, the ways in which children interacted with various artifacts and environments become readily apparent.

I have suggested that archaeologists employ critical fabulation to imagine the significance of certain artifacts which cannot be verified. Recollections of childhood from formerly enslaved individuals provide numerous situations and scenarios through which to identify the material culture that enslaved children utilized daily. This method may transform the meaning of an artifact. Utilitarian artifacts such as the iron handles of buckets or pails are

typically associated with the activities of enslaved adults or, more frequently, dismissed as ordinary finds. However, by applying critical fabulation, I discovered that buckets were more interesting than previously thought. Through the eyes of an enslaved child, a bucket represented many things, including stress and responsibility, as well as physical pain and injuries. A bucket also represented companionship or solidarity with other enslaved children. In the narratives, numerous individuals recalled the difficulty of hauling multiple pails of water from a well or a pump back to the enslaver's house, to the enslaved cook in the kitchen, or to the enslaved laborers in the fields. As a job generally assigned to young children under the age of ten years old, the full pails of water would have been quite heavy. Additionally, in many cases the distance between the water source and the place where the children delivered the water was quite far and the children were forced to travel a number of miles, making the trip to fetch and deliver water multiple times a day.

Formerly enslaved people described vivid memories detailing how the water was and how the buckets slapped against their legs as they carried them, so the time they reached their destination, much of the water had spilled out. They remembered walking for miles under the hot sun, and because enslaved children were not given shoes until they began formal work, their feet were unprotected. The children would often slice their bare feet open on sharp rocks and break their toenails to the quick while performing the duty of toting water. Besides causing pain, these injuries also made the children susceptible to infection. Even as elderly adults, some individuals recalled the names of their companions who did this work with them each day. They told interviewers how they were forced to carry a bucketful of water in each hand and one bucket on their heads, causing the hair on their heads to wear off in a ring-shape due to the weight and friction of the bucket and the frequency of the trips each day.

Through the use of the narratives combined with critical fabulation, I was able to understand how an artifact like a bucket (or bucket handle) might be associated with enslaved children and the different scenarios that it might represent, offering multiple possibilities for archaeological interpretation. This is simply a general example of how the archival record may be used to advance our archaeological understanding of certain objects and their possible meanings or associations. When utilizing critical fabulation at a specific site, one is able to create an even stronger and potentially more accurate narrative surrounding the artifact. In Chapter 5, I was able to connect a child-size thimble excavated from the South Kitchen at Montpelier to a young enslaved girl named Joanna. I imagined what the thimble meant for her and what it represented in the context of her role as the eldest child in her family and the responsibilities that position entailed. The purpose of this exercise was not to definitively state that that specific thimble belonged to or was used by Joanna, but to offer a possible scenario that the thimble may represent, centered around an individual child who was enslaved by James Madison Sr. and who once lived and worked at Montpelier. Joanna truly existed and she may or may not have used the thimble. However, young enslaved girls at other plantations did use similar thimbles and did have similar responsibilities to those that I imagined Joanna possessed. Critical fabulation allows archaeologists to give artifacts meaning, and in doing so, demonstrate that the individual who once used the artifact was a real person who had a name and a story.

Earlier, I discussed how many archaeologists initially picture a man when they think about who may be associated with any particular ungendered artifact and how this inclination produces biased archaeological interpretations. In this dissertation, I have explained how the archaeology of enslaved children is fundamental for our understanding of American chattel slavery. Additionally, I have contributed a variety of different methods for identifying the

presence of enslaved children in the archaeological record, and some of these methods may also be applied to other archaeological sites. Archaeologists hold a position of authority in today's society. Members of the public generally accept archaeological interpretations as true, meaning that what we tell people about the past matters. As archaeologists, we have a responsibility to two main groups of people: those whose lives we study and interpret, and those whom we teach today. It is vitally important that we take these responsibilities seriously, and this includes combatting the idea that men are the most identifiable group in the archaeological record. This reinforces inequalities and implies that not only are men the most identifiable, men are (and were) the most important people.

Archaeologists have a duty to represent the experiences of the people whom we study in the most accurate way possible. Children constituted a significant part of the enslaved population. Their lives were no less important than the lives of enslaved men or women. Moreover, they are undeniably present in the archaeological record and cannot be confined to one category of artifacts. This dissertation demonstrates that the difficulty in identifying enslaved children in the archaeological record is not due to a lack of evidence, but rather to the inability to comprehend what is right in front of us.

Appendix A: Formerly Enslaved Individuals in the Dissertation

Andy, Ben, and Jim; Dick; Phebe; Ailcey; John Little; Sam and Louisa Everett; Emma Barr; Ida Blackshear Hutchinson; Luke Blackshear; Bedford John, Virginia, Robert, and Amanda; Louis Hughes; Peter Brown; Martha Jackson; Estella Jones; Teshan Young; Abram Sells; John Brown; Millie Evans; Charlotte Beverly; Henry Blake; Harriett Hill; Mollie Malone; Cull Taylor; Talitha Island; Robert Shepherd; Frederick Douglass; Willis Cofer; Benny Dillard; Sallie Crane; Israel Jackson; Booker T. Washington; John Washington; Henry Bibb; Solomon Northup; Eliza, Randall, and Emily Berry; Martha; Patty and Lot; Ben; Rachel and her infant daughter; Chaney Spell; Mingo, John, and Selina White; Elizabeth Keckley; Little Joe; Henry Watson; John Parker; Jeff; Ben; Mary and Emily Edmonson; George, Olly, Elizabeth, Nancy, and Francis; Henry and Maria Goings; Peter Fossett; Benjamin Roberts; Beth Rose; Ezekiel Cooper; Henry Seney; Jacob Johnson; Jake Affy; Jim Thomas; Lafetta Williams; Maria Williams; Merena Sutton; Sally Johnson; Sharlotte Johnson; James; Ben; William Wells Brown; Mary Bell; Susan Snow; William Black; Millie Simpkins; Eda Rains; Anthony and Robert; Moses Grandy; Lizzie Baker; Harriet Jacobs; Lu; Agnes James; Gracie Gibson; Ona Judge; Chaney and Caroline; Daniel Baudin; Mary, Lewis, and Aggy; Dave Taylor; Adaline Johnson; John; Mary and Isaac; Tom Davis; Wes Woods; Emanuel Elmore; Alex Golightly; Acie Thomas; Gus Clark; Isaac Martin; C.B. McRay; George Rogers; Morgan Scurry; Henry Clay Bruce; George Henderson; Charlie Barbour; John Glover; Simon Stokes; Charlie Hudson; Zeb Crowder; Amos Lincoln; Salem Powell; Foster Weathersby; Jim Gillard; Elisha Garey; James Bolton; Tom Hawkins; George Dorsey; Maggie Jackson; Levi Branham; Susan Castle; Gus Feaster; Robert Hinton; Valmar Cormier; Alonza Fantroy Toombs; Bert Mayfield; Thomas Johns; Steve Brown; Susan McIntosh; Bacchus; Joseph Holmes; Sally Murphy; Jim Henry; Julius Nelson; Alice Hutcheson;

Tom Woods; Charlie Davenport; Henry Walker; Willie Cozart; Billy (Bedford) and Nancy; Beverly Jefferson; Mary Island; Carrie Hudson; Mahala Jewel; Charles Grandy; Isaac Green; Randall Lee; Martha Ann Dixon; Molly Finley; Isom Starnes; Jane Clark; Hattie Thomas; Silvia Witherspoon; Henry Brown; Lou Williams; Mary Divine; Sam Kilgore; Will Daily; Elizabeth Smith; Francis Black; Addie Vinson; Henry Coleman; Richmond Posey; Georgina Gibbs; James V. Deane; Precilla Gray; Nancy Williams; Shade Richards; Rev. Henry Clay Moorman; William Curtis; John Thompson; Richard Crump; Charles Ball; Patience Campbell; Thomas Cole; Andrew Moss; James Hemings; Peter Hemings; Hercules Posey; Rosina Hoard; Mary Raines; Jacob Branch; Lewis Mundy; Laura Redmoun, Emma Knight; Douglas Parish; Jacob Stroyer; Paul Jennings; Sukey; Emmaline Heard; Edith Hern Fossett; Sally Hemings; Isaac Granger Jefferson; David Hern, Jr.; Ben Hix; Burwell Colbert; Barnaby Gillette; James Hubbard; Shepherd; Wormley Hughes; Joseph Fossett; Moses Hern; Cordelia Thomas; Mary Flagg; Mandy McCullough Cosby; William Henry Towns; Betty Cofer; Amanda McCray; Lydia; Eliza, Joanna, Dianna, Demas, Pender, and Webster; Mary Colbert; Rias Body; Lindsey Moore; Scott Hooper; Richard Macks; William McWhorter; Adeline Blakeley; Sam T. Stewart; Joe High; Mary Ellen Johnson; Chana Littlejohn; Charles Anderson; Hagar Lewis; Katherine Eppes; Rachel Adams; John Davenport; Mary Johnson; Callie Elder; Carrie Bradley Logan Bennet; Daniel Taylor; Adeline Willis; Louisa Adams; Green Willbanks; Samuel Boulware; Perry Sid Jameson; Aaron Ford; Tildy Collins; Mrs. Duncan; Emma Jones; Stephen McCray; Cornelia Robinson; Doc Quinn; Easter Huff; Willis Easter; Lucindia Washington; Wayman Williams; Aleck Trimble; Cheney Cross; Elisha Doc Garey; Prince Johnson; Ann Hawthorne; Angie Garrett; Esther Green; Henry Barnes; Charles Hayes; Rosa Washington; Harriet Collins; Matilda Poe; Dosia Harris; Isaac Johnson; Jane Lassiter; Jefferson Franklin Henry; Sabe Rutledge.

Appendix B: Behavioral and Ecological Traits of Small Game Mammals Found in Enslaved Contexts at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon

Species	Nocturnal/Diurnal	Habitat	Diet	Size	Behavior
Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)[187]	Mostly nocturnal, but can be seen between dusk and dawn (crepuscular)	Edge environments between woods and open grasslands; dense grasses along fields, meadows, and hedgerows; ground-nesting	Herbivore: eats wild grasses and cultivated crops	15-18 in. in length; weighs no more than three lbs.	Solitary; can run at speeds up to 18 mph
Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)[188]	Diurnal, peak activity in spring, summer, and fall 2 hours after sunrise and 2-5 hours before sunset	Mature and dense forests of around 40 hectares or 100 acres; lives in tree dens or nests 30-45 ft above ground	Omnivore: eats mostly nuts, flowers, and buds but also crops and insects	15-20 in. in length; weighs less than two lbs.	Social; fast and agile
Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)[189]	Diurnal	Deciduous and mixed forests; areas with diverse tree species are preferred; lives in tree dens or nests	Omnivore: eats nuts, vegetative matter, corn crops, and insects	17-27 in. in length; weighs less than three lbs.	Solitary but together during mating season; fast and agile
Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)[190]	Primarily diurnal, but can sometimes exhibit nocturnal behavior	Coniferous, deciduous, and mixed forests with dense and interlocking canopies; live in natural cavities, leaf nests, or sometimes underground nests	Primarily herbivore but opportunistic omnivore; eats mostly seeds	10-15 in. in length; weighs less than one lb.	Solitary; highly territorial; aggressive when cornered
Woodchuck (*Marmota monax*)[191]	Diurnal	Low elevation forests, fields, pastures, and hedgerows; lives in summer and winter dens or burrows 4-5 feet deep	Primarily herbivore: eats leaves and garden crops but will	16-26 in. in length; weighs from 4-13 lbs.	Solitary; hibernates from Oct-Feb; can be shy or timid

[187] Information from Mikita (1999)
[188] Information from Lawniczak (2002)
[189] Information from Fahey (2001)
[190] Information from Rubin (2012)
[191] Information from Tobias (2011)

			also eat insects or bird eggs		
Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)[192]	Primarily nocturnal but also crepuscular, they are most active from mid-afternoon to after dusk; occasionally seen during the day	Wet environments with 4-6 feet of water, including marshes, swamps, ponds, and lakes; live in bank burrows or nests in water	Primarily herbivore but sometimes eat aquatic animals like fish, frogs, or small turtles	16-25 in. in length; weighs from 1.5-4 lbs.	Live in families; semi-aquatic; shy and avoids humans
Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)[193]	Primarily nocturnal, but can be crepuscular	Many kinds of habitats, but need access to water; prefer moist woodlands but easily live near humans; usually build dens in trees but can live in a variety of places	Omnivorous and opportunistic; diet is wide-ranging and includes plants, crops, small animals, insects, and carrion	23-37 in. in length; weighs from 4-23 lbs.	Primarily solitary; can move at speeds of 15 mph; strong climbers and swimmers
Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*)[194]	Primarily nocturnal, but can be crepuscular	Wide range of habitats but typically near a water source; may live in woodlands but often found in areas near humans; will make leaf nests or use another animal's burrow	Omnivorous and opportunistic; diet varies based on season and habitat but will eat plants, small animals, and carrion	13-11 in. in length; weighs from 4-13 lbs.	Solitary; terrestrial but adept climbers; will 'play dead' if threatened
Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)[195]	Primarily nocturnal, but can be crepuscular	A variety of habitats such as woodlands and grassy plains but also extremely cultivated areas and suburban environments; live in underground dens, hollow logs, and other sheltered areas	Omnivorous and opportunistic; primarily eats insects, but also eggs, small birds, and fish, and some plant matter, including corn	18-32 in. in length; weighs from 1.5 to 13 lbs.	Solitary; docile, but will spray malodorous musk as a defensive behavior

[192] Information from Newell (2000)
[193] Information from Fox (2001)
[194] Information from Martina (2013)
[195] Information from Kiiskila (2014)

Appendix C: Behavioral and Ecological Traits of Wild Birds Found in Enslaved Contexts at Montpelier, Monticello, and Mount Vernon

Species	Nocturnal/Diurnal	Habitat	Diet	Size	Behavior
Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)[196]	Diurnal	Estuaries, freshwater lakes, coastal bays; nests typically built on water	Omnivorous; largely aquatic vegetation in winter	18-22 in. in length; weighs from 1.8-3.5 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; fast flyers and swimmers; diving duck
Redhead (*Aythya americana*)[197]	Diurnal	Shallow freshwater lakes and marshes, also coastal bays; nests in water	Omnivorous; largely aquatic weeds and grasses	18-22 in. in length; weighs from 1.5-3 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; social and flock together; diving duck
Ring-necked duck (*Aythya collaris*)[198]	Diurnal	Floodplains, small ponds, and marshes; nest in sedges	Omnivorous; tubers and aquatic plants but also insects and mollusks	18-22 in. in length; weighs from 1-2 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; forms large flocks; diving duck
Greater scaup (*Aythya marila*)[199]	Diurnal	Coastal bays and shorelines; nest on the ground near the water	Omnivorous; aquatic plants and invertebrates	15-22 in. in length; weighs from 1.5-3 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; typically stays far from shore in water; diving duck
Lesser scaup (*Aythya affinis*)[200]	Diurnal	Shallow wetlands, ponds, lakes, and coastal bays; nests on the ground	Primarily carnivorous; insects, mollusks, and shellfish but also plant seeds	15-17 in. in length; weighs from 1.3-2.6 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; large flocks; will usually stay in the water; diving duck

[196] Information from Dewey (2008)
[197] Information from Hoak (2003)
[198] Information from Patel (2011)
[199] Information from Cornell Lab of Ornithology (2019) "Greater Scaup"
[200] Information from Dewey (2009a)

Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)[201]	Diurnal	Fresh and saltwater marshes; nests on the ground away from the water	Omnivorous; aquatic vegetation, insects, shellfish, and sometimes grain	18-22 in. in length; weighs from 1-2.3 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; tend to live in small flocks; dabbling duck
American wigeon (*Mareca americana*)[202]	Diurnal	Freshwater marshes, lakes; estuaries; saltwater bays; agricultural lands; nests on the ground away from the water	Omnivorous but largely herbivores; aquatic plants, grasses, and agricultural plants; insects and shellfish	18-23 in. in length; weighs from 1.5-3 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; most active in water but can be found in agricultural fields; dabbling duck
Common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)[203]	Diurnal	Coastal marine habitats, large lakes, slow-moving rivers; nests in tree cavities	Primarily carnivorous; fish and shellfish, but can also eat tubers and seeds	15-20 in. in length; weighs from 1.7-2.7 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; spend most time in the water; excellent swimmers; diving duck
Common merganser (*Mergus merganser*)[204]	Diurnal	Freshwater lakes; forest areas near streams and rivers; nest in trees	Carnivorous; mostly small fish, but will also eat insects, snails, and frogs	21-27 in. in length; weighs from 2.3-4.5 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; prefer groups; diving duck
Ruddy duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)[205]	Diurnal	Coastal marshes and bays, freshwater wetlands and lakes inland; nest in dense vegetation on shore	Omnivorous; crustaceans, mollusks, insects, seeds and green plants	14-17 in. in length; weighs no more than 2 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; helpless on land; diving duck

[201] Information from Cone (2002)
[202] Information from Taylor (2002)
[203] Information from Dewey (2009b)
[204] Information from Becker (2006)
[205] Information from Hall (2008)

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchose*)[206]	Diurnal	Almost any wetland habitat, including marshes, bogs, and lakes, as well as city parks and farms	Omnivorous and opportunistic; will eat a variety of plants and insects as well as grains	20-26 in. in length; weighs from 2-3 lbs.	Extremely cosmopolitan and adaptable; unafraid of humans; dabbling duck
Rock dove or common pigeon (*Columba livia*)[207]	Diurnal	Cliff crevices near agricultural or vegetation (wild); old farm buildings (feral); skyscrapers (city)	Herbivore; mainly seeds, also corn and oats; city pigeons will eat popcorn, bread, etc.	12-14 in. in length; weighs around one lb.	Cosmopolitan; can be territorial and aggressive; feeds on open ground; thrives in human environments
Passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*)[208]	Diurnal	Deciduous forests	Omnivore; beechnuts, acorns, chestnuts, seeds, and berries; worms and insects	15-16 in. in length	**Extinct, 1914.** Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter
Mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*)[209]	Diurnal	Agricultural and suburban areas near humans, also open woodlands and forest edges near fields	Primarily herbivore; seeds, fruit, agricultural grains, but also insects	9-14 in. in length; weighs from 0.25-0.4 lbs.	Highly adaptable; feed on open ground; unafraid of humans

[206] Information from Rogers (2001)
[207] Information from Roof (2001)
[208] Information from Pollock (2003)
[209] Information from Emiley and Dewey (n.d.)

Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)[210]	Diurnal	Forests and woodlands with openings including pastures, orchards, and fields	Omnivorous; acorns, nuts, seeds, leaves, and also insects and salamanders	36-48 in. in length; weighs from 8-25 lbs.	Ground-dwelling but roost in trees; wary; sharp eyesight and hearing; fast runners and fliers
Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)[211]	Diurnal	Quiet, sheltered areas including deciduous forests and thickets; dislikes open areas	Omnivorous; primarily berries, seeds and fibrous vegetation but also insects	16-20 in. in length; weighs from 1-1.7 lbs.	Ground-dwelling and nest in depressions on the ground; solitary; typically shy around humans
Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)[212]	Diurnal	Agricultural fields, open woodlands, and grasslands	Omnivorous; primarily seeds and leaves but also insects	8-10 in. in length; weighs about 1/3 of a lb.	Ground-dwelling and nest in depressions on the ground; found in groups; shy around humans
American coot (*Fulica americana*)[213]	Diurnal	Freshwater or brackish wetlands, including marshes, swamps, lakes, and suburban ponds	Omnivorous; mainly aquatic plants, terrestrial plants and grains, as well as insects and small aquatic animals	16-17 in. in length; weighs from 1.3-1.5 lbs.	Migratory; found in Virginia during the winter; social and live in flocks; must take a running start in order to fly
American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)[214]	Diurnal	Woodlands, fields, orchards, gardens, and lawns; suburban and agricultural areas near humans	Omnivorous; fruits, berries, earthworms, and insects	8-11 in. in length; weights less than 1/5 of a lb.	Migratory; some are found in Virginia year-round; others only pass through in early spring; social and live in large flocks at night

[210] Information from McCullough (2001)
[211] Information from Haupt (2001)
[212] Information from Cornell Lab of Ornithology (2019) "Northern Bobwhite"
[213] Information from Bridgman (2003) and Cornell Lab of Ornithology (2019) "American Coot"
[214] Information from Middlebrook (2001)

Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)[215]	Nocturnal and crepuscular	Areas of woodland and open fields, as well as rural and urban human settlements	Carnivorous; terrestrial vertebrates like rabbits, mice, voles, and other rodents; when near water they may eat fish, amphibians, or reptiles	18-25 in. in length; weighs from 2-5.5 lbs.	Solitary; territorial; can easily adapt to human-inhabited ecosystems

[215] Information from Dietrich (2013)

Appendix D: Behavioral and Ecological Traits of Fish and Shellfish Found in Enslaved Contexts at Montpelier and Mount Vernon

Species	Pelagic/Demersal	Habitat	Size	Behavior
Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*)[216]	Demersal	Marine or brackish coastal waters	Can grow up to 4 inches in length	Cluster in oyster beds and reefs on rock, piers, and old shells
American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)[217]	Pelagic	Coastal ocean waters but returns to freshwater rivers and streams to spawn	18-30 in. in length; weighs from 2-12 lbs.	Anadromous and migratory; swim in schools; spawn from mid-April through early June
Blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*)[218]	Pelagic	Coastal ocean waters but returns to freshwater rivers and streams to spawn	Around 12 in. in length; weighs about ½ lb.	Anadromous and migratory; swim in schools; spawn late March through mid-May
Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*)[219]	Pelagic	Coastal ocean waters but returns to freshwater rivers and streams to spawn	4-14 in. in length; weighs about ¼ lb.	Anadromous and migratory; swim in schools; spawn in late February through April
Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)[220]	Demersal	Can live in fresh, brackish, or saltwater but prefer freshwater lakes, creeks, or rivers	Grows to about 2 feet in length; weighs from 2-4 lbs. but can grow to 40 or 50 lbs.	Solitary; most active after dusk but can be found in deeper water during the day

[216] Information from Osborne (1999) and NOAA Fisheries (2022), "Oyster Reef Habitat"
[217] Information from Kessler (2012) and Maryland DNR n.d., "American Shad"
[218] Information from Dennis (2002)
[219] Information from Tobias (2004) and Maryland DNR n.d., "Alewife and Blueback Herring"
[220] Information from Schoonover (2004) and Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute n.d., "Channel catfish."

White catfish (Ameiurus catus)[221]	Demersal	Both fresh and brackish bodies of water; prefers slow-moving waters	12-13 in. in length; rarely weighs more than 6 lbs.	Most active after dusk but can be found in deeper water during the day
Bluegill (Lepomis macrochirus)[222]	Pelagic	Freshwater but can tolerate salinities up to 18%; prefer lakes and slow-moving streams	4-8 in. in length; typically weighs ½ lb. or less	Most active at dawn and hide under cover during the day; travel in schools; move to shallow water at night
Redear sunfish (Lepomis microlophus)[223]	Demersal	Freshwater; prefer warm and stagnant waters such as ponds, lakes, and river backwaters	8-10 in. in length; weighs 1-2 lbs.	Crepuscular and is sedentary during the day; retreats to covered areas during the day; territorial
White crappie (Pomoxis annularis)[224]	Pelagic	Freshwater; lakes, ponds, and slow-moving streams and rivers; prefer clear and shallow waters	7-20 in. in length; weighs 1-5 lbs.	Crepuscular and less active during the day; travel loosely in schools; gather around underwater cover like brush and rocks
Chain pickerel (Esox niger)[225]	Pelagic	Fresh and brackish water; lakes, streams, and ponds; prefer clear and sluggish waters	12-26 in. in length; weighs ½ lb. to 6 lbs.	Active all day but feed at dawn and dusk; solitary; commonly found under submerged cover; can be aggressive when caught

[221] Information from Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "White Catfish"
[222] Information from Parr (2013)
[223] Information from Barbee (2011)
[224] Information from Tingle (2015)
[225] Information from Shelburne (2017)

White perch (Morone americana)[226]	Semi-pelagic	Brackish waters and estuaries (such as the Chesapeake Bay)	Average 7-10 in. in length; weighs ½ lb. to 1 lb.	Semi-anadromous; spawns in quiet, freshwater streams in the spring; juveniles may group in shoals or river backwaters
Striped bass (Morone saxatilis)[227]	Pelagic	Marine, brackish estuaries and tributaries, and freshwater	Average 2-3 feet in length; weighs 10-30 lbs.	Semi-anadromous; moves upstream in spring to spawn in freshwater; congregate in large schools
Yellow perch (Perca flavescens)[228]	Pelagic	Freshwater, but have adapted to the brackish waters of the Chesapeake Bay rivers	5-12 in. in length; weighs ¼ lb. to 1 lb.	Semi-anadromous; spawn in shallow freshwater areas in early spring
Black sea bass (Centropristis striata)[229]	Demersal	Marine waters along the east coast; found at depths of around 20 ft. below surface	1-2 feet in length; weighs 1-2 lbs.	Anadromous; spawn in lower Chesapeake Bay in spring and return to ocean in fall for southern waters
Blue crab (Callinectes sapidus)[230]	Demersal	Saltwater and freshwater; most abundant in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries	5-7 in. in length	May be aggressive when threatened; "beautiful swimmers"; can be found in submerged aquatic vegetation, under docks, and rock formations

[226] Information from Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "White Perch"
[227] Information from Wittenberg (2011) and Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d., "Striped Bass."
[228] Information from Creque (2000)
[229] Information from Chesapeake Bay Foundation n.d. "Black Sea Bass" and NOAA Fisheries 2023, "Black Sea Bass."
[230] Information from Maryland Department of Natural Resources n.d., "Maryland Fish Facts, Shellfish – Blue Crab."

Appendix E: Behavioral and Ecological Traits of Amphibians and Reptiles Found in Enslaved Contexts at Montpelier and Mount Vernon

Species	Nocturnal/Diurnal	Habitat	Diet	Size	Behavior
American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)[231]	Nocturnal and diurnal (active day and night)	Ponds, lakes, rivers, or bogs	Carnivore; snakes, worms, insects, other frogs, worms, salamanders, fish eggs, and shellfish	4-7 in. in length; weighs less than one lb.	Hibernate during winter; most active in warm and moist weather; very common in human-populated areas
River cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*)[232]	Diurnal	Rivers and lakes; less commonly found in ponds, swamps, and springs; bask and nest on land	Predominantly herbivore; aquatic vegetation and algae but occasionally crawfish	8-11 in. in length (but can reach up to 15 in.); weighs 8-10 lbs.	Hibernate during the winter; can stay submerged for several hours; extremely skittish; prefer areas moderately inaccessible to humans
Box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*)[233]	Diurnal	Near streams and ponds in wooded areas and edge areas of pastures	Omnivore; berries, insects, slugs, worms, birds, mushrooms, and other fruits and vegetables; sometimes carrion	4-7 in. in size; weighs less than one lb.	When frightened withdraws completely and closes shell; hibernates in winter; most active in spring and fall

[231] Information from Bruening (2002)
[232] Information from Malueg (2017)
[233] Information from Niedzielski (2002) and Virginia DWR n.d., "eastern box turtle"

Common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)[234]	Diurnal	Fresh or brackish water; ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams with muddy bottoms and vegetation	Omnivore; will eat almost anything, including aquatic vegetation, carrion and other turtles	8-18 in. in length; weighs 9-35 lbs.	Solitary; territorial; can be vicious if removed from water; highly aggressive when provoked; will fight back violently

[234] Information from Bosch (2003)

Appendix F: Montpelier Thimble Measurements

Site	Invno	Height	Diameter
44OR249	11735 DA	0.5	0.41
44OR249	16412 AH	0.63	0.48
44OR249	16515 AA	0.49	0.52
44OR249	16706 HX	0.68	0.61
44OR249	18809 AG	0.75	0.62
44OR249	44849 HAA	0.75	0.51
44OR249	42287 HAA	0.6	0.62
44OR249	42148 HAF	0.75	0.52
44OR249	42030 HAA	0.67	0.49
44OR249	41806 HAA	0.88	0.68
44OR249	28951 AA	0.75	0.64
44OR249	28707 BT	0.75	0.64
44OR249	27890 AA		0.5
44OR249	42978 HAA	0.8	0.56
44OR333	4205 CO	0.69	0.78
44OR333	6354 BR	0.85	0.57
44OR333	6379 DJ	0.71	0.69
44OR333	6536 BV	0.93	0.65
44OR333	7478 AL	0.78	0.61
44OR333	7550 AA		0.75

Appendix G: Diameters of Children's Fingers

Diameters of the distal phalanges of the index and middle fingers for children from three to ten years old (Hohendorff et al. 2010).

All children 3-10 years of age

Age	Diameter of index finger DP	Diameter of middle finger DP
3 years	11 (9-11)	11 (10-12)
4 years	11 (9-12)	11 (10-12)
5 years	11 (10-12)	12 (11-13)
6 years	12 (10-14)	12 (11-13)
7 years	12 (11-13)	13 (11-14)
8 years	13 (12-14)	13 (12-14)
9 years	13 (11-14)	13 (12-15)
10 years	13(11-14)	14 (12-19)

Girls 3-10 years of age

Age	Diameter of index finger DP	Diameter of middle finger DP
3 years	10 (10-11)	11 (10-11)
4 years	11 (9-12)	11 (10-12)
5 years	11 (11-12)	11 (11-13)
6 years	11 (10-13)	12 (11-13)
7 years	12 (11-13)	12 (11-14)
8 years	13 (12-14)	13 (12-14)
9 years	12 (11-13)	13 (12-13)
10 years	13 (11-13)	14 (12-15)

Boys 3-10 years of age

Age	Diameter of index finger DP	Diameter of middle finger DP
3 years	11 (9-11)	11 (10-12)
4 years	11 (11-12)	11 (11-12)
5 years	11 (10-12)	12 (11-13)
6 years	12 (11-14)	13 (12-13)
7 years	12 (11-13)	13 (11-13)
8 years	12 (12-13)	13 (12-14)
9 years	13 (11-14)	14 (13-15)
10 years	13(12-14)	14 (12-19)

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