RUNAWAY SLAVES AND THE MAKING OF GEORGIA

By

ANTHONY F. MOFFETT

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This project investigates the enslaved runaways of colonial Georgia and their impact on the Atlantic world. It argues that the runaways’ actions must be understood more than as a function of slave-master relations or work regimes. Rather, this work views runaways at both ends of the flight continuum. On one end was the act of fleeing. The study chronicles who the runaways were, as well as when, how and from where they fled, as well as their intended destination. At the other end of the spectrum is how the numerous acts of running away affected the broader society. Their methods of flight evolved, often coinciding with opportunities in their environment such as the chaos of the American Revolution. Their actions altered the direction of Georgia and swayed the broader geopolitics of the southeast.

Georgia will be the focus of the study for a few reasons. Foremost, Georgia was founded as an anti-slavery colony. Its geographical location was determined in part by the need for a buffer zone to hinder runaway slaves from South Carolina who sought refuge in Spanish Florida. The constant influx of fugitive slaves directed the use of labor and the militias of both Georgia and South Carolina which routinely pursued runaways, even into Florida. Therefore, runaway slaves arguably influenced Georgia more than any other of the original Thirteen Colonies.
Advertisements for runaway slaves in colonial newspapers supply the primary source of information. They provide useful data such as the fugitives’ gender, approximate age, occupational skills, and previous history of absconding. After slavery became legal in Georgia in 1750, the transatlantic slave trade brought thousands of Africans to the colony, many of whom are listed in runaway advertisements. By merging the profiles of the runaways into the broader literature of Georgia and the southeast, I argue that often the act of running away was as much a determinant to the development of the lowcountry as it was a reaction against slavery.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project is to investigate the enslaved runaways of colonial Georgia as a means to show their impact on the Atlantic world. Many important works have chronicled African resistance to enslavement in North America and informed this study in kind. Such contributions have produced expansive studies of resistance across the history of British North America.¹ Other studies have incorporated runaways into more intensive regional studies.² Scholars have also noted the influence of ideology on the enslaved and runaways. Such works include studies of religion and revolutionary ideology.³


This work aims to expand the role of the runaways, to show that their acts went beyond isolated slave-master relations; neither can they all be fully appreciated in the context of a region, an era, or work regime. These were calculated acts with a reciprocal effect on culture, economics, and politics throughout Georgia, the southeast, and the Americas. Georgia will be the focus of the study for a few reasons. Foremost, Georgia was founded as an anti-slavery colony. However, the geographical location of Georgia was determined in part by the need for the colony to function as a buffer zone to hinder runaway slaves from South Carolina who sought refuge in Florida. Once the colony was founded, the constant influx of fugitive slaves further directed the use of labor and the militias of both Georgia and South Carolina as the latter routinely mandated the mobilization of Georgians to pursue runaways, even launching official forays into Florida. Therefore, it is arguable that runaway slaves influenced Georgia more than any other of the original Thirteen Colonies.

One major goal of this study is to merge the literature about runaways into the broader discussion of the Atlantic world instead of isolating their actions to those of rebels against the status quo of the lowcountry. The intention is to show that runaways fit no demographic categorization; favored no particular method of escape; came from different backgrounds and experiences, and had different intentions as they fled captivity. They were young men. They were grandmothers. They were African. They were creole. They fled on foot. They fled by boat. Some sought the anonymity of

Savannah, others the refuge of the swamps. Though influenced by familial concerns, work experiences, and notions of freedom, runaways are best understood as individuals, in the context of the time and manner in which they fled. As carpenters, hucksters, and sailors, fugitives took advantage of the shifting opportunities to attain liberty in the lowcountry.

Georgia underwent tremendous changes as it evolved from a Trusteeship that banned slavery, to a royal colony that permitted the institution, and the state that eventually depended on it. It was because of runaways who sought refuge in Florida that Britain eventually decided to establish the colony of Georgia to the south of Carolina. Runaways challenged the early ban on slavery as they entered the colony and gained employment from colonists willing to ignore the prohibition in order to earn a profit. The economic activity of the Royal period was further shaped by fugitives who clandestinely participated in the market for goods and services such as cattle herding. During the Revolution, runaways fought and served on both sides of the conflict. After the Revolution, many redefined liberty and established their own free communities in the lowcountry. Others evacuated with the British and founded their own towns in Florida, Jamaica, Canada, and eventually Africa and Mexico. The collective diversity of

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4 The term lowcountry is a general reference to geographical region of the southeast that ranges from the Fall Line, the point at which upland rivers descend to the lower Atlantic Coastal Plain, to the Atlantic Ocean. The Piedmont Mountains are often considered the western border of the lowcountry.

those who resisted enslavement throughout the evolution of the colony represented a consciousness of their many options in the broader societies in which they lived.

Runaways were often conscious participants in a larger interplay that occurred throughout the southeast and featured Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina in an ongoing transatlantic exchange between Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Fugitive slaves were Atlantic creoles who were often influenced as much by decisions made in Madrid and London as they were by local conditions in the lowcountry. Moreover, their actions had a reciprocal effect of also shaping colonial policies on both sides of the Atlantic. Through numerous changes in the population, economy, and political climate of Georgia, slaves of different ages, ethnicities, and occupations took the brave and dangerous step to abscond. Some episodes indicate that slaves made spontaneous decisions and fled in haste. Other cases reflected calculated decisions with long-term implications for their freedom as well for the broader Atlantic world. In either regard, the unique evolution of slave resistance in the lowcountry produced runaways who redefined black liberty throughout the Atlantic.

The runaways and their ancestors forged paths of freedom that eventually took them to Cuba, Jamaica, Indian Territory, the Andros, Mexico, Canada, and for some, back to Africa to found free colonies there. Theirs is not simply a history of maroonage or resistance, but of freedom defined and redefined by enslaved people throughout the Atlantic world.

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CHAPTER 2
RUNAWAY SLAVES AND THE FOUNDING OF GEORGIA

When James Edward Oglethorpe conceived the idea of founding a paupers’ colony in North America, his designs were based primarily on humanitarian concerns for both the impoverished citizens of London and those imprisoned in the overburdened penal system of the city as well. This compassion initiated a Utopian scheme, a model society in which slavery would be forbidden. This plan contrasted all previous British imperial ventures in the New World, for every English colony from North America to the Caribbean utilized or permitted the use of slavery. Yet, Oglethorpe hoped and believed that the New World offered a place for yeomen, settlers who were to be farmer-soldiers, working earnestly without the use of human bondage to forge an egalitarian society in North America. Had such altruism singularly shaped the development of the colony, Georgia would have evolved differently. As it was, however, grander schemes were at work. Before Oglethorpe set sail for the New World or even received a charter for the founding of Georgia, Britain had engaged in a mercantile struggle against France and Spain for land and resources throughout the New World. Thus, Oglethorpe’s utopian scheme would have to find a place in the greater struggle. Evidence suggests that those imperial concerns outweighed Oglethorpe’s philanthropy and placed Georgia on the southeastern border of British North America to suit the needs of the South Carolinians and the Crown.

When Oglethorpe received the charter for Georgia 1732, two contradictory forces were clearly directing the development and evolution of the colony. From the motives of Oglethorpe and the Trustees came the philanthropic sentiments that promoted religious tolerance, economic opportunity, and the acquisition of land by white settlers. The ban
on slavery and the restrictions on the size of land-holdings was meant to prevent the development of a planter class and provided opportunities for the imprisoned and impoverished in London. The second force was practical, material and imperialistic, directed by a practical and material need for a southern outpost. In the latter, the colony was first and foremost a southern buffer against the Spanish presence in Florida and secondly a market in the Atlantic mercantilist network.\(^1\) In either regard, the land that became the new colony Georgia was a highly contested ground, as it had been for some two hundred years.

Five years after Ponce De Leon’s death, Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon from Hispaniola landed in 1526 at what is believed to be the modern Sapelo Sound in Georgia. There he founded a settlement which Allyon called San Miquel de Gualdape. The expedition consisted of six-hundred Spanish, men, women, and children, and the first known contingent of African slaves brought into the North America. The slaves were possibly ladinos, seasoned artisans and domestics, or bozal, African-born from the mining and agricultural labor pools of Hispaniola. Starvation and disease diminished the Spaniards and a mutiny dispersed them. Guale Indians attacked the settlement from the outside while slaves torched the compound from within. The few surviving Spaniards fled to Hispaniola. The Africans settled with the Guale, and became the first maroons in British North America.\(^2\)


French Huguenots tried to settle the coast of what is now present day Jacksonville in 1564. In 1565, Florida Governor Pedro Menedez de Aviles annihilated the Huguenots and inspired the Spanish crown in 1565 to establish Florida as a permanent Spanish enterprise. When de Aviles founded St. Augustine, however, he encountered people of African descent who had survived from previous European expeditions. Moreover, when the Spanish enforced slavery, fifty Africans fled and dispersed into Native American populations. Those successful attempts set the precedent of Florida as a refuge for fugitive slaves.³

The Barbadian colonization of South Carolina in 1670 triggered 150 years of imperial competition between Britain and Spain for control of the Southeast. By the 17th century, the Guale merged with other smaller groups to form the Yamassee and the amalgamation of tribes grew to control the lower Savannah River and much of the area inland to the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers. Due to the Yamassee’s location in the contested barrier between British South Carolina and Spanish Florida, the British wanted to maintain a peaceful alliance with the group. Therefore, England recognized the land on their southern border as Yamassee land and restricted colonists from settling therein. The Yamassee traded deerskins and to a lesser degree Indian slaves to South Carolinians for guns and alcohol. Due to the increased trade, deer grew scarce and raids for slaves more dangerous. Over time, the Yamassee went deeper in debt to English traders.⁴


Despite the diminished economic status of Native Americas, they maintained political and military clout, whereas the British and Spaniards both needed their assistance to maintain control over their claims in the lowcountry. Many groups of Native Americans employed a strategy of playing the British against the Spanish and vice-versa, to garner the best deals for their people. The bargains struck and alliances formed by the Native Americas are pivotal to the evolution of the lowcountry. Moreover, those arrangements also shed light on how and why runaway slaves from South Carolina became such important influences on Georgia despite the fact that Georgia would later prohibit slavery. As the population of Native Americans diminished and Africans eventually became prominent in the lowcountry, the latter also learned to exploit the imperial rifts. The groups differed in that Native Americans sought trade where Africans sought freedom. However, all negotiations hinged on loyalty, and the Spaniards offered freedom to Africans in exchange for loyalty whereas the British did not.

Spaniards maintained trade with missionized Natives in present day Columbus, Georgia and eventually organized Native Americans to resist the British infringement in the lowcountry. The government of Spanish Florida grouped ten pre-existing towns of Native Americans along the Apalachee and Chattahoochee River into the province of Apalachicole. The British called all Native Americans of the area Ocheesee Creeks. When British traders arrived to establish trade with the groups in 1685 Antonio Matheo, the deputy-governor of Spanish Florida, commissioned two expeditions to capture the British and to persuade the townships to sever any ties with the English. The most
significant long-term development of the episode was that it sparked an increased and continued presence of both the Spaniards and British in the area.\(^5\)

The British controlled the four Northern-most towns of the Ocheesee Creeks and sponsored raids against the Spaniards to be carried out by the Creek and Yamassee tribes. Matheos launched another expedition and burned those towns and the provisions therein. Furthermore, Matheos left Yamasee spies in the remaining towns to observe and report any sign of English infringement.\(^6\) By 1685 then, British traders, native spies, and Spanish militia began linking the slave society of South Carolina to the Spanish society of Florida via maritime and overland routes of trade. The Spanish countered by inviting the Lower Creek to settle at Apalachee to serve as a buffer against future aggressions from the British and their Native American allies.\(^7\)

The buffer provided by the Apalachee and Timucuan was short lived. Carolinians overran them, killed many, and enslaved others. The tribes suffered a tragic dispersal. The Spaniards loss valuable allies. As Sensbach has noted, the Southeast lost the vast majority of its Catholic residents. The Spaniards, who relied heavily on their mission system to build alliances, would have to find new allies to join them in the broader Protestant-Catholic rivalry that shaped geopolitics in the Southeast.\(^8\) Ironically, the victories won by Carolinians facilitated their southward expansion, which subsequently

\(^5\) John H. Hann, “Cloak and Dagger,” p. 76.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 80.

\(^7\) Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border: The Seminoles in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahiuila, and Texas (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), p 6.

brought enslaved Africans, even closer to the Spanish promise of freedom many would eventually pursue.

From 1694 to 1715, Carolinians steadily expanded cattle-holdings southward. Cattle raising was cheaper to start and easier to maintain than other economic ventures. Cattle became the economic bedrock of the Drayton, McPherson, Elliot and Sanders families. To establish cowpens, laborers felled trees, burned underbrush, cleared and fenced 100-200 acres of land, usually close to a water supply. Africans became pivotal members of the cattle industry, as they built fences and pens, erected shelters, and branded livestock. In the marketplace, slaves also butchered, packed, and loaded beef for export. More significant to the future of Georgia, were the roles that Africans played along the frontier as they hunted beasts of prey, herded cattle, and tracked strays.

The success of the industry led to expansion and enslaved Africans were at the forefront. Cattle-ranching was marked by drover camps, make-shift settlements built by herders as they maintained cattle overnight or over a few days at specific location. The need for Africans along the frontier provided them with invaluable training. In 1708, South Carolinians passed a law that required captains to enlist, train, and bring to muster one able-bodied slave for each white man. Moreover, the slave had to be armed with a gun or lance. The problems of arming slaves, however, became evident

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by the spring of 1711, when several armed Negroes repeatedly robbed and plundered houses and plantations.¹²

Carolinians also feared the growing tensions from the Yamasee and the encroachment of Carolinians upon their lands. Colonists demarcated Yamasee lands in 1712 in the hopes that clearly defined border would prohibit further intrusions by land-hungry settlers. Even after the demarcation of 1712, however, many Carolinians continued to violate Yamasee territory. Furthermore, by 1715 many drover camps had evolved into semi-permanent settlements or pens. The establishment of the human dwellings and animal enclosures brought more hardships upon the indigenous population as both displaced the native deer population and disrupted the crops of the Yamasee.¹³

Carolinian traders had already established trade routes and cow-pens through the land that would become Georgia. Moreover they did so with enslaved labor. As slaves rebuked their status and fled, many trekked through the land that would become Georgia in route to Florida, pursuing the promise of freedom from the Spanish Crown. The importance of geopolitical concerns in the eventual founding of Georgia is made evident by the petition for the first colony of Georgia.

Two decades before Oglethorpe secured the charter for Georgia, another group petitioned for the founding of a colony named Georgia. However, those colonists wanted to found Georgia in New England. In 1713, a group of petitioners targeted the unsettled land between the Kennebec and St. Croix rivers. The land had exchanged


¹³ Lawrence Sanders Rowland, The History of Beaufort County South Carolina, pp. 86 – 88.
hands several times. The French were the first Europeans to claim the land but lost it to the Dutch in 1660. The Duke of York settled approximately 1,100 families who were displaced by the revolution of 1689. Massachusetts attempted to claim the land in 1691 but since colonial officials were unwilling to defend the land, the French reclaimed it in 1696 and held it until Colonel Nicholson conquered it in 1710.

In 1713, the petitioners advocated that the land be settled and reclaimed for the British empire. Immediately issues arose in regards to funding and governance. The colonists advocated a provincial government instead of a proprietary structure. However, conflict erupted between the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, and the agent of Massachusetts. Jeremiah Dummer, the agent of Massachusetts Bay, claimed that Massachusetts held jurisdiction over the territory based on legal documents such as the Beauchamp and Leverett grant; the title of the Duke of Hamilton; and the claims of Lake and Clark, Partridge, and Toppan claims. As the conflict of jurisdiction waged on, the Board also raised important questions about the structure of governance and how the colony would be funded. The dialogue over jurisprudence and finances laid the framework for the way Georgia was eventually founded.

The land would be distributed to grantees in trust, who incorporated under a charter, would share legislative power and supervise company affairs. The Trustees were to distribute land to colonists and collect rents. The “Scheme of Profit” established a ratio of how much the company would allot for the transportation and settlement of...

14 The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations were established by William III and replaced the Lords of Trade which had been assembled in 1675. The groups’ primary goal was to advise the Crown in supervising British colonies. Among the Commissioners functions were the analysis of colonial legislation and hearing of complaints issued from the colonies on royal policies and administration.
colonists, allocations of livestock, equipment, and the time-frame and method through which the colonist would repay the crown. The petitioners restructured their proposal, and by 1716, presented a list of fifty trustees to the Lords Commissioners. On three occasions, the Solicitor General, Sir William Thompson, upheld Massachusetts’ jurisdiction and the Board of Trade suggested that the petitioners seek another location, on unclaimed lands to avoid such issues. As the process drew on, events on the southern end of British North America shifted that possible location of the proposed colony to south of the Altamaha.

By 1715, the year before colonists in New England petitioned for their vision of Georgia, rice plantations had thrived in South Carolina for at least twenty years. As plantation owners claimed the best arable lands, less affluent planters began to exert pressures on uncultivated Yamassee land. The Yamassee responded with violence.

The Yamassee War began in 1715 when members of that group killed several traders, attacked Port Royal, and destroyed plantations in Saint Bartholomew Parish. Governor Craven led a force of one hundred whites, one-hundred blacks, and Native Americans across the Santee River. Captain John Plight led another ‘Negro company’ during the war. After many pitched battles, the South Carolinians negotiated support from the Cherokee, quelled the rebellion, and dispersed the Yamassee by 1717. Carolinians won the war but the conflict left them with significant concerns. One of the most disconcerting developments of the war for the Carolinians was the lack of assistance from Great Britain. South Carolinians also realized the internal threat from

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the colony’s black majority, which by 1715 constituted approximately 10,500 blacks to about 6,250 whites.17 Thus, South Carolinians emerged from the Yemassee War with a renewed sense of insecurity, especially for their southern border. They established Fort King George near the area later settled as Darien by Georgians.18 Due to their expertise, enslaved cattle-hunters reinforce the provincial military.19

With security concerns notwithstanding, traders and politicians continued their southward expansion. Traders like Robert Graham hired freemen and slaves to transport goods on the Savannah River and also by horseback overland. Moreover, citizens such as Alexander Mackey, who remained in South Carolina, hired slaves to traveling traders like Graham, who exchanges goods along roving caravans instead of through sedentary establishments.20 As such, merchants and citizens benefited from the expansion of trade. In 1717, the Proprietors granted to Sir Robert Montgomery of Skelmorlie all of the lands between the Altamaha and Savannah rivers. The “Margravate of Azilia”, as Sir Robert’s grant was titled, was to establish an independent government and check the French activity in the region. For reasons unrelated to the plan, the Proprietors were overthrown in 1719 and the plan disintegrated.21 However, the potential of southern lands for both plantations and defense remained a priority for many Carolinians.

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18 Ettinger, James Edward Oglethorpe: Imperial Idealist, p. 114.

19 Porter, Negroes on the Southern Frontier, p. 55.


In 1720, the influence of St. Augustine brought fear and violence in South Carolina. White Carolinians discovered a plot among the enslaved to kill them all and take over Charleston. The colonists reacted with great violence against the suspected conspirators, and they imprisoned, burned, and hanged many. Fourteen of the slaves who were accused of plotting the insurrection fled for St. Augustine but were captured near an area called Savannah Town, which was near the present location of Augusta, Georgia. The Creek allegedly refused to assist the runaways. However, they did not capture and return them either. Though the Creeks’ refusal to aid the fugitives may have pleased the colonists, the fact the Amerindians did not capture and return them showed a lack of commitment to acting as a police force for fugitive slaves.22 Again Carolinians tried to bolster their southern border.

In the same year as the suspected uprising, a trader by the name of John Barnwell led another charge to extend the southern border of South Carolina to the Altamaha River. At the heart of Barnwell’s initiative was a call for a defensive perimeter. The planter-dominated Commons House of the Assembly voted down the defense-based scheme on the basis that planters did not want to burden the expenses of the program. Barnwell introduced his plan to the Privy Council in London. The council saw the benefits of Barnwell’s plan but again cost was an issue. Thus, the Council nullified Barnwell’s idea of defensive townships and agreed for the establishment of a single fort at the mouth of the Altamaha. Since the fort and garrison had to be supported entirely

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by the colonial government, the Commons House, decided to the garrison the fort, Fort George, through trade with friendly Native Americans.\textsuperscript{23}

As the conflicts evolved along the southern frontier of Carolina, several groups proposed schemes between the years of 1720 to 1728 to found Georgia in the Northeast. Of those petitioners, a London merchant named Thomas Coram was a constant figure in the proposals. Though Coram’s attempts to found Georgia near the Penobscot failed, his association with Reverend Thomas Bray ensured that his influence would be felt when Georgia was founded south of the Altamaha.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1729 Carolina became a royal colony. Carolina Governor Robert Johnson used both his political authority and his alliances to the most powerful planter families to implement a scheme similar to that of Barnwell. However, Johnson directed his township scheme more towards economic development of the entire colony, not just the defense of the southern border. The governor proposed a total of ten townships with three of them forming the southern boundary of the colony along the Savannah River instead of the Altamaha. To encourage settlement and reduce the costs to the colonial government, Johnson’s plan extended incentives to migrants such as tax exemptions and acts that prevented the settlers from being sued for non-payment of debt. They also designated Indian hunting-grounds to the south of the Savannah River, which effectively removed Indians from the lands he desired north of the river. The Board of Trade altered Johnson’s plan by allowing for two townships to be established along the Altamaha. When Georgia was founded those lands south of the Savannah were

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{24} Moody, \textit{Three Documents Concerning a Proposal to Establish a Province of Georgia in New England}, p. 115-118.
\end{thebibliography}
granted to it. However, the establishment of Georgia acted as a barrier between planters and the Spanish in Florida and actually made the lands more promising for the prolific extension of the rice industry. Thus, the founding of the philanthropic Georgia colony only reinforced the long-term economic interests of Carolinians to move into the similarly promising lands of Georgia.

The grant was formatted for the colony to be led by a council of twenty men. Nine were appointed by the king and those nine chose the remaining members. In May of 1730, parliament granted 10,000 pounds for Georgia. However, many of the early immigrants were Swiss emigrants, Salzburg Protestants, and domestic paupers. In order to secure proceeds for the colony, Benjamin Martyn, a government official who later served as the only Secretary to the Trustees of Georgia, manipulated a map that had been drawn by Thomas Nairne, a Scots trader and Indian Agent of Carolina. Martyn omitted problematic settlements such as Mobile, Biloxi, and New Orleans, along with inscriptions that depicted other settlements of rival Europeans and of Native Americans. Furthermore, the proximity of St. Augustine was positioned much further to the south on that map to suggest a larger buffer region for the proposed colony.25

Despite Martyn’s deception, the edited map failed to secure enough investors. The petitioners then used the map drawn by Henry Popple, which was allegedly influenced by Oglethorpe to exclude unwanted imagery from its inception.26 The Trustees finally secured enough investors to found the colony. However, it was the ban on slavery in conjunction with the needs of South Carolina for a secure border without


26 Ibid., pp. 35-41.
slaves that won Oglethorpe and his companions the charter when and where others were denied.

The prohibition on slavery did not withstand the demands of colonization in the lowcountry. In the summer of 1732, the Georgia Trustees officially requested assistance from the government of South Carolina. Most of the Trustees were members of the Prison Investigation Committee, not experienced colonists. The South Carolina government responded with material, military, and administrative assistance. Benjamin Martyn, then serving as the Secretary to the Trustees, submitted a request to Governor Johnson of South Carolina “that twenty Negro Labourers, and Four Pair of sawyers, be hired to assist in clearing the ground for this new settlement, which is design’d to be made on the south side of the River Savannah.”27 Thus, even in the colony’s earliest years, settlers found ways around the ban on slavery by hiring or renting slaves rather than buying and owning them. Africans were present in Georgia from the onset.

It was from the first group of hired slaves from South Carolina that the earliest runaways in Georgia came. Some of the first fugitives listed in the South Carolina Gazette were “three Negro Sawyers . . . named Primus, Venture, and Syphax.” All of “the said Negroes” had been “hired by Mr. Chardon for the service of Georgia.”28 Initially, the South Carolinians provided provisions and housing for Georgia colonists at Port Royal as they waited to embark to Savannah with additional provisions to sustain them during settlement. After the settlers landed at Frederica, the government allotted them one hundred and five head of cattle, twenty-five of swine, and twenty barrels of


rice. Charleston merchants also made personal contributions of another one hundred head of cattle supplemented with cash and the loan of slave laborers.²⁹

On November 15, 1732 the main body of Georgia colonists embarked on the seven week trans-Atlantic voyage that landed them in Charleston on January 13, 1733. However, the global implications of the colony were immediately apparent. The royal government of South Carolina was granted control of the military of Georgia. Without authorization from the Trustees, South Carolinians built Fort Argyle equipped with fortifications and a militia occupation at Saint Simon’s Island. They also established fortifications around Savannah and required that in the future Georgians would train regularly in military drills.³⁰

Even though the royal charter banned slavery, runaway slaves forced Georgians to answer questions that revolved around the institution and those who used Georgia to escape it. How would Georgians respond to the longstanding tradition of slaves absconding through the land they sought to colonize? What about the slaves who had already been sent from South Carolina to clear the land, tend the cattle and built houses? Could a group of philanthropists, paupers, and visionaries colonize without the use of slave labor while also serving as a police force against runaway slaves from South Carolina? As colonists pondered those and other concerns, runaways took action and pressed them to respond in kind.


CHAPTER 3
RUNAWAYS OF THE TRUSTEE PERIOD

Amidst the Imperial Struggle

Historians have duly noted that Georgia was founded as the anti-slavery colony. The Trustees wanted to ensure that paupers and debtors could find work. By emphasizing that noble goal of the founders, however, one might be left with the impression that slaves were absent altogether. Despite the anti-slavery mandate in the colony’s charter, slaves were present in Georgia from the very founding of the colony. Runaway slaves were crucial to the eventual revocation of the ban on slavery as they fled into Georgia to provide much needed labor when the inexperienced settlers failed to meet the demands required for the colony to succeed. Influenced by both the success of South Carolina and the hardships of founding a colony, many chose to seek alternatives rather than fail. Runaway slaves provided colonists with the most feasible solution because they did not require recruitment. Instead they came readily to fill the labor void.

Several factors indicated that runaway slaves would play a central role in the shaping of Georgia despite the colony’s ban on slavery. Foremost, Georgia encompassed preexisting trade routes used by Carolinians, Native Americans and traders who often used slaves as porters, boatmen, and interpreters. Secondly, cattle-ranchers from South Carolina had encroached on the land and used slaves called cattle-hunters extensively along the southern frontier.\(^1\) Thirdly, the founders of Georgia lacked experience at colonization. Their collective lack of knowledge and manpower led

\(^1\) Cattle-hunters were slaves that worked exclusively as the herders of cattle on the open-ranges of the lowcountry.
to a direct dependence on Carolinians for assistance, and a subsequent reliance on slave-labor because Carolinians answered their requests by sending slaves. Finally, Spanish Florida adamantly enticed slaves to abscond from their masters in Carolina and receive freedom from the Spanish Crown once they reached Florida and converted to Catholicism. Economic opportunity motivated some runaways to enter Georgia. The Spanish promise of freedom led some to trek even further. In either regard, the information the enslaved gained through work and travel facilitated their journey to freedom.

The advertisements of South Carolina revealed the subscribers’ suspicion that their troublesome property had either fled to or through Georgia. Often times, the fugitives in question absconded with horses or some form of the maritime vessels which were frequently used by the runaways who made it to St. Augustine. Another fact that concerned the subscribers was that many runaways fled after they had been hired in Georgia as porters, cattle-hunters, and laborers. The hiring-out of slaves from Carolina allowed them to gain an early foothold in the Georgia labor force. Those experiences exposed slaves to the opportunities to clandestine work and trade available to them in Georgia. Moreover, the successful employment of runaway slaves became the bedrock upon which the group known as the Malcontents built their campaign to revoke the ban on slavery in Georgia. Despite the ban on paper, slaves and runaway slaves from South Carolina affected the economic, political, and diplomatic development of Georgia from the colony’s inception.

During the very time at which Georgia was growing more dependent on slave labor, the Governor of Florida issued the Edict of 1733. The Edict was meant to
reinvigorate the use of instigation as means to incite unrest among the enslaved masses in the lowcountry of British North America. The new Edict not only extended the promise of freedom but also revoked both the ability of British colonists to reclaim fugitive slaves and also that of their parties to claim slaves on the owner's behalf. While these themes were indeed dominant, one act of profound violence committed by two of the earliest indentured servants may have also skewed Georgians from recruiting adequate laborers from Europe.

Bacon’s Rebellion has often been interpreted as a pivotal turning point for the use of enslaved Africans in Virginia, whereas the violent uprising by the underclassmen increased the landed elites’ fear of recruiting more indentured-servants, and subsequently imported more Africans in their stead. Julie Anne Sweet has likewise argued that a murder committed by Irish-Catholic indentured servants Alice Riley and Richard White contributed to anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments of Georgians. On March 1, 1734, Riley and White strangled and drowned their master William Wise, who owned a small estate on Hutchinson’s Island near Savannah. While the murder itself concerned colonists, the ethnicity and religion of the culprits exacerbated preexisting tensions. Prejudices against Irish indentured servants manifested throughout the lowcountry and Chesapeake. However, the fact that Riley and White were both Catholic made them an internal threat associated by religion to the hostile Spanish regime in Florida. It was the fear of Irish-Catholic collusion with Catholic Florida that led Georgians to suspect the role of Irish servants in the Red String Plot of 1735, a suspected revolt of the disgruntled indentures. Though the conspiracy did not materialize, it revealed prejudices against Irish servants that may have skewed the
willingness of both Georgians to recruit more Irish-Catholics and of Irish Catholics to enter the lowcountry.²

Amidst Georgia’s dire need for manageable laborers, more and more enslaved Africans made their way into Georgia. The advertisements for runaways in South Carolina revealed the tendency for slaves to abscond to Florida, or at the very least, showed the collective fears and suspicions that they had. The potential threat of slaves fleeing southward to take refuge in Florida manifested in 1738, when a group of runaways from South Carolina sailed from Port Royal and established *Gracia Real de Sante Teresa de Mose*. The fugitives established their free community approximately two miles North of St. Augustine. The demographics of the founders of Fort Mose, as the free community would eventually be known, revealed a prevalence of skilled slaves, including carpenters, ironsmiths, and stonemasons. The artisans would use their acquired skills to build a walled fort. Female runaways also made the journey and helped to found Fort Mose. Thus, neither the motivation to seek freedom in Florida nor the ability to make the journey were restricted to single young men.

The runaways founded Gracia Real de Sante de Mose between the months of March and November of 1738. The Spanish government provided assistance. However, a Mandinga named Francisco Menedez and Antonio Joseph Eligio de la Puente led the free black community.³ The ramifications of their success soon reverberated in the lowcountry.

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On November 21, 1738, a group of twenty-three men, women and children fled Port Royal and sailed to Saint Augustine on a stolen launch. Nineteen of the runaways had belonged to Captain Caleb Davis, an Englishman who had traded in St. Augustine for years. When Captain Davis tried to reclaim the fugitives Spanish Governor Montiano refused his claim as the former slaves publicly laughed at Davis’s efforts.4 Within one month, more Carolinians complained about ‘several negroes' who had been ‘employed in Pettiaugers, and other like Craft’ who took ‘the benefits of the Spaniards’ Proclamation’ and went to Saint Augustine. Captain Davis reminded his fellow slaveholders that ‘No less than nineteen Negro Slaves which he had in Carolina’ had ‘run away from him lately all at once, under the strong Temptation of the Spaniards.’ Again he emphasized his own experience in which ‘he saw his said Negroes now at St. Augustine, who laughed at him.’5

Though Fort Mose was the most obvious manifestation of slaves who attained freedom in Florida, attention must also be given to the uncounted numbers of Africans who established autonomous communities amongst the native peoples of Florida.6 Georgia would likewise be impacted by Fort Mose. To counter the existence of Fort Mose and the threat the community posed to incite unrest among the enslaved masses, the government of South Carolina invoked its jurisdiction over the Georgia militia. That decision initiated a vicious cycle that facilitated the growth of slavery in Georgia. As

4 Ibid., pp. 32-33.


Georgians were compelled to patrol the southern border and launch expeditions against Fort Mose, their military service created even more shortages in an already deficient labor pool. To compensate for the voids in the workforce, Georgia relied evermore on assistance from South Carolina, and Carolinians responded by sending more slaves to work. Ironically, then, the success of slaves escaping to Florida and the collective fear that more would follow suit actually led colonists to utilize even more slaves in Georgia, which in turn increased the potential of runaways.

In 1739 the Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina informed Oglethorpe of “a serious revolt among the negroes of that province” which they claimed “had been instigated by a proclamation from the Spanish Governor of St. Augustine when some slaves had taken refuge there in January” of the said year. The South Carolina General Assembly sent a committee to St. Augustine to demand the restoration of “their property.” However, the Captain General of Florida maintained his position to “protect all runaway slaves.” In September of 1739, Oglethorpe “ordered a troop of rangers to patrol through Georgia and intercept any fugitives; sent Indian runners in pursuit, and directed a detachment from Port Royal to aid the planters of Carolina.” While on the campaign, “he directed the constables to seize all Negroes found in Georgia, offering rewards for their capture.”

The increased use of slaves blurred the distinction between fugitives who fled through Georgia and slaves hired out to work there.

To counter the Spanish threat, Oglethorpe sponsored the Lower Creeks in raids against Spanish settlements in Florida between the years of 1738 and 1739. The slave

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flight continued. Two Spaniards were caught and imprisoned in Georgia for enticing
slaves to flee and join those in Florida.\(^9\) In March of 1739, four slaves and an Irish
Catholic servant managed to escape Carolina to Florida on stolen horses and received
great honors at St. Augustine.\(^10\)

In 1739, Carolinians feared an immediate Spanish invasion and responded by
arming all enlisted slaves with a gun, powder, shot pouch, bullets, spare flints, and a
hatchet. The colonists also extended incentives for dutiful service. If a slave killed or
captured an enemy he was to be granted a livery coat, a pair of breeches, and an
exemption from labor on the day of each year upon which he performed the act.
Carolinians even proposed the fielding of a force of one-thousand Negroes to aid
Oglethorpe in a proposed invasion of St. Augustine in 1740. Eight hundred of the
slaves were to be used as laborers, while two-hundred were to be armed for combat.
After the Stono Rebellion of 1739, however, many South Carolinians rescinded the
notions of arming large numbers of their slaves.\(^11\)

On the 9\(^{th}\) of September 1739, a group of slaves started an uprising
approximately twenty-miles west of Charleston. They marched to the Stono river
bridge, attacked a warehouse, killed two guards, and secured weapons. The numbers
swelled to eighty as they marched southward, towards Spanish Florida. They burned or
looted seven plantations and killed approximately thirty whites and lost about forty-four
rebels. It took several days to quell the insurrection. The timing could have been

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influenced by many factors such as a recent malaria epidemic, rising tensions between the colony and the Crown, and that a new law was about to go into effect which required all white men to carry firearms.\textsuperscript{12} In either regard, the law fueled concerns and exposed the contradictory problems: slaves were becoming more rebellious yet slavery was the basis of the South Carolina economy. The Spaniards had shaken that basis by inciting slaves to run away and in the case of Stono to rebel. Carolinians refocused their efforts on patrolling the local slave population and the governor exercised his control over the militia of Georgia, directing those groups into slave patrols for the southern border.

During the War of Jenkins Ear, Oglethorpe led another exhibition and captured Fort Pupo, and Fort Picolata on the St. Johns River, West of St. Augustine. Oglethorpe’s force included eight-hundred black slaves or pioneers, as they were called, with South Carolina and Georgia Rangers, Highlanders, plus six-hundred Creek and Uchee.\textsuperscript{13} They captured Fort Mose in 1740 but the victory was short-lived. Spaniards rallied using a combined force of Africans and Indians. The force consisted of approximately nine hundred and sixty-five troops. Two-hundred were ‘Armed Negroes’ combined with ‘free Negroes’ who were formed from fugitives from the English colonies. Governor Montiano employed them as scouts. The Spanish counter-attacked again in June of 1742. The force included “Negroes” along with Indians and Spaniards.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{13} Landers, \textit{Black Society in Spanish Florida}, p. 35-38.

\textsuperscript{14} Porter, "Negroes on the Southern Frontier, 1670-1763," pp 67 – 68.
The St. Mary’s River demarcated a political, legal, religious, and cultural divide across which new groups of Africans fled in search of freedom. Pastor Johann Martin Bolzius noted in his Questionnaire on Carolina and Georgia that “generally” runaway slaves would “escape by water, past Frederica to St. Augustine, where they receive their freedom, be it war or peace.”\textsuperscript{15} The advertisements often reflect the slaves’ southward trek, mentioning the suspected direction of the fugitives and the means they used to take flight. For example, two Negroes fled in unison and one “named Stephen was patron of a large wood boat.”\textsuperscript{16} In other cases, the slaves’ experience was more apparent. Between July 25 and August 1, 1740 there “deserted from on Board the Sloop May-Flower, a tall rough Spanish Indian fellow” along with a “well set Spanish Negro fellow, about 30 years of age.” Although “neither of them” could “speak English,” the subscriber “supposed they were gone away in a small Spanish Cedar Boat 18 Feet long.”\textsuperscript{17} In 1746, for example, “a mulatto fellow named Chamberlain” who was “very well known in Town and Country” who the subscriber suspected would attempt to board “some vessel intending to go off the province.”\textsuperscript{18} In April 1748, an ad was posted for two Angola men who were “supposed to be gone in a Canow to the southward.”\textsuperscript{19} While many slaves fled through Georgia in route to Florida, the slaves of merchants and traders often traveled specific routes into Georgia.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., pp. 41-42.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 69.

\textsuperscript{19} Windley, \textit{Runaways Slave Advertisements Vol. 3}, p. 82.
From Porters to Runaways

Despite the prohibition against slavery, Charleston merchants sent slaves on trade ventures throughout Georgia. The slaves of traders often acted as representatives of merchant houses and the advertisements reveal that many operated without direct supervision for weeks at a time as they trekked from South Carolina to Georgia. These slaves were granted two factors that facilitated them to abscond; great mobility and marketable products. As the Georgian economy languished, struggling colonists readily engaged in clandestine trade with fugitive slaves who had access to the finished goods that they could not otherwise afford. Flight for such slaves provided as much opportunity to secure funds for themselves as it did to achieve freedom.

As early as 1690, Carolinians transferred goods from Savannah Town, a southern hub of the trade with Native Americans, on periagoes from which the products were transferred on to pack-horses or human porters and transferred them southeastward along two paths that branched near the Ogeechee River; one to Coweta the other to Okmulgee and Hichiti. Those same Charleston merchants continued to ship goods along those old routes through Georgia after it was founded. Agents, traders and merchants also used linksters, slaves who spoke multiple languages and often operated without direct supervision for weeks at a time as they trekked through Indian country.

South Carolina slave advertisements revealed patterns that indicated that runaways fled to or through Georgia, whereas many of the earliest runaways belonged

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20 Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1956), p. 36; Periagoes refers to small boats, often dugout canoes, designed primarily for travel in shallow water. Such boats could be equipped with paddles or sails and were used throughout the South and in West Africa. Because of the widespread use of such boats, they are called by various names such as piroque, piragua, or piraga.
to merchants and probably had experience along the many waterways and trade routes that extended southward into Georgia. In some cases, the subscriber mentioned that the runaway had experience with trade networks or was suspected of trying to venture southward. Some slaves stole a means to traverse those networks by horses or boats which also indicated their experience with travel and their intent to travel further and faster than they could on foot.

The most obvious indication of a slave’s experience was manifested by the numerous advertisements for runaways who belonged to merchants. Slaves who shipped and traded for Indian merchants gained experience along the many waterways and trade routes that extended southward into Georgia as they traveled on horseback or on piroques. The advertisements of Nicolas and Sarah Trott provided prime examples. Nicolas Trott traded actively with Native Americans between the years of 1700 to 1715, and was in constant conflict with the Grand Council over the licensing of his traders.\(^{21}\) Trott also opposed Barnwell’s expansionist policy and represented the Proprieter’s policies to protect Indian lands from encroachment by colonists in 1718.\(^{22}\) Moreover, Sarah Trott, the spouse of Nicolas, also used slaves in her various enterprises. In June of 1732, there ran “Away from James Searles two Negro Women,” and “one formerly belonged to Madam Trott.” The fugitives evidently had backgrounds in maritime travel and knowledge of the waterways because “they took a Cypress Canoe about 25 foot long and 3 foot wide.”\(^{23}\) The Trott’s chattel proved troublesome to other owners because during the first week of March 1734, there “Runaway from Is.

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\(^{21}\) Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, p. 120.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 215-217.

Mazyk sen. on 3d of January Last, a Negro woman named Hanna” who was “a good seamstress” and “seen at the point among Mad. Trott’s Negroes.”24 The Subscriber Isaac Mazýck, like Nicolas Trott, was one of the most active Indian traders of South Carolina from 1700. Thomas Smith posted an ad for “a Negro Man named Cuffee, belonging to the Estate of Mrs. Sarah Trott” who was “by trade a ship carpenter, and” had “been for some years past generally on board some of the Men of War.”25 Cuffee, then not only had seafaring experience but also a skill that made him useful to any vessel upon which he traveled. Evidently the Trotts used many of their slaves in maritime trade. Near the end of April 1739, a group of “three Negro men” who belonged “to Nicolas Trott” collectively “ran away from the Haugen plantation.” The subscriber noted that the fugitives had “taken a canoe to make the best way to Charlestown in order to make their Escape out of the Province.”26

The slaves of other Indian traders exhibited similar patterns of behavior. Between October 29 and November 5, 1737 “a young Negro Fellow named Peter” fled. Prior to absconding, Peter did “belong to the Mr. Coleman the Indian Trader, after that to Mr. Jordan Roche.” He was “well known in Charlestown” and had “been lately seen with the fishing Negroes.”27 Through the activities of his previous owners, Peter would have extensive exposure to the backcountry routes and human networks. In 1717, Coleman was made the manager of the pack-horses for trade to the Catawba and in

25 Ibid., p. 70.
26 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
27 Windley, Runaways Slave Advertisements Vol. 3, p. 29.
1718 manager of pack-horses to the Cherokee. Roche, from approximately 1728 had for many years, been the most enterprising trader amongst the Chickasaw. In 1735, he was listed among the official estimates of about two-hundred Indian traders employed as factors by the merchants of Charlestown. Roche lived among the Indians, and eventually rose to the ranks of the Charleston merchants who once employed him.

Along with the knowledge and opportunity for slaves to navigate their way to freedom, the South Carolinians who established trade houses in Georgia also facilitated the possibility for slaves to engage in clandestine trade. By 1735, Georgia’s Indian Commissioner Patrick Mackay intensified his efforts to thwart unlicensed trade in the low country. During the same period, however, Carolina traders experienced dwindling profits from their primary trade with the Cherokee, and compensated for their losses by increasing trade with the Creek, their second most prosperous trade network. The trade with the Creek required Carolina traders to travel and trade even more within the borders of Georgia. Georgian traders began to cut into the trade and benefited from their closer proximity. To minimize their costs, Carolinian traders ignored the mandate to secure a license to trade in Georgia. In 1735, Commissioner Mackay enforced the Indian Act and the Rum Act seized the goods from the unlicensed traders, and expelled them from Georgia. Mackay ordered traders to secure a license for sixty-five sterling per year but the bond was 6100 sterling.

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29 Ibid., pp. 121-126, 274.

Mackay’s efforts, however, failed to discourage the merchants. Instead, determined Carolinians found ways to circumnavigate the restrictions. In March of 1735, “Orders” were “issued to all the Magistrates to take from Joseph Watson his Lycense for trading with the Indians, and to confine him as a lunatick.”

In May of 1735, South Carolina Lt. Governor Thomas Broughton was informed that blacks and whites were committing robberies and other offenses. The outlaws held up in the swamp at the head of the Wando River. Furthermore, both of Georgia’s major urban centers, Augusta and Savannah, became hubs for legal and illegal trade. Some Carolinians attempted to bypass conflict and establish residence in Georgia.

On 16 January 1735, for example, the magistrate noted that “Archibald Macgilivray,” a Carolinian merchant, had been “given a Town lot.” Although Indian traders who moved southward from Charleston were usually poor, illiterate, and chronic debtors, McGillivray was one of the few large scale traders. The merchant’s establishment, Archibald McGillivray and Company, employed one-hundred and three horses from New Windsor to the Creeks in the charge of fifteen pack-horsemen and principal traders. In the same month another large-scale trader, “Mr. Everleigh Merch. of Charlestown acquainted the Trustees that he had been at Savannah and found 80 houses already built, and 40 more in hand.” Eveleigh stated that “besides additions making to those that were finish’d” he would charge 15£ sterling p. ann, 15£ to build, and 20 shill per acre for gardens. However, he found that the people were


“uneasie that they are not allow’d the use of Negroes.”

Eveleigh had as long and extensive engagement in the Indian trade as any merchant. He had direct economic networks in Bristol and instead of employing factors like other traders, Eveleigh extended large-scale supplies to traders on credit. He served on the Indian Board from 1712 to 1715 and worked most extensively with the Creek and Cherokee. In 1732 he entertained the Head Men of many Indian tribes aboard the Fox Man-of-War.

Evidence suggests that Eveleigh continued his slave-based ventures and began to hire out slaves a year after he settled in Georgia. In the same year that Eveleigh established residence in Georgia, a planter by the name of Samuel Montaigut Eveleigh posted an ad for “3 Negroes named Simon, Cyprus, and Peter” who had absconded from a “plantation on Opescoe Creek.” The subscriber requested that the slaves be returned to “Mr. Sam: Eveleigh at Charlestown.” Thus, Eveleigh had most likely hired the slaves out. The next year Geo. Austin posted an ad for “a tall Gambia Negro Man, named Carolina about 25 years of age” who spoke “very bad English.” Carolina had fled “about Three Months” prior and the reward was for anyone who could “give intelligence of him to Sam. Eveleigh on Charles-Town (his Present Master).” Thus, Eveleigh was engaged in hiring out slaves by 1736. Moreover, Eveleigh soon expanded such ventures to clients in Georgia. However, the activities of Eveleigh and runaway slaves must be recognized as a common practice within the context of the economic conditions of Georgia and its settlers.

35 Crane, The Southern Frontier, pp. 122-123.
37 Ibid., p. 27.
Augusta was a particularly active region in regards to clandestine trade, due in part to the types of the settlers who migrated there from South Carolina. John Musgrove, owner of one of the first stores in the area, used a slave named Justice in his various enterprises.\(^{38}\) Other colonists stated Augusta was “principally, if not altogether, inhabited by Indian Traders and Store-keepers, the number of whom may now be about thirty or upwards,” furthermore the settlements supported by “the use of Negroes . . . upwards of eighty” who did “all the laborious parts of culture.”\(^{39}\) In case of runaways, subscribers often made general mention of a runaway’s experience with trade networks when it was suspected that the slave would venture southward. For instance, Georgians tried to divert Indian trade to Savannah in 1735 and the advertisements reflected that shift in trade. During the second week of April 1736, an ad was posted for “a Negro man Named Prince” who had “run away the 13\(^{th}\) of February from Savannah Town.”\(^{40}\) Though details are scant in regards to the uses to which the slaves were put, it is clear that they were involved in the building and maintaining of the earliest trade posts in the Georgia.

With regards “to Savannah,” it was reported in December of 1736 that there were “some who” had “cultivated” and who were “diligent to thrive.” However, there also lived in Savannah “a great number are idlers and will never come to good. Many of these were intending to leave our colony when orders came to strike them off the stores, but

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\(^{39}\) Patrick Tailfer, A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America, from the First Settlement Thereof until the Present Period . . . by Patrick Tailfer, M.D., Hugh Anderson, M.A. Da. Douglass and others . . . Charles-Town, South Carolina [18\(^{th}\) century collection Online Gale Group] p. 114.

\(^{40}\) Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 3, p. 20.
having run themselves in debt, were not suffer’d to depart till they had paid their debts, upon which some had made themselves over servants to their creditors to work them out.” Trustees discovered that “Two Thirds of the people” of Savannah lived “in debt, and . . . thought the prosperest way to do by them, was to give them all leave to sell their Town Lotts of houses & 5 acres” and “to oblige them with the residue of their money (after their debts are paid) to settle on their 45 acre lots.”

The Trustees were further alarmed that despite the economic hardships “people still get Rum notwithstanding all the care taken, by means of Carolina boat in which in the night time land it in Creeks unknown to the magistrates.” Based on accounts of the general river traffic, Negroes probably outnumbered white rivermen in the Rum trade as well.

The languishing conditions of Georgia fostered clandestine trade and the Trust was conflicted between the will of the Crown and economic hardships of settling the colony. In July of 1736, Oglethorpe received word that “the people of Charlestown” were “angry with him for insisting on their obeying his majesty’s Orders, particularly that relating to the Treaty with the Indians.” Carolinians had a vested interest in the trade because of “Some of their Merchants carrying on a clandestine trade with the French and Spaniards.” Georgians, then, understood that “if the Indians go to the French and Spaniards these merchants gain by it, because they” sold “to these Nations at vast prices.” Into those conditions of depravity and contention, merchants of Charleston sent their slaves with marketable goods and many of those slaves became fugitives taking those commodities with them.

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42 Ibid., p. 219.

In April of 1738, the merchant Eveleigh posted an ad for “3 Negro men” who had “Run Away January last, from Samuel Montauit’s plantation in the Township of Purrysburgh.” At least one of the slaves was experienced in the area, whereas he had been “taken last year about Savannah-Town” and was “supposed to be traveling that way again with his companions.” The reward was to be paid to anyone who could deliver “the said Negroes to Mr. Sam. Eveleigh at Charlestown.”

Although Eveleigh forsake Georgia, he was instrumental in hiring slaves and for exposing them to the opportunities to flee to or gain clandestine work in Georgia.

From June to September 1739, Augusta expanded rapidly and “there were several traders settled, with large warehouses of goods, and great trade drove with the Indian Nation.” In July of that year, an observer outlined “the whole Indian trade” which was “meant to be carry’d on by the Savannah River.” As a result of the “abundance of winding, in many places” the traders were “obliged to send their trading vessels quite round to the River Savannah, from whence they must go afterwards near 300 miles further by water.” The trade boats, “commonly go with only 4 Negroes to row, and a white man to steer who is master.” Overall, “the cargo was seldom less worth than 1000£ sterlg. All of which Trade from what is said is now likely to center in Georgia.” Instead of the slower and more laborious routes that traveled over the mountains. Free or enslaved, black wayfarers outnumbered their white counterparts in the movement of goods along the rivers and streams of the lowcountry. Such a ratio would have made it less likely for runaway slaves to attract attention.

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44 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 3, p. 32.
Trade to the frontier regions of the lowcountry also brought slaves into contact with Native Americans who would harbor them if they chose to run away. Few Africans were known to live among the Creek during the Trustee period. Those who did manage to escape and find refuge among the Creek, however, were most often accepted into extended family networks and performed the same tasks as women or children. Fugitive slaves may have been required to do work usually required of Creek children such as tend fields, collect wood, water or forage for food. Runaway slaves may have also had to do the work of Creek women. Which included agrarian labor as well as the preparation of food and the processing of deerskin. Some intermarried.47

Along with stealing their time and labor from their masters, the slaves who were employed in trade were also able to engage in complex networks of theft and clandestine trade. Such bondsmen had access to marketable goods, a high level of mobility, and less supervision because they often outnumbered white supervisors on trading trips. Like the other groups who entered Georgian from Carolina, the black populace, free or enslaved brought certain experiences to bear. Therefore, theft by slaves can be best understood in the context of material conditions of Georgia and the experiences that Carolinians, free and enslaved, brought with them as they influenced the shaping of the colony.

Theft and clandestine trade, developed along gender lines. Female slaves who worked in the Charleston market had been granted “all imaginable liberty.” With women dominating the marketplace, the market became a central crossroads of the slave

community, in which rural producers and urban marketers maintained ‘trading partnerships.’ In order to cordon such unrestricted interaction the city of Charleston established an official market in 1739. A major complaint of the citizens was the discretion in which the slaves managed the market, reserving items for one another over white citizens. Thus, the market was not simply a slave market for white buyers but also a market in which slaves bought, sold, and bartered goods. The market posed as an ideological challenge to slavery and foreshadowed the “tolerated illegalities” that slaves later took to Georgia.

The government of Georgia forbade colonists from trading with slaves but was unable to contain the activity due to the inability to patrol the frontier. The trade was also facilitated by the willingness of whites to trade with slaves, even under clandestine conditions. Timothy Lockley noted the two tiered class of Carolinians who migrated to Georgia. Atop the social ladder were the “men of substance”, the planter-elite exemplified by Jonathan Bryan and beneath the landed-class existed the “indigent subjects” of less affluence.48 Unable to purchase the goods they sought outright, those subjects provided a ready market for stolen goods. Slaves were quick to take advantage of their position between the haves and the have-nots.

Historian Jeff Forret noted that “armed with the money and commodities they earned from or through the largesse of their masters, slaves were no strangers to the antebellum marketplace.”49 However, Forret also noted that poor whites influenced and facilitated slave trading, and more importantly slave theft. The author argued that

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slaves exhibited “sophisticated market behavior” when they stole because they mainly took items such as clothes and foods for which poor whites were willing to barter. Poor whites, some of whom possessed with a “Snopesian” resentment towards rich whites, were very willing to maintain clandestine trade networks with slaves.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, the problem of clandestine trade stemmed in part from the evolving inequalities amongst colonists.

Colonists, such as Francis Moore, the first keeper of stores, wrote growing accounts of the natural potential of Savannah. However, trouble soon arose. Two ships from Charleston loaded with supplies were supposed to land at Frederica but “the captains did not care to venture down, and gave many reasons.” Colonists suffered as they waited for Oglethorpe to enlist the help of Captain Yokely.\textsuperscript{51} Hardships caused many to supplant praise with criticism, to replace loyalty with defections, and to forsake the work-ethic and anti-slavery sentiments upon which the colony was founded and to embrace slavery for all the benefits that came with it. As the economy languished, the market for clandestine trade expanded.

In 1736, Minister Bolzius sent word to Oglethorpe. The “new come Saltsburgers had not received half the tools promist them out of the stores,” and “that they must break up & go southward, if deny’d their full provisions” which included “their full

\textsuperscript{50} Forret, “Slaves, Poor Whites, and the Underground Economy of the Rural Carolinas,” p. 803; The term Snopesian refers to the fictional Snopes family chronicled in the William Faulkner’s \textit{The Hamlet}, \textit{The Town}, and \textit{The Mansion} in which poor whites live as outcasts of the white society and instead of conforming to the mores of the more affluent families, engaged in deviant behaviors.

\textsuperscript{51} Francis Moore, \textit{A voyage to Georgia. Begun in the year 1735. Containing, an account of the settling the town of Frederica, in the southern part of the province; and a description of the soil, air, birds, beasts, trees, rivers, islands, &c. With the rules and orders made by the ... trustees for that settlement ... Also a description of the town and county of Savannah ...},(London: Printed for J. Robinson, 1744), pp. 21-22.
quantity of cows, sows, and poultry.\textsuperscript{52} Typical allotments or provisions were for “every man a Watch-coat, a Musquet and Bayonet; to those who have them not of their own, an Hatchet, an Hammer, an Handsaw, a shod Shovel or Spade, a broad Hoe, a narrow Hoe, a Gimlet, a drawing Knife, and there will be a publick Grindstone to each Ward or Village. He will also have an Iron Pot, and a Pair of Pot hooks, and a Frying-pan.”\textsuperscript{53} It is worth noting that in 1738 the overall economy of Georgia took a drastic turn for the worse.

\textbf{The Failure of the Trusteeship}

The Trusteeship of Georgia failed for many reasons. Not the least of which was the divisive natured in which the colony was governed in the ever futile effort to fulfill the contradictory reasons for which the colony was founded. To fulfill Georgia’s role as both a paupers’ colony and a military outpost, Oglethorpe functioned as both a military commander and civilian authority. In 1738, the Crown granted Oglethorpe command of Forty-Second Regiment of Foot, an armed force of seven-hundred infantry. Though he remained a Trustee, the promoted marked a noted shift for Oglethorpe and the colony. Foremost, from 1738 until his departure from Georgia in 1743, Oglethorpe devoted a great deal of his time and the colony’s resources into building Frederica into a fortified town capable of withstanding Spanish attacks. The political division between Savannah and Frederica hindered colonial unity. The Trustees tried to govern Savannah in accordance to the mandates of the Trusteeship. Oglethorpe commanded Frederica to suit Royal directives and the military conditions brought by the War of Jenkin’s Ear.

\textsuperscript{52} McPherson, \textit{Journal of the Earl of Egmont}, p. 205.

Neither government respected the authority of the other. The Malcontents exploited the lack of a central authority and bolstered their position to permit slavery. Economic troubles exacerbated the overall struggle for power amidst an environment of mutual dissent.\textsuperscript{54}

Thomas Causton, the keeper of the Trustees store, received more than 13,000 pounds for public expenses in 1738. Yet, by June of that year, the colony’s unpaid bills amounted to more than 5,000 pounds. People charged that “he had used the office for his own advancement and acted the part of a petty tyrant, rewarding his favorites and oppressing others.” However, the policing of runaway slaves also strained the colonial budget because even “the scout boatmen, rangers, and others employed in the defense of the colony were unpaid and actually starving.”\textsuperscript{55}

In June of 1738, Thomas Carston was removed from both his office as magistrate and as the keeper of public stores for the city. Officials stated that Carston’s mismanagement was exacerbated by the fact that he held both offices. Therefore, two people assumed the dual offices once held by Carston. Thomas Jones, the Third Bailiff, became the keeper of stores and Henry Parker assumed the position of magistrate. However, the next magistrate and keeper of stores found too many inconsistencies and irregularities to provide immediate improvements. Thus, the disarray Carston initiated outlasted his term. Many citizens recalled that “the finances of the trust were again in a depressed condition”, so much that Olgethorpe himself “found it necessary to draw largely upon his private fortune and to pledge his individual credit in provisioning the


\textsuperscript{55} Cooper, \textit{The Story of Georgia}, p. 208
settlers.” Officials stated that Jones “surpassed Mr. Carston in everything that was bad, without having any one of his good qualifications” Oglethorpe’s decision to retain Henry Parker, however, spoke volumes for the future of the fledgling province. The person who persuaded Oglethorpe to retain Parker was Thomas Christie, a South Carolinian. The influence of Christie was significant because he later was one of numerous Carolinians to petition for a Georgia land grant and to transplant his slaveholding ventures with him.

In 1738, thirty-six of one-hundred and nineteen petitioning freeholders joined the colony mysteriously. Thirty-two of the migrants settled at unknown locations. Thirty allegedly traveled from up-country Carolina, where they were former members of disbanded military units. They owned slaves, used sloops and pole-boats to trade rum and molasses along the numerous rivers. They also raised corn and rice. Due to the opportunities provided along the frontier, the number of squatters steadily increased until 1750. Carolinians eventually took advantage of that unregulated market, as did runaway slaves.

By September of 1738, the Trust had “received a Letter from one John Miller, who keeps Stores at Augusta to serve the Indian Traders.” The letters informed them “that the Inhabitants were settling in a very irregular Manner, by building Stores on five hundred Acre Lotts some Miles distant from each other up the Path toward the Creeks:

57 Tailfer, A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America, p. 73.
58 Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion into Georgia, p. 219.
The Reason for which is that the Out-Parts have the Advantage and Chance of intercepting the Customers of those who live in or near the Town of Augusta.” Miller further noted “the Power of such Indian Traders” who would “run in debt with the settled Storekeepers,” then “go on one of those outlying Stores, and be supplied, and then to return to the Indian nation, thereby defrauding their former Creditors, who cannot bring them to regular Justice.” 60 In 1739, the interior was continually troubled by the “disorder of traders” and a “great numbers of vagrants being gone up without licenses.” 61 Slaves continually fled amidst the unruly frontier. Beneath the veil of trade, slavery became a pillar of the economy of the backcountry.

Slaves eventually became a substantial part of the clandestine population of the backcountry. On November 10, 1740 an official noted that Augusta was “principally, if not altogether inhabited by Indian traders and Storekeepers, the numbers upwards of 30, and a considerable quantity of corn has been raised there, the land being good and richer than in the maritime parts, and their use of negroes is connived at, they having upwards of 80 Negroes.” 62 In July of the next year, citizens complained that “without some such Authority at Augusta, amidst such a lawless, wild Crew of People, no Man’s Property, or even personal Safety, would be secure.” 63 At the request of the Trust, Captain William Thompson investigated the complaint. Later that year, Thompson


63 Ibid., p.19.
reported to the Trustees in London that “Augusta consists of a lawless of Indian Traders, all runaways from Carolina for debt, all rogues to each other and at continual variance.”

Kennedy O’Brien noted in 1741 that both rogues and traders utilized black labor in Augusta. O’Brien stated that “All, or most of the Corn . . . raised there, hath been wrought and manufactured by Negroes belonging to the said Inhabitants and those opposite them on the North Side of the River in South Carolina.” In October of 1741, Stephens later noted in a letter that “Some People at Augusta” had “Plantations on the Carolina side of the River, as well as in Georgia, where they find it more advantageous to settle, and carry on the Trade with the Indians . . . by such Means they have an Opportunity of sliding two or three Negroes now and then at a Pinch into their Plantations, where during their skulking [sic] a while (which is not hard to conceive, considering the great Extend of the Township of Augusta.” Later that year, in December of 1741, Stephens wrote another letter that did “so positively affirm, that there are at least 100 Negroes made use of by the Inhabitants of Augusta, without which, not one settler would live on that Side of the River.” As slavery became more and more a part of Georgia, despite the ban, colonists began to press for the restriction on slavery to be lifted.

Thomas Stephens, Secretary of Georgia and his son William Stephens were central to the movement to have slavery legalized in Georgia. Thomas Stephens had voiced his displeasure with the system of land tenure, the Trustees inefficiency, and the

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64 Ibid., p. 21.
inability of Europeans to labor effectively under the climate of the lowcountry. His overt criticism led to a rift between he and Oglethorpe, and Stephens took his argument to London. Among his suggestions, Stephens called for the unlimited importation of African slaves and argued that it over an eight year span would cost £751.9.9 more to employ white workers as enslaved Africans. After organizing the Malcontents into a formal political lobby, Stephens forced a showdown between the proslavery faction and the Trustees in London. In March of 1742, the House of Commons denied the petition of the Malcontents but Stephens succeeded in causing such a stir that Parliament inquired. In May Stephens was granted the opportunity to state his case before the Committee of the Whole House. The Trustees presented their resolutions the next month. By then the proslavery faction had gained support even among the Trustees. Of the seven resolutions that they presented six passed. The resolution for the introduction of slavery was denied by a vote of 43-34. Despite the verdict in London, conditions in the lowcountry facilitated the continued use of slavery.

By 1744, colonists throughout Georgia openly engaged in clandestine trade. In December of that year, for example, William Stephens chronicled a heated encounter centered on the use of a vessel to informally dispose of goods. The conflict was initiated by a “Mrs. Avery” whom he described as “a poor woman” who was “fearful of being deprived of all Claim to any benefit from the Trust, for her late husbands Works.” Mr. Avery supervised a general survey for the Trust with the terms of the agreement being held secret between Mr. Avery and the Trust. Mrs. Avery traveled from Charleston to Georgia in November to settle the matter. In an effort to secure some claim to Mr.

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Avery’s rightful due prior to the Trust’s intervention and possible confiscation, Mrs. Avery “parted with them out of her custody.” In December, a vessel was docked and loading when Mrs. Avery “sent some of her Goods in a Clandestine manner down the Wharf in order to put on Board a Small Vessell, that was bound to Charlestown.” The captain refused to transport goods in such a furtive manner and Mrs. Avery “shew’d her Talent in railing and foul language.” With her requests unmet, Mrs. Avery departed and sought another outlet in which she could informally dispose of her goods. Some Georgians even encouraged servants to steal. For example, administrators heard of the “grievous complaints exhibited by Mr. Bosomworth” who filed them “in behalf of himself and his Wife, against. Josp. Watsons.” Mr. Bosomworth accused Mr. Waston of “seducing his Servants, and taking Goods from them, which they had Stollen from their Master and Mistress.” The dispute between Bosomworth and Waston showed that clandestine trade was driven as much by the desires of free citizens as the conditions of forced-laborers, whether they were servants or slaves. Amidst the colonialists disregard for the law, the slaves of merchants continued to use their experiences and opportunities to flee.

On September 22, 1746 there did “Run Away from Point-Comfort on Savannah River within 20 miles of Old Savannah Town or New-Windsor, the latter end of December last, a Negro man and Woman.” The man was called “Cooper Joe” and his wife was described as “a tall lusty young wench” who could speak “good English,

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68 Ibid., p. 174.

69 Ibid., p. 174.
Chickesaw, and perhaps French,” as a result of “the Chickesaws having taken her from the French settlements on Mississippi.” The ad did not mention the slaves’ method of escape or any loot they may have taken. However, Alexander Wood, the Indian trader, was the subscriber.\(^70\) In July of 1748, a similar ad was posted for a fugitive who had fled “sometime in May.” The runaway was “a Negro fellow named Sambo” who was “used to row in one of the Indian trading boats.”\(^71\) Again there was no mention of any plunder taken by Sambo, but by 1748, the economic conditions of Georgia had brought many colonists to desperation. Many of the “middling and lower classes” had either fled the colony due to the hardships of the war or threatened to flee before they would bear the hardships of another. The planters endured hardships as well, with their condition being described as “unspeakably bad.”\(^72\)

As economic conditions worsened in Georgia, runaway slaves continually found ways to escape and transport clandestine goods into Georgia and their efforts became more evident. In late November 1749 an ad was posted in South Carolina for a slave “named Peter” who was “about 30 years of age.” The subscriber suspected that the fugitive would attempt to pass for free and flee towards “some of the Indian nations” or “Georgia.” Peter took shoes, “a young red roan gelding” and so many clothes that it was “almost needless to describe his dress.”\(^73\) The clothes may have been simply for wearing. Considering the economic context, however, Peter may have stolen the horse


\(^71\) Ibid., p. 84.


\(^73\) Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 3}, p. 94.
and extra clothing to sell or barter. Observing such practices from Ebenezer, Pastor Bolzius noted that some runaways would “just run into the woods” and be “secretly looked after by the other Negroes and occupy themselves with theft.” As such, theft by slaves was associated with their personal autonomy, while simultaneously keeping them in touch with those in servitude.

Along with great mobility, the slaves of merchants also benefited from their access to marketable products. As the Georgian economy languished, struggling colonists readily engaged in clandestine trade with fugitive slaves who could deliver goods that they could not otherwise afford. Flight for such slaves provided as much of an opportunity to gain profit as it did to achieve freedom. The same can be said of skilled slaves who fled to Georgia during the Trustee era.

The inability of Georgians to meet the colony’s physical and artisan needs led to an immediate dependence on South Carolinians for labor. Two conditions shaped the increased use of slavery within that context. Foremost, none of the original founders of Georgia had experience in settling a frontier and few of the citizens were artisans. Secondly, South Carolinians hired their skilled slaves out to work in Georgia, which allowed the slaves to work without the direct supervision of their owners. Furthermore, the first black slaves in the history of Georgia possessed skills and experience that made them better-prepared even than many of the first European workers to labor in the founding stages of every sector of the colonial economy. As a result of the settlers’ shortcomings and the hiring process, Georgia differed from other British colonies of North America in that Georgia did not undergo a major shift from an economy

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74 Bolzius, “Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina,” p. 234.
dependent on indentured servitude to one dependent on slavery. The advertisements for runaways revealed that many slaves from South Carolina fled while or shortly after they had been hired-out to Georgia. Thus, the hiring process provided skilled slaves with opportunities and experiences that they eventually used to run away.

In the summer of 1732, the Georgia Trustees officially requested assistance from the government of South Carolina. Most of the Trustees were members of the Prison Investigation Committee in London. The government of South Carolina and citizens provided Georgians with material, military, and administrative assistance. South Carolinians hired common slaves to Georgia perform draft labor, skilled slaves for carpentry, or cattle-hunters to tend cattle. Benjamin Martyn, Secretary to the Trustees, submitted a request to Governor Johnson of South Carolina “that twenty Negro Labourers, and Four Pair of sawyers, be hired to assist in clearing the ground for this new settlement, which is design’d to be made on the south side of the River Savannah.”

South Carolinians provided food and housing at Port Royal for future Georgians as they waited to embark for Savannah. When the Georgians departed, Carolinians granted the additional provisions for the settlers to sustain themselves as they established homes and gardens in Georgia. Once the settlers landed at Frederica, the Carolina government allotted them another one-hundred and five head of cattle, twenty-five of swine, and twenty barrels of rice. Charleston merchants made additional personal contributions of another one-hundred head of cattle, cash and the loan of slave laborers. Military aid began when fifteen Rangers and a scout boat were dispatched

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76 Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion into Georgia p. 13.
to accompany the original settlers from Port Royal to Frederica, and continued when the Carolina Assembly funded a Ranger group that assisted with defense of Georgia for three years. The military assistance alone cost 5,500 pounds for the first year. The planter Jonathan Bryan guided Oglethorpe with Indian negotiations.  

Despite the assistance of Carolinians, Oglethorpe and the colonists still failed to meet their labor needs. The colonists were meant to build their own. However, Lord Egmont, a principal trustee of the colony, stated before Parliament that their recruit consisted of entre deux ages ‘middle poor’ such as ‘decayed tradesmen, or supernumerary workmen’ who either could not ‘put their hands to country affairs or’ were ‘too proud to do it.’ Others described them as the ‘miserable wretches let out of Goal’ by the Act of 1729. As the masses struggled to meet the needs of settlement, their leaders provided ineffective guidance. Instead, the situation was worsened by those of a “superior rank” who contributed to dem.ise of the colony because they “formed romantick scenes of happiness, and imagined they could find the conveniences and pleasures of life without any labour of soil.” By Martyn’s account, “they did not consider the hardships inseparable from the first settlement of a new country.”

The need for slaves was further accentuated by colonists who “made but little or bad use from the benefits they received, idling away their times, whilst they had provisions from the public store, or else working for hire . . . and spending that money in rum and good living, thereby neglecting to improve their lands.” Work arrangements allowed colonists to earn two shillings per day as unskilled laborers and five shillings per

77 Ibid., p. 11.
80 Martyn Benjamin, An Impartial Enquiry into the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia, p. 4.
day as carpenters. Too often, however, such people accumulated debt over time and became “hirelings’, unable to sustain themselves on their own agricultural production and dependent on wage labor. “These” settlers, wrote Francis Moore, were “generally discontent with the Country,” but “their creditors will not let them go away.”

Even the mandatory labor requirements failed to meet the needs of settling Georgia. On average, colonists labored “in common” for approximately fifteen months. The costs of recruiting and sustaining workers proved too costly for the fledgling economy of Georgia. Colonists soon noted that, “the expence of white servants, was the chief means of ruining those who thought to procure a living by building their towns.” As Georgians failed to meet the growing demands of settlement, Carolina sent more slaves, and Georgia was soon “afflicted by Negroes from Carolina, who did the heaviest work.” In March of 1733, Joseph Bryan personally dispatched four slaves who worked gratis for twenty days as they hewed trees and built the first houses in Savannah. As the colony continued to languish, Bryan and Colonel William Bull traveled to Georgia in July with twenty more slaves and presented the slaves' labor as a gift 1733.

The labor shortage was exacerbated by the settlers’ factionalization. Jews, from Portugal, South America and England, migrated to Georgia but instead of working in common with the Trust, they formed the homogenous settlement of Hampton. Germans emigrated from the palatinates of the Rhine, and Scots from both the Lowland and Highland shires. The colonists recorded less demographic information regarding non-

81 Moore, A voyage to Georgia. Begun in the year 1735, p.25.

82 Patrick Tailfer, a True and Historical narrative of the colony of Georgia in America, p. 30.


English settlers because many of them came of their own account. The information for the English settlers, however, revealed their lack of preparation for the colonial undertaking.

The first migrants consisted of one-hundred and thirty individuals, many of whom were in thirty-five family units. They were listed as carpenters, brick-layers, mechanics, farmers, all of who had allegedly been “sifted through a fine sieve”, the “honestly unfortunate.”85 During the first decade of the colony, however, approximately 1,800 people entered Georgia on charity, which indicated that they were not affluent enough to pay their own passage to the New World. The data on approximately eight hundred of those migrants also revealed that only fifty-five had experience in agricultural, and only thirty-hundred and three were described as workers or servants.86

Early advertisements from South Carolina showed that Georgians recruited slaves from Carolina to perform skilled labor. In April of 1733, “Mrs. Catherine Bettison” posted an ad for “three Negro Sawyers,” runaways who had been “hired by Mr. Chardon for the Service of Georgia.”87 The subscriber also mentioned that she had “Good Cyprus shingles to be sold.” Therefore, the slaves may have been experienced in shingle-making as well as carpentry. Such skills were invaluable in the lowcountry where hired slaves provided much needed skills and labor cheaper than European workers.

On December 15, 1733, the Trustees proposed a resolution to offer a home to Salzburgers. Each head of household was to receive three lots, farm residence, garden, tools, and provisions from the Trustees store. At the time, however, the colony was not ready to receive the displaced Germans. In an effort to prepare for the


87 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements, South Carolina Vol. 3, p. 5.
Salzburgers, Oglethorpe purchased forty Irish transport servants in January of 1734, but “most of them proved vile rogues.”

On March 10, 1734, Oglethorpe met the Salzburgers at Charleston despite the setback with recruiting adequate laborers to assist them. Philip Von Reck, a Salzburger leader, decided upon a settlement one week later and named it Ebenezer. Georgia received more Germans over the next two years but their contribution to the Trust and the colony was less than optimal. By 1736, the vast majority of German migrants had decided to settle, and work within their own ethnic enclave. Some of them went to Frederica to strengthen the garrison at St. Simon’s Island, but most preferred Ebenezer, where the population had grown to approximately 200 souls.

The Germans who entered Georgia after the original Salzburger immigrants showed the same determination to maintain the ethnic enclave instead of supporting the communal desires of the Trust. Oglethorpe expected Captain Hermsdorf to deliver another contingent of German to Frederica. After their arrival, however, the Germans chose instead to settle at Ebenezer, “so that they might have the benefit of two ministers, who settled at Ebenezer and that they might not divide the congregation.” Although Captain Hermsdorf pledged for the Germans to “be put upon every occasion of service,” the defection left Frederica with approximately half the manpower expected in the settlement. Once the Germans settled “under the government of Mr. Boltzius their pastor”, however, they chose “never to commix or associate with Strangers.” The Germans had no need, whereas they “were liberally supported by both from Germany and England,” independent of the rest of the colony. Thus, regardless of the pledge

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90 Tailfer, a True and Historical narrative of the colony of Georgia in America page 108 and Moore, A voyage to Georgia. Begun in the year 1735, pp. 21-22.
by Captain Hermsdorf, Oglethorpe and the main body of the colony was left without the Salzburgers' expected contribution to colonial labor. Despite their decision to distinguish themselves ethnically, however, the Salzburgers' did share in the growing dependence on slave labor.

South Carolinians sent English sawyers to assist the Salzburgers in settling Ebenezer. Pastor Bolzius stated that the "Salzburgers arrived very poor, having none but European experience, no honest friends in the land, and at the beginning, because of their own and other people's errors, no good soil, nor horses and plow."\(^\text{91}\) Though Bolzius later attributed the success of Ebenezer to Divine Intervention, it must be noted that Paul Jenys, South Carolina’s Speaker of the House, personally sent fourteen slaves who built huts, felled trees, and built bridges. \(^\text{92}\) Those slaves signaled the problem of flight that accompanied the increased use of hired slaves. The fourteen slaves sent by Jenys were also used for the clearing of a road from Ebenezer to Abercorn, a distance of approximately eight miles. During the clearing of the road, four of the fourteen slaves eventually escaped.\(^\text{93}\) Jenys was not the only Carolinian who sent slaves. The Trustees noted that "Mr Gronau's house at old Ebenezer as well as other buildings there were erected by the English carpenters and ye Twenty Negroes that were employed."\(^\text{94}\) The shortage of European artisans facilitated the use of slaves throughout colonial Georgia.

Oglethorpe appointed a carpenter named Blythman to build a lighthouse at Frederica and provided ten workers to assist him. However, when a group of settlers

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\(^{91}\) Bolzius, “Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina,” p. 226.


arrived on the fifth of February 1735, Oglethorpe that “found the Foundation had been piled, but the Brick-work not rais’d”. Blythman claimed that he used a lot of time in clearing trees, hauling timber, and laying the foundation. When Oglethorpe pressed the carpenter, however, he discovered that “the chief reason for the his delay arose from his men’s not working. . .Rum was so cheap in Carolina, from whence they easily got it, that one day’s pay would make them drunk for a week, and then they neither minded him nor anything else.” Oglethorpe weighed his options. He considered prosecuting Blythman but he was the only available person who had the skills to finish the work. Oglethorpe also feared that by the time he found and hired another carpenter the materials on-hand would be ruined. Oglethorpe accepted Blythman’s transgression and appointed a Mr. Vanderplank to observe Blythman’s progress and to pay him periodically, in proportion to the amount of work the carpenter completed.95

Though slaves were instrumental in trade and cattle-herding, it was their involvement in skilled labor that influenced if not inspired the bulwark of a pro-slavery faction in Georgia. Again, a South Carolinian was in the middle of the unrest. Elisha Dobree migrated from South Carolina to Georgia and settlers sought his help in forming a petition to void the prohibition on slavery. By 1738, a petition for slavery was sent to the Trustees; one-hundred and seventeen colonists had signed the document. The pro-slavery support for slavery coalesced. Magistrates forbade slavery on legal basis of the charter. The aforementioned Malcontents argued for the economic benefits of using slaves. However, Salzburgers and Scots disagreed with the philosophical basis of the institution.96

The demand for slave labor was also exacerbated by military demands, which in 1737, hindered the amount of time and effort white colonists could contributed to the

95 Moore, A voyage to Georgia. Begun in the year 1735, pp. 17-18.
colony. These events were influenced by an intensified imperial competition that centered on Spanish efforts to recruit runaway slaves from South Carolina and the Carolinians’ efforts to thwart Spanish schemes. During that year, Carolinians arrested three black residents and charged them with conspiracy. Over the next two years, South Carolinians would mobilize many times in response to suspected uprisings and rumors that slaves planned masse flight to St. Augustine.97 Also in 1737, Oglethorpe learned that Governor Guemes Y Horacasita of Florida planned to attack him, ‘Don Diego Oglethorpe’, with the aid of Negroes and Indians.98 Oglethorpe responded and required all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five to allot two of five work days for service in the militia. Men loss production and military commitments simultaneously drained more resources from the Trustees stores to feed and compensate those who served. Oglethorpe raised a special guard during a time of threat and offered a bounty of 10 sterling per man to recruits. Moreover, parliamentary grants were not increased to compensate for the drain on the colonies’ labor poor, and excess costs spent on defense. As a result, the Trust had to pay for extra provisions and medical expenses of extra-duty and of those injured.99 The actions of runaway slaves, however, would further direct the development of Georgia’s military and eventually lead to rift between Oglethorpe, the colony’s founder, and Bryan, one the colony’s chief supporters from South Carolina.

At some point between March and November of 1738, a group of runaways fled South Carolina and established Fort Moosa, also called Fort Mose, about two miles north of St. Augustine. They were skilled as carpenters, ironsmiths, and stoncutters. At least twenty three of the runaways escaped from Port Royal and nineteen of each

97 Porter, Negroes on the Southern Frontier, p. 64.
98 Ettinger, James Edward Oglethorpe: Imperial Idealist, p. 228.
belonged to Captain Caleb Davis who had actively traded in St. Augustine for several years prior.\textsuperscript{100}

Planters of South Carolina viewed Fort Mose as a great threat to stability of the lowcountry. Foremost, Fort Mose was founded and led by former runaways and might entice other slaves to seek sanctuary in Florida. Moreover, large numbers of runaways could present a dangerous adversary should they join the Spaniards or Native Americans in a military actions against their former masters. At the behest of Carolinians, Oglethorpe led a failed attempt to destroy Fort Mose.\textsuperscript{101} However, the campaign did capture some of the fugitives and Bryan was very displeased that Oglethorpe did not allow the Carolinians who accompanied him to take charge of them.\textsuperscript{102}

Mismanagement of the economic system also hindered the Trust’s ability to sustain the colony and facilitated the need for cheap slave-labor. Only five years after its founding, the colony was impoverished due to a lack of supplies and currency. Agricultural scarcity exacerbated poverty. The relative success of Charleston intensified the colonists’ dissatisfaction and once citizens realized that they suffered from mismanagement, many threatened to defections to Charleston. The future of the colony was jeopardized by the financial disarray later termed the Carston defalcation. In the


\textsuperscript{101} Many works mentioned the invasion led by Oglethorpe but only make generalizations about the size of the force. In James Edward Oglethorpe: Imperial Idealist, Amos Ettinger stated that Oglethorpe led one regiment on foot, one troop or cavalry unit, and militia men to attack St. Augustine. That definition, however, is more useful in determining the type of force led by Oglethorpe than in determining the actual size of the group.

\textsuperscript{102} Jackson, ”The Carolina Connection,” \textit{Georgia Historical Quarterly}, p. 160 - 161; Ettinger, James Edward Oglethorpe: Imperial Idealist, p. 235.
wake of the economic dismay of the colony, citizens and elected officials alike quickly took matters into their own hands and used criminal means to attain economic ends.

**Runaway Slaves Fill the Voids**

The citizens of Georgia struggled to uphold the philanthropic vision of the charter for a decade after the removal of Causton, but the economy languished. Meanwhile, the slave-based economy of South Carolina made Charleston the wealthiest city between Philadelphia and New Orleans. Negro slavery, though banned by the charter, had already appeared south of the Altamaha.

Settlement leaders soon began using black laborers as well. “Mr. Patrick Mackay Had without leave settled on Wilmington Island where he employ’d Negroes.” 103 In 1740, Mr. Vernon noted that the charter forbade slaves, therefore free negroes could be permitted. Some of the colonists leading members, such as Baillie, Stirling, Grant and Douglass supported Vernon’s position and, another petition that had been signed by sixty-one people. As Oglethorpe fought legal measures to permit the use of black labor, he discovered that Reverend Thomas Bosomworth, up the Altamaha river had already surreptitiously used negroes.104 By December 31, 1741, Stephens, did “so positively affirm, that there are at least 100 Negroes made use of by the Inhabitants of Augusta, without which, not one settler would live on that Side of the River.”105 As more colonists began to question the ideological justification for prohibiting the use of slavery, the Trustees noted the economic reasons for continuing the ban. In 1742 the Trustees Official State to the Lords Commissions for Trade and Plantations, [103 McPherson, *The Journal of the Earl of Egmont*, p. 319.]

[104 Church, *Oglethorpe: a study of philanthropy in England and Georgia*, p. 166.]

that held ten points against permitting slavery in Georgia they noted that “the expense would be too great for the Trust, since the first cost of a Negro would be £30 Or as much as passage money, tools, and subsistence for a year for a white man.”

In March 10, 1743, a citizen noted that in Augusta, “the Traders and Inhabitants are rich, and have many Servants, nay, and have (as Trustees have great Reason to believe) unlawfully employed Negroes on their Plantations.” Perhaps the earlier reports went unheeded because the “The Trustees are extremely surpris’d at seeing in the Journal . . . that Negroes have been creeping into the Colony at Augusta, and other places.” The use of enslaved labor increased. By October 2, 1747 “the whole Inhabitants of Augusta who have had Negroes among them for many Years past, and now declare that if they cannot obtain that Liberty, they will remove to the Carolina Side.” By December 29, 1747 white artisans took a stand against the burgeoning threat the slaves posed to their livelihood. “At a meeting in Queens Square, Westminster, an advertisement” was read from Savannah signed by several Carpenters, that had been “stuck up at several Places in the said Town, whereby they have combined and resolved not to work below particular prices specified therein.” The meeting had been to some degree inspired by the fact that “Revd Mr. Thomas Bosomworth had sent to South Carolina for 6 Negroes to be employ’d at his plantation at the Forks of the Altamaha River.”

As skilled slaves met the colony’s needs for labor, slaves known as cattle hunters rose to prominence in the burgeoning cattle industry. Carolinians provided Georgians

106 Church, Oglethorpe: a study of philanthropy in England and Georgia, p.162.
with barreled-beef and live cattle from the onset of the colony. Georgians welcomed both. However, live cattle required more responsibility for the settlers. Despite the prohibition on both slavery and land infringements, Carolinians often had their cattle hunters herd droves of cattle into Georgia and maintain cow-pens. The slaves who tended the cattle arguably had the greatest chances of all to flee. Their occupation mandated that they develop an extensive knowledge of the terrain. They were provided with horses and weapons and were allowed to herd with minimal supervision. Since Georgians had no experience with ranging cattle in the southeast, cattle hunters became integral to founding of the cattle culture. Georgians tried to replace cattle hunters with white pen-keepers, but the cattle industry in Georgia grew even larger than it had been in South Carolina. As a result, Georgia could not recruit enough white penkeepers and those who accepted the position were often removed for incompetence or for stealing cattle. Thus, as the industry burgeoned throughout the lowcountry, more and more slaves were imported from South Carolina to manage the herds. Many used their opportunities to flee. Ironically, many also stole cattle and traded beef clandestinely like the white cattle keepers they replaced.

Cow-pens were heavily dependent on slave labor. However, cow-pens mandated that certain slaves exercise a relatively high degree of autonomy. Though historians credit Carolinians with the advent of cowpens, bovines were an integral part of colonial Georgia prior to the establishment of the institution. The troubles that accompanied bovine husbandry favored the use of slaves over white cattle-keepers. In the early 1730s, Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck, colonial commissary, surveyed lands for the Salzburger contingent that eventually settled in Georgia. Reck noted the
presence of “Turkies, Roe-Bucks, Wild Goats, Wild Cows, Horses, hares, Partridges, and Buffaloes” through the area.  Though Reck considered the cows to be wild, the cattle may very well have belonged to Uchee Indians or South Carolinians. Nevertheless, Reck noted the importance of cattle to the subsistence of the colony, whereas he appreciated the contributions of “the inhabitants of the island of Edistow, having given 30 cows for the use of the colony of Georgia.” A week later another “sloop brought” the Salzburgers “ten cows and calves, from the magistrate of Savannah.” On May 5, three days later, they received a “post of letters from Mr. Oglethorpe” which stated that they “were to receive Twenty Cows and Calves, ten sows, with Corn for to feed them.”

Early efforts at cattle-husbandry were troubled. As early as 1733, “two fellows who hade broke out of Charles Town Jayle” ventured into across the Savannah River into the Georgians “neighborhood, and hade killed several cattle, at Musgrove, the Indian Traders Cow Penn.” The “Frenchman denied all he was charged” but “the Englishman confess’d that what cattle they killed was only for their own subsistence.” Part of the problem was the widespread usage of the open range. By 1735, settlers would often “let them go into the woods,” and could “rarely find them.” Such practices not only made it difficult for colonists to manage their herds but it also reduced the


110 Ibid., p. 24.

111 Ibid., p. 25.


113 Ibid., p. 41.
quality of the stocks as well. As one settler noted, the cows that ranged freely on the frontier would “not give half the quantity of milk, which another cow fed near home” would produce. To improve the overall care of cattle, Patrick Tailfer suggested that each town ward maintain a vacant lot so “that the villages without may have places in the town, to bring their cattle and families into for refuge.”\textsuperscript{114}

Patrick Tailfer also stated that land near the Savannah river had cypress and cane swamps suited for raising cattle. Tailfer noted that if the river swamps “were drained they would produce good rice; as would the cane swamps also, in the mean time are the best feeding for all sorts of cattle.” Furthermore, the hard marshes “at some seasons” were also “good for feeding cattle.”\textsuperscript{115} By the early 1730s, some of the earliest cattlemen in the backcountry began to improve their lots. Jacob Matthews, a neighbor of Patrick Tailfer, owned a plantation actually called the Cow-pen. Matthews, like other cow-pen owners, was an absentee owner who used servants and left "only two or three to look after his cattle."\textsuperscript{116} Even as Georgians tried to take advantage of the potential of the backcountry, South Carolinians infringed and brought their slaves with them.

By February, 14 1735, James Oglethorpe stated that "the Uchee Indians complained that cattle were passed over into their country, contrary to the capitulation; and that planters had come and settled Negroes there." Though some of the cattle

\textsuperscript{114} Patrick Tailfer, \textit{A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia in America, from the first settlement thereof until this present period. . . . By Pat Tailfer, M.D., Hugh Anderson, M.A. Da., Douglass and others . . .Charles-Town, South Carolina} (18 Century Collections Online) Gale Group, pages, 26 & 29.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.102.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 109.
belonged to Saltzburgher immigrants, some of the bovine and "also the Negroes, belong'd to some of the inhabitants of South Carolina."117 Later that same year Oglethorpe sent Captain Enes McIntosh to the Uchee again to disperse South Carolina planters who had settled with cattle and negroes.118 Evidently the measures failed, for in 1736 colonists reported that "some Carolina people drove a great herd of cattle across the Savannah and, with a negro slaves, set up a plantation near the Uchee town." The establishment of a plantation irritated Uchees, undercut Savannah’s trade with the Indians, and also violated Georgia’s prohibition laws.119

The importance of the cattle industry and the subsequent reliance on slaves for cattle husbandry became integral parts of early dissent. Trustees, from Old-Palace-Yard, Westminster, complained that the "neighboring province" had "by an introduction of too great numbers abused the use of Negroes." A contingent from Darien opposed the anti-slavery stance of the Trustees and even asserted that the loyalty of the inhabitants of Darien "were bought with a number of cattle and extensive promises of future rewards."120

The influx of cattle brought subsequent problems. In July 1739, Georgians stated that more "horsemen were wanted to range the woods for the protection of cattle, the arrest of outlaws, and the arrest of runaway slaves from South Carolina."121 The

117 Moore, A Voyage to Georgia, p. 35.
120 Patrick Tailfler, a True and Historical narrative of the colony of Georgia in America, pp. 92-93.
121 Cooper, The Story of Georgia, p. 223.
Trustees even encountered problems maintaining the colonial stock. As early as 1742, William Stephens noted that "sufficient care was not taken in the Trusts cowpen at Old Ebenezer to hunt cattle." Stephens also stated that disorder complicated matters and "that cows with their calves might be duly marked and numbered." However, the main problem was "the want of horses" because the horses imported from South Carolina proved too "worn out and unable to do the work."122

Mismanagement became a problem even for the Trust. By 1743, the total number of Trust cattle had "generally been so confused and irregularly accounted for" that he thought that "it was no longer safe to rely on Cowpen Keeper Barkers Faith."123 William Stephens noted that "the late cowpen keeper Barker neglected" his post. Due to Barker’s neglect “the cattle of all sorts had betaken themselves to the swamps for the winter, and that it was not in the power of a man to drive them out."124 By January 1744, another keeper was appointed to the Trust but the new cowpen keeper "found the stock widely dispersed, so that his whole employment, yet, was to reduce them within a more reasonable compass." Despite the keeper’s inability to coral the stray cattle, the herds proliferated and he assured the colonists "that there was sufficient plenty of good steers for slaughter, and abundantly more."125

In February 1744, the Trust dismissed “Joseph Barker, formerly cowpen keeper,” because he “had the confidence to lay claim to a large number of cattle, as well as

123 Ibid., p. 178.
124 Ibid., p. 42.
125 Ibid., p. 63.
mares and colts, that he alledge were his property.”¹²⁶ Barker allegedly allowed his personal stock to intermingle with those of the Trust and then claimed the entire herd as his own. Barker, however, was not the only keeper who sought to take advantage of the ungoverned cattle industry. By April of the same year, “Two of their most noted Cattle hunters were gone out, with intent to make good the claim they insisted on, relating to their property.” The hunters' complaint was in regards to the ownership of unmarked cattle and “they resolved avowedly to put” their claim into “practice, by laying hold of any unmarked cattle they could come at, and mark them as their own; wherein they were backed by some others, who were determined (as they openly profess’d) to do the same whenever the thought fit.”¹²⁷ The Trust rebuked such vigilantism and eventually posted a "hired servant at the Trusts cowpen" because the previous keepers left their post and "being drunk behaved themselves in a scandalous manner.”¹²⁸

The services of cow keepers increased. By October of 1744, the settlers wrote "a verbal representation against the manner of hunting cattle" in particular by some people, who make no scruple of catching such as they think fit, (being young or old) and claiming a property, right or wrong, clap their own mark upon them, without giving opportunity to any others of questioning by what right such claim was make, which raised a great discontent among the inhabitants both in town and country.”¹²⁹

By November 1744, the Trustees presented “an order to Quartermaster Milledge, to give all necessary assistance with a party of his Rangers” as needed for the “proper

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 97.
¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 147.
¹²⁹ Ibid., p.159.
for keeping the cattle from running away into the woods, or otherwise."\textsuperscript{130} Another major hindrance to the cattle industry was their inability "to provide Horses able and sufficient for carrying on that important work of cattle hunting at Ebenezer Cowpen", but since such horses and hunters "were not yet to be had in Georgia", the Trustees had to "seek them in Carolina, to be feared at a dear rate."\textsuperscript{131}

During the same month, theft from within further hindered the growth of the industry. The Trustees received "heavy complaints against Mr. Joseph Watson", especially for "his practice of carrying on an unlicenced trade with the Indians."\textsuperscript{132} Watson’s clandestine trade soon took effect, for in December 1744, the Trust exported beef but not that the trade had "not attended the success" they had intended. Nevertheless, the aforementioned Stephens stated that there was "assuredly a great stock of cattle belonging to that cowpen of the Trusts." Stephens noted that the trust held "about 150 calves marked . . . no less than 300 steers from 4 years old and upwards . . . not to mention cows of full age."\textsuperscript{133} By March of 1745, however, "the penkeeper was dismissed, under a strict change not to offer any dealings with Indians for goods."\textsuperscript{134} Stephens had to apprehend a few offenders, one was a "hired servant at the Trusts cowpen" rode into Ebenezer he had left his post, "being drunk behaved themselves in a scandalous manner, disturbing the peace."\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{130} The Journal of William Stephens, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 183.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 204.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 178-179.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 204.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 147.
By October of 1744 the magistrates received a letter from a Capt, Horton of “a verbal representation against the manner of hunting up cattle” carried on “by some people, who make no scruple of catching such as they think fit (being young or old) and claiming a property, right or wrong, clap their own mark upon them, without giving opportunity to any others of questioning by what right such claim was made, which raised a great Discontent among the Inhabitants both in town and country.”

The clandestine trade in beef and cattle persisted. By November 24, 1744, colonists levied “heavy complaints against Mr. Joseph Watson, as well for many gross abuses”, he was criticized for “his practice of carrying on an unlicensed trade with the Indians” March 1745, troubles “the Penkeeper was dismissed under a strict charge not to offer at any dealings with Indians for goods.” Clandestine activities continued to hinder the growth of Georgia’s formal cattle industry during the Trustee era.

The employment of slaves and runaways from South Carolina were essential to the pro-slavery sentiments that eventually developed. Between the years of 1735 and 1740, a clearly defined proslavery faction developed. The aforementioned Eveleigh along with colonists like Patrick Tailfer, David Douglass, Patrick Houstoun, and Andrew Grant led the charge and were supported by lowland Scots and Robert Williams, an English Merchant. Until 1746, anti-slavery lobbyists mentioned the industry of the Salzburgers as a constant prevailing argument for the prohibition of slavery. However, malcontents criticized the notion of the Salzburgers as industrious because they

137 Ibid., p.170.
138 Ibid., p. 204.
received funds from both Germany and England for building parsonage, church, and orphanage. The leader of the Salzburgers admitted that “most of their strength” was “used up” and that could not “keep servants or Negroes.” Therefore, “most of them admittedly still belong among the poor who have always been in need of support from Europe.” Eventually, however, the allotments of Britain failed to meet the Salzburgers’ needs.

By 1748, however, the performance of slaves and runaways amidst the economic conditions of Georgia changed the stance of the most ardent anti-slavery colonists. On May 3rd of 1748, Mr. Bolzius, the leader of anti-slavery faction, stated that “things being now in such a melancholy state, I must humbly beseech your honors not to regard any more of our or our friends petitions against Negroes.” In observation of the struggles of colonists Samuel Urlsperger noted the struggles of colonists to persist without slave labor. On the “1st of February” 1749, that “the daughter and mother” were “putting a lot of effort into raising cattle and planting crops.” He saw firsthand “their industriousness and good arrangements” but “the husband,” often absent, “did not understand field work and husbandry.” Furthermore, Urlsperger noted that “the day laborers demand too great a wage.” He asserted that there was “no easier way for a man to get into debt than to have to use day laborers on his plantations for building

140 Jones, The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans Along the Savannah, p. 60.
142 Vodder, History of Savannah, p. 144.
fences, cultivating, plowing, and other field and house chores because the wages are much too high.”

Urlsperger noted that “the leaders of the Congregation must pay cash for wood, wheat, and other necessities.” They also had their “houses repaired for cash” but they were only able to do so because they received cash from “benefactors in Europe.” “Otherwise,” he noted their “salaries would not be enough.”

Widespread hardships eventually led Bolzius and the Salzburgers to reverse their position on slavery. After attending meetings to outline the safe introduction of Negroes into Georgia, Bolzius acquiesced and stated that “the restrictions are such a nature that in this way the Negroes would not be harmful for the land but useful because of the lack of white servants.”

Georgians used slaves despite the prohibitions and philanthropic goals of the charter. On January 1st 1749, the petition to lift the ban on the importation, sale, and purchase of slaves was passed. Georgia would officially have the one thing needful for economic success. Hirelings and runaways had already established a foothold that fugitives would expand upon during the Royal Period.

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144 Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America, p. 10.
146 Ibid., p. 121.
Martin Bolzius, religious leader of the Salzburgers, said of Georgia that “as long as our colony is not filled with Negroes, the deserters in Carolina, if they want to cross Georgia towards Augustine, cannot remain hidden.” Bolzius insights were keen. However, runaway slaves proliferated during the Royal period because of the conditions that developed after Georgia made the physical and philanthropic change from a paupers’ colony to a slave society. Once slavery was legalized, for the first time slaves entered the colony directly from Africa and the Caribbean. The restrictions on landholdings were lifted which facilitated the rise of plantations and cow-pens. The Crown assumed administrative control of Georgia and ensured more security along the southern border. With the prohibitions removed and Royal support increased, South Carolinians moved to Georgia in mass and until 1765 constituted the largest group of migrants into the colony. Entire communities moved in unison and brought in thousands of slaves with their transition. The cattle industry expanded and cattle hunters ranged herds over more expansive tracts in the sparsely settled lowcountry. Indian traders brought scores of slaves into direct contact with Native American trading posts throughout the frontier. Trade and work expanded and provided immeasurable opportunities for slaves to abscond and engage in clandestine activities. Moreover, the southward migration of Carolinians brought slaves physically closer to the sanctuary of St. Augustine.

The Carolina Invasion

The influence of South Carolinians, free and enslaved, was accentuated by the cohesiveness of their migration into Georgia. Migrants from Dorchester built Midway. Inhabitants from Port Royal moved in unison to the Savannah-Ogechee district, while planters from Williamsburg founded the Altamaha district. Slaves took apart buildings in South Carolina and transported materials to Georgia where they rebuilt the Carolinians’ homes, churches, mills, and wharfs.

The advertisements for runaways revealed that many of the free and bonded migrants had experience with hiring out and that both groups continued the practice in

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the Royal period of Georgia. The advertisements also revealed patterns of flight used by slaves who took advantage of the mass migration and expansion into the languished colony of Georgia. Many of the slaves that fled during the Royal Period were owned by Carolinians or associated through hiring. Some of the fugitives were recidivists, with a history of absconding prior to the Royal era. Others took advantage of the opportunities provided to them. Many runaways belonged to Carolina merchants who permitted them to trade in urban areas with passes and who used them to transport goods by horse or by boat deep into the western frontier. Skilled slaves, experienced with the hiring process, took flight and exploited the burgeoning building trade. Cattle-hunters roamed the burgeoning frontier to care for cattle. Patterns suggest that prior experience and the ability to find a trustworthy cohort were among the main determinants for slaves to take flight.

The vast increase in the number of slaves increased the ability for fugitive slaves to avoid detection. In 1750 Georgia’s white population totaled 4,200 whites with 1,000 Negro slaves. At least 1,000 slaves entered the colony in 1752. By 1753, slaves accounted for one of every three Georgians and the enslaved population tripled during the 1760s, eventually accounting for forty-two percent of population by the end of the colonial era. By 1760, the white population had increased to 6,000 whites with the slaves’ numbers growing to 3,578 during the same time. As of 1770, 12,750 whites

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{ Willard Range, "Agricultural Revolution in Royal Georgia 1752-1775," \textit{Agricultural History}, Vol. 21, No. 4 (October, 1947), p. 251.}\]
lived in Georgia along with 10,625 African slaves. As the colonial era came to an end in 1776, 17,000 whites and 16,000 enslaved Africans constituted Georgia’s population.\(^3\)

Slaves were concentrated in certain areas. Most agricultural slaves were concentrated on the plantations of the tidewater region which were geared towards the production of staple crops. Smaller subsistence-oriented farms were more prevalent inland from the tidewater and slave ownership was rare in that area. None of the settlers along the frontier registered slaves.\(^4\) Slaves were also clustered around urban areas, and work areas such as wharfs and sawmills. The practice or hiring-out left many slaves without direct supervision, which increased the ability of non-slaveholders to negotiate with black labors whether they were slaves or fugitives.

The South Carolina advertisements for fugitives reflect the connections between slave owners in South Carolina and runaway slaves in Georgia. For example, “A negro man named Quatee, aged 37 years” fled “from Capt. Patrick Mackay’s plantation at Joseph’s-Town in Georgia.” Quatee had “lived in Barbados and Rhode Island” and evidently learned something of the sailing trade because he “stole a canow at Tybee.”\(^5\) Mackay was one of the few grantees from South Carolina who owned more than ten slaves when he migrated between the years of 1755 and 1758.\(^6\) In 1756, Alexander Shaw posted an ad in South Carolina for a “sensible negro fellow” who was “about 30


\(^4\) Range, “Agricultural Revolution in Royal Georgia,” p. 252; In regards to the tidewater Ranged noted that 108 settlers claimed six slaves or less; 47 claimed between six and ten; 44 owned 11 to 20 slaves; 20 owned 21 to 30; 13 owned 31 to 40; three owned 41 to 50; and 12 migrants owned 50 or more.


\(^6\) Range, “Agricultural Revolution in Royal Georgia,” p. 252.
years of age, named Charles,” who had “RUN away from the subscriber near Savannah town.”

Another tidewater slaveholder named Joseph Gibbons advertised for “four negroes, viz. June and Rino” along with “Harry a young fellow” and Rino a girl of 8 years of age.” Joseph Gibbons was “a substantial planter” from Colleton Country, South Carolina who migrated to Georgia in 1755 with 31 slaves. Joseph Gibbons Junior inherited and then sold 220 acres of land in Pon Pon and settled near Savannah. By 1759, Gibbons Jr. had a lumber yard, a 150 acre rice reservoir, and another plantation ten miles west of Savannah especially to produce timber. To operate his various ventures, Gibbons accumulated 174 slaves. Thus, Primus and his subscriber had experience in South Carolina, not to mention Gibbons’ large number of slaves that may have made his absence less noticeable.

In 1759, John Mullryne advertised for a fugitive “NAMED JOHN” who as “Virginian born.” Though the runaway was “plausible in speech . . .the many visible marks upon his body” proved “him to be and old offender.” Mullryne suspected that John would probably “attempt to get on board some outward-bound vessel.” Later the same year Jacob Waight posted an ad for “a young black fellow Limus,” whom the subscriber “supposed to be about Savannah-Town.”

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8 Ibid., p. 116.
9 David Charles Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia, 1720-1765 (University Microfilms: Ann Arbor, 1973), pp. 111-112.
10 Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia., p. 169.
11 Ibid., p.168.
Charles Pryce posted an ad for a “negro fellow named Carolina” who had fled “from the subscriber’s plantation near Savannah.” The fugitive was “well known both in Carolina and Georgia, having from his childhood been a waiter in the tavern formerly owned by Mr. Tisdale,” the “afterwards by Mrs. Mercer, in Savannah.”\textsuperscript{12} In August of 1761, a group of three fled Mr. Logan’s plantation at Ponpon. London, Chloe and Nanny were “all supposed to be gone to St. Thomas’s and Christ-Church parishes, where they” were “well known.”\textsuperscript{13} In October of the same year, an ad was posted in South Carolina for “a mulatto slave” who had runaway 15 months prior. The fugitive had allegedly “inlisted [sic] himself in one of the provincial scouts of rangers . . . to get farther out of the way” and had perhaps “gone to Georgia.”\textsuperscript{14} In the same month, another subscriber suspected that “a negro fellow named CUDJO, late the property of Mr. John Holmes of Charleston. Who brought him about 12 months” prior “from Georgia, whither he” was “supposed to be gone,” having “taken two blankets with him.”\textsuperscript{15}

On April 7, 1763 Joseph Gibbons posted one the first advertisements for runaways. In the ad, Gibbons described “A NEGRO MAN, named Primus” who had fled five to six weeks prior. Primus actually belonged “to James Skirving, Esq; of Ponpon,” South Carolina.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, the early advertisements for runaway slaves in Georgia revealed that Carolinians who did not migrate into Georgian continued to hire their

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 191.
\textsuperscript{13} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 3}, pp. 178-179.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 201-202.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.203.
slaves there. As a result, runaways could still find solace in the fact that residents of both South Carolina and Georgia would expect to see unsupervised blacks crossing the border back and forth between the two colonies.

**Runaways and Clandestine Trade**

For slaves involved in trade, transactions flowed from supplier to an enslaved vendor who might have sold goods for her owner on a full-time basis or peddled on a part-time basis. As in South Carolina, most enslaved vendors were female. By the 1760s, so many slaves engaged in huckstering or peddling that the magistrate implemented a badge system, in which owners had to register all of the slaves who were allowed to sell, and purchase badges for those slaves. The slaves were required to carry those badges at all times. Due to rising costs of goods and the constant movement of maritime vessels in and out of port cities, slaves without badges readily found customers who purchased goods from them. As for runaways, Bolzius stated that many would “just run into the woods” from whence they would be “secretly looked after by other Negroes and occupy themselves with theft.” As such both the enslaved and those who ran away found ways to exploit their economic opportunities, individually or in cahoots with one another.

In 1760, for example, the merchants of Macartan & Campbell posted an advertisement for “FIVE NEGROES,” who had “RUN AWAY from Savannah,” and were “supposed to be gone into Carolina. . . from whence they were lately brought.”

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often, however, slaves fled merchants individually. Lewis Johnson, for instance, posted an ad for “a negro man named Bob” who “carried off with him a large Roan horse.” However, Johnson suspected that the fugitive abandoned the horse when on the Georgian “side of the river, opposite to Purrysburg, where he crossed over and stole a horse belonging to Mr. Martin Disher.” Knowledge of routes and residents proved invaluable for slaves such as Bob who managed to flee great distances.

Slaves of merchants also used their occupations to engage in clandestine trade. The Laurens family shipped various maritime goods such as turpentine, salt, and pitch from Charleston to patrons in Georgia. However, they were concerned about the slaves responsible for transporting those goods along the Savannah River. In 1765, for example, the Laurens family discovered that a slave named Captain Abraham had a clandestine venture in which he sold wood, harbored stolen provisions, and traded illegally. Another absentee planter from South Carolina complained because he had provided hogs for his slave Saby to consume but instead of eating the hogs, Saby traded pork in Savannah. Such were the opportunities for slaves who absconded with marketable goods. Late the same year, “Ten Negroe men” fled from the plantation of merchant-planter Jonathan Bryan and “took a canoe from the landing, and carried with them a barrel of grits.”

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22 Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p. 345.

In some cases, the fugitives of Georgia were repeat offenders from South Carolina. The saga of Virginia John proved a case in point. In February of 1764, John Govan, from Indian-Land South Carolina, posted an ad for a “very artful fellow” called “Virginia John.” Govan assumed that John would “endeavor to pass himself as a free mulatto.”

Govan purchased the artful fugitive from Colonel Mulryne, a common misspelling of John Mullryne. As noted earlier, John Mullryne posted an ad in the South Carolina for “a mulatto fellow NAMED JOHN” five years earlier. Three years later after posting that advertisement, Mullryne had migrated to Georgia and posted another notice for a runaway named John who may have actually been the same runaway he sought half a decade earlier. Female fugitives slaves, though much fewer in number, had their recidivists as well. William Smith, for example, advertised for a female runaway named Chloe in 1766. Five years prior, a South Carolinian named Cholmondeley Dering posted an ad for another female fugitive named Chloe who was thirty-five years old at the time of her flight.

Slaveholders who lived near rivers also complained of their inability to control the activity of their slaves. Many residents of Savannah river repeatedly attributed clandestine trade and theft to the common practice of patroons and traders who landed their crews, and remained with them for entire nights and days on the plantations. Slaves’ ability to consume alcohol troubled colonists and those fears were manifested in 1768, when Georgia increased the value of fines for people found guilty of providing

24 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements: Vol. 4, p. 4.
26 Ibid., pp. 208-209.
27 Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, p. 339.
slaves with alcohol and added a three month jail term for repeat offenders.\textsuperscript{28} In some instances, slaves fled or were enticed to abscond with valuable goods. On May 31, 1769 “a Negroe Boy, about 15 years old” fled “from Mr. Benjamin Fuller, near Ashley Ferry.” The subscriber, writing from South Carolina, supposed that the slave had been “carried off by some white people, as he was seen riding a bay horse with a good deal of luggage behind him.”\textsuperscript{29} Residents along the Savannah River repeatedly attributed theft by slaves to the common practice of patroons and traders who landed their crews, and remained with them for entire nights and days on the plantations.

\textbf{Runaways and Trade Routes}

The experience that slaves gained as they trekked between South Carolina and Georgia was also reflected in the advertisements that subscribers occasionally posted in both colonies for the same fugitive. Lewis Johnson, for example, posted two similar ads for a runaway named Bob. In the \textit{Georgia Gazette}, Johnson stated that Bob was allegedly “born in Virginia” and had “carried off with him a large roan horse.”\textsuperscript{30} In the \textit{South Carolina Gazette}, however, Johnson presented additional information about the runaway and the horse, mentioning that he “supposed he left him this side of the river, opposite Purysburgh, where he crossed over and stole a horse belonging to Mr. Martin Disher.”\textsuperscript{31} The ability of some runaways to move from one colony to another was facilitated by their involvement in trade networks.


\textsuperscript{29} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{30} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 2.

Trade and the exchange of goods facilitated flight in two ways. Foremost, migrant planters and merchants continued the allowance of “little estates” and huckstering. Little estates were personal gardens in which slaves were permitted to grow whatever they wanted so long as they did so on their own time. The practice became a pillar of the lowcountry plantations because the more slaves fed themselves, the less time and labor it cost the owner to do so. In some cases, planters even permitted slaves to sell or trade their excess. The trade amongst slaves evolved into huckstering, the practice through which some owners allowed slaves to sell or trade their produce in markets. In some arrangements, masters even required their slaves to establish urban stalls and devote their time to preparing and selling foodstuffs on a daily basis. In order for a slave to maintain an urban stall, masters had to register their slave, pay a fee, and provide the slave a pass which they carried at all times to trade in urban areas. Those practices aided runaways because huckstering provided some runaways with experience that preceded flight, enabling them to develop clientele and a reputation of legitimacy. Subsequently, hucksters traded with runaways and in doing so made it easier for fugitives to barter in urban areas without detection.\(^{32}\) Opportunities for slaves increased once huckstering exceeded the masters’ control. The autonomous activity granted by masters became a steady if clandestine trade between slaves and shopkeepers.\(^{33}\)

Theft associated with clandestine trade permeated the Royal era. Early trade laws such as *An Act for Better Regulating the Market in the Town of Savannah* and *An


Act to Prevent the Stealing of Horses and Meat Cattle indicated the nature of illegal activity that persisted. In February of 1758, for instance, the colonial magistrate passed “An Act to Prevent purchasing Lands from the Indians and for Preventing Persons Trading with them without License.” Article Two of the act was aimed to stop the activities of colonists who, “directly or indirectly, visit, frequent, haunt, trade to, barter with any Indian or Indians within said province of Georgia.” The penalty for trading with Indians was one-hundred pounds sterling, which was hefty considering that the fines for violating the market schedule ranged from five to ten schillings.34

During the same session that the administration passed the act restricting illicit trade with the Indians, colonists also addressed theft. The magistrate passed “An Act to Prevent Stealing of Horses and Meat Cattle.” In the case of livestock, the magistrate stated that “no law hath hitherto been provided in this province, to prevent the great evils of stealing horses, and meat cattle, and unlawfully branding, marking, or killing the same.”35 As the importance of cattle increased slaves and runaways alike exploited their access to the beef that so many colonists desired.

Another way in which trade facilitated flight was by providing slaves experience with the local merchant networks. The advertisements for runaways often reflected that slaves were involved in their masters’ ventures prior to taking flight. In 1758, the merchant group Austin & Laurens posted an ad for a “Negro Boy, named Harry” who had been “lately sent from Georgia to be sold,” and was thus “imagined to be returned


35 An Act to Prevent the Stealing of Horses and neat Cattle: and for the more effectual discovery and punishment of such persons as shall unlawfully brand, mark, or kill the same. (Microopaque Worcester, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society, 1955-1983 - Early American Imprints, 1763), no. 41352.
to that province.”

Later the same year, John Gordon of Beaufort of South Carolina posted a reward of 40 shillings sterling for “a negro fellow named Jack” who had “runaway from the Tybee lighthouse in Georgia.” The fugitive had been at large for twenty-eight days before the subscriber posted the ad and he noted that the runaway could be returned to Francis Goffe, at the Tybee lighthouse, or to the merchants James Habersham or David Montaigut at Savannah. Gordon migrated to Georgia in 1755 and by 1759 he had established a mercantile house at Beaufort and a wharf at Yamacraw Bluff for timber. In July of 1759, an ad was posted for “a tall well made Carolina-born man, named Saunders” who had fled December of 1758. He was “probably the same fellow who as seen at the plantation of Mrs. Ravenell in St. John’s parish . . .from whence he may have proceeded to upper part of the said parish or Santee, at both which places he” had “acquaintances.” Perhaps Saunders was displaced from his family or “acquaintances” as a result of an estate breakup. In December 1760, Daniel Ravenell, Sr. and James Ravenell posted another ad in the South Carolina Gazette for four runaways to be returned to them in St. John’s parish.

Even if slaves were not directly involved in trading for their masters, the experiences and connections they developed facilitated long-term flight. Such was evident in the case of runaways who fled Grey Elliot. Elliot was one of the five original trustees of Sunbury, a merchant, and acted as an agent for William Thomson of London.


37 Ibid., p. 164.


40 Ibid., p.191.
who held an interest in the vessel Venus.\textsuperscript{41} The complexity of Elliot’s economic activities exposed his slaves to numerous opportunities to abscond and that was reflected the advertisements for runaways. In a transaction of January 23, 1759, Elliot purchased “a Negro fellow named London” from Moses Buzaglo, from the island of Jamaica.\textsuperscript{42} In July of 1763, Grey Elliot posted an ad for “a NEGRO FELLOW called Francois” who was “used to the sea” and “an artful plausible fellow” who the subscriber suspected would “attempt to pass for free.”\textsuperscript{43}

Along with divergent ventures, Elliot was also very active in exchanging and mobilizing large number slaves. Elliot’s extensive ventures were evident in a joint transaction with other Carolinians. Planter William Carr granted to Grey Elliot, John Gordon, and Francis Arthur a “bill of sale” on May 12, 1761 in Sunbury for 726 pounds, 3 shillings, 9 pence sterling money of the province of GA. The bill of sale was for “three Negro men,” named “Prince, Ceaser, and Baalam; two Negro boys, George and Captain; six Negro Women, Cloe, Jenny, Sue, Nanny, Hannah, and Philis; one Negro girl, Kate [kale?].” Also included in the exchange were “14 head of cattle and horses and 100 hogs . . . and 500 acres of land on North Newport, bounding eastwardly on Richard Hazzard’s land and westwardly on John Burnett’s land.”\textsuperscript{44}

While the relocation from South Carolina to Georgia provided many slaves with opportunities to flee, the activities of traders and merchants provided their slaves with


\textsuperscript{42} Walker, Abstracts of Georgia Colonial Book J, 1755-1762, p. 130.

\textsuperscript{43} Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Volume 4, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{44} Walker, Abstracts of Georgia Colonial Book J, 1755-1762, p. 209.
both a means to escape and the opportunity to learn escape routes as many permitted their slaves to cross back and forth over the border between the two colonies, occasionally unsupervised. In the 1750s preexisting trade between South Carolina and Georgia was expanded by merchants like John McGillivray and Company, and Archibald McGillivray. The McGillivray traders used Indian-bred packhorses. On average, the traders send caravans of thirty-five horses and strapped three packs per horse. Each horse accounted for 150 wt. each, 5259 wt. per, carriage hiring horses was 1225 pounds. Others significant traders included Isaac Motte, William Sludders, Jeremiah Knott, George Cussings, Henry Gustin, and Laughlin McBain. 45 These traders followed a pattern.

Land carriages became too expensive so traders began to use periagos valued at sixteen pounds for a large boat and two pounds for a small one. The average periago was usually paddled by seven to eight slaves, and carried from five-hundred to seven-hundred skins. 46 The large-scale merchants replaced the periago with larger boats and the used more extensive water routes which began at the fall-line of rivers such as Occanechi, Catawba, Congaree. 47

The expansion of trade during the Royal period also exacerbated the opportunities for slaves to take flight. The routes of trade extended as far West as central Alabama as traders based in Georgia and South Carolina sought to divert the trade of Native Americas, especially the Creek, from Spanish merchants at Pensacola.


47 Ibid., p. 129.
to Savannah and Charleston. Panton, Leslie and Company were a central agency in that competition and Lachlan McGillivray was a pivotal agent. McGillivray migrated from the lowcountry to Hickory Ground, central Alabama, and settled amongst the Creek. McGillivray also established and maintained two plantations along the Savannah River. In order to transport goods overland, traders used Indian Ponies and human drivers to transport goods along the overland trail. On average, the caravans consisted of one driver per ten animals, and usually traveled in groups of five to ten: fifty to one hundred ponies driven by five to ten humans. 48 McGillvray was one of the most successful of the Indian traders but many of the less affluent merchants implemented his model to varying degrees and the marked shift in their mode of transporting goods provided opportunities for enslaved porters to seem freedom, whereas many of the trades established stores in Creek towns and almost every trade employed at least one slave as a porter, storekeeper, interpreter, or tender of packhorses. 49 The travel through the interior and the prolonged exposure to Creek society provided valuable experience to slaves who would become runaways in the years to come.

The advertisements reflected the association between merchants, the slaves who ran away from them, and how the slaves used their experience and access to horses, boats, and limited supervision. In October 1752, South Carolinian Alexander Fraser advertised for a “a tall slime negro fellow named Jack” who had one for about four months and had “been used in Indian Trading boats” and was “well known” about


Savannah town.”50 In June of 1755, James Germany granted to Reverend Jonathan Copp a “bill of sale” for 320 pounds South Carolina money for a “Negro man named Ketch.”51 In January of 1756, Reverend Copp posted an advertisement for “a Negro named Ketch” who “was sent out of Charles-Town to Capt. Peter Taylor’s of Goose Creed, with 2 horses.” Ketch had been “ordered to return . . . with the said horses on Monday the nineteenth.”52 Ketch had eleven days from the time that he departed until the day upon which he was supposed to arrive, the 19th. In addition, the advertisement was posted on the 22nd, so the fugitive had fourteen days to roam before the public was alerted.

Squatters, Indians and the Harboring of Runaways

By the middle of the 1760s, however, slave owners expressed their concern that their slaves were being taken in by the untold numbers of squatters, debtors, and criminals who lived throughout the lowcountry. Thus, as the role of slaves in trade networks proliferated, their opportunities for clandestine trade burgeoned as well. Planter James Habersham wrote a letter to Governor Wright in which he relayed the complaints of Mr. Barnard of Augusta about “idle People from the Northward.” In the lowcountry, those ‘idle People’ became “great Villains, Horse Stealers, etc. and were amongst the North Carolina Regulators” people he described as “Crackers.”53

Such a group provided an enigmatic proposition for runaway slaves. An advertisement posted by one Carolina planter noted groups in the backcountry might

50 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Volume 3, p. 115.
52 Windley Runaway Slave Advertisements Volume 3, pp. 139-140.
accept and conceal runaways, re-enslave them, or barter them. A South Carolinian, named Gibbons posted an ad for a fugitive named Primus and asserted his fear that Primus “might have gone away with a gang of Creek Indian” or had been “taken by some back settlers, who” would “frequently conceal runaway negroes, and work them in their own fields, or change them in some of the northern colonies for horses.”\(^{54}\)

Runaways may have preferred to join the Creek because their custom was to place slaves into an extended family network and required them to do work associated with their status: agriculture work of clearing or tending fields, or gathering wood, water, and edible flora.\(^{55}\)

Slaves entering Indian territories posed a different challenge and in the wake of the Seven Years War colonists took measures to restrict such interaction. In 1763, a Creek confederation convened at Augusta, Georgia and signed a treaty with the governors of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia in which the Creek agreed to return all runaway slaves they captured to any commissary or public jail for a reward of fifty half-dressed deerskins or any goods they chose as an equivalent of £5. The agreement thwarted the efforts of some runaways as evident by the report of John Stuart, the British Superintendent of Indians for the Southern District. Stuart noted that a colonist named David Taitt returned several runaway slaves that had been brought to him by the Creek.\(^{56}\)

The advertisements for runaways showed that some Creek were still likely to conceal fugitives that reached them.

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\(^{54}\) *Georgia Gazette*, No. 8, Thursday, May 26, 1763.


In May of 1763, the aforementioned Gibbons posted another ad for Primus which revealed that some Creek still provided opportunities for fugitives in the backcountry. Gibbons asserted his fear that Primus “might have gone away with a gang of Creek Indian” or had been “taken by some back settlers, who” would “frequently conceal runaway negroes, and work them in their own fields, or change them in some of the northern colonies for horses.”

By the middle of the decade a significant number of Creek seemed less willing to return runaways slaves than they had been when they signed the treaty in 1763. Runaway slaves took advantage of the Creek willingness and in doing so, evoked a fear that would overshadow the burgeoning conflict between royal magistrates and the colonists. Governor Wright reported to Wills Hill, who was the Earl of Hillsborough and Secretary of State for the colonies, that he had reason to believe that many of the Creek not only harbored runaway slaves but had actually begun to entice slaves to flee their masters and join the Creek. Governor Wright’s concerns were influenced by the growing dissent against royal policy because he worried not only about the loss of labor and property incurred by slaves running away, but the greater threat the Creek posed to colonial stability by assisting them. Foremost, Creek assistance to runaways might encourage more slaves to abscond. The greater menace that Wright foresaw, however, was that the Creek might actually arm the runaways and by doing so encourage a mass slave rebellion. The advertisements, however, revealed that slaveholders were more concerned about those who helped slaves escape.

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57 Georgia Gazette, No. 8, Thursday, May 26, 1763.
59 Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, p. 339.
Native Americans, who were mainly Creek and Cherokee, also aided runaway slaves. William Coachman posted an ad for “a Negroe fellow named York, or Yorkshire” who had been born in the province yet fled with “a tall Guiney wench.” The former had experience as a “a boatman and sawyer,” and after a week of flight “the said Negroes” had “been seen lately in Georgia, taken up by the Creek Indians.” In March 7, 1770 “a Negroe Man called Peter” had “run way from the subscriber some months” prior. Peter “formerly belonged to a person at Pensacola” and he had recently “came from thence by land.” Thus, a subscriber “supposed” that the fugitive “may be gone toward the Creek Nation.”

By the eve of the American Revolution, runaway slaves still fled to the Creek and the royal government tried yet again to hinder the fugitives’ ability to do so. William Bartram noted that fifteen blacks lived in the household of the headman of Apalachicola when he visited with him just prior to the outbreak of the revolutionary war. Aware of the ongoing problem, the royal government of Georgia hosted an Indian Congress and signed another treaty with the Creek during October of 1774. The new agreement increased the reward for runaways to fifty pounds of leather or the equivalent value in goods to any Creek who returned a slave to the white person sought him or her. The treaty also granted sixty pounds to any Creek who returned a runaway to Savannah. Despite the increased bounty, the authorities had limited success recapturing runaways who fled to the Creek.

60 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 36.
61 Ibid., p. 43.
David Taitt, a British agent to the Upper Creek, managed to regain sixteen runaway slaves from the Creek in the years prior to the Revolution. The runaways had fled from both Georgia and South Carolina. By 1775, however, Taitt experienced a complicated exchange with the Creek that foreshadowed the complicated nature of interactions that would go on between runaways and the Creek as revolution erupted. In January of 1775, Taitt requested the return of seven slaves who had fled to the Creek. During May of 1775, the Creek brought in six of the seven runaways and received their reward. The six slaves were sent to Georgia under Indian guard but four of them escaped en route. Tuckabatchee warriors recaptured two of the four fugitives in a different part of Creek territory and upon their return, the Creek requested and were granted another reward. Once again, the recidivists were sent to Georgia, only to escape yet again. The Creek commission to transport them killed one, another drowned, and a third was not recaptured. Another reward was given for the lone recaptured runaway. As the Creek sought those runaways, however, they captured three other runaway slaves and requested more rewards for each of them. Taitt conceded to their demands and overall paid £114.1.10 in addition to trade goods for the runaways. By the time the matter was settled, the Revolution had began in earnest and since he did not know the loyalty of the slaves' owners, Taitt sent all of them to Charles Stuart, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, with instructions to sell the runaways from Georgia and returned the three from South Carolina to their masters.63 As the Revolution began, Loyalists and Patriots would both take note of their inability to control

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activity between runaway slaves and Native Americans, and the danger that each faction posed to shift the balance of power during the war.

For the time being, slaves' decisions to abscond to the Creek may have been motivated as much by religious beliefs as material concerns. However, the spiritual processes that brought a common ground between Native Americans and Africans in the lowcountry had their roots in Huntington, in West Africa, and in the growing evangelical movement in the North American colonies. For many Africans who landed in the lowcountry, the processes of adaptation and modification began prior to their enslavement in the Americas. Christian missions proselytized in West and West Central Africa in the 15th century and groups such as the KiKongo and Chukwu reinterpreted Christianity through pre-existing cosmologies. Scholars Betty Wood and Sylvia Frey argue that those inventions marked the origins of the historical trajectory of Afro-Christianity that emerged centuries later in the Americas. Moreover, the spread of Christianity provided a common ground upon which Africans of disparate backgrounds built new unified cultures in the lowcountry.64

By 1764 slave owners constantly expressed their concerns that someone was harboring runaways and by doing so indicated that the runaways had people who would assist them in flight. In July of 1764, an advertisement was posted for two runaways named Santee and Jemmy who had fled the preceding December. The subscriber claimed that both “were harboured in the forks of the Saltketcher by one Simon Bradley

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64 Though African forms of resistance are viewed as occurring outside of the scope of the American Revolution, historians have argued that religion was driving force of the revolution. In Under the Cope of Heaven Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America. Patricia U. Bonomi argued that religion fostered individualism, democratization, extra-legal organization, and a defense of the rights of minorities. Thus, religious awakenings facilitated the colonists to challenge authority, pp. 152-153; Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
and his friend Samuel Cruse.” Jemmy was of particular value because he understood “a little of the cooper business.” Because of Jemmy’s skills, the subscriber suspected “that Bradley . . . carried off Jemmy” and that he “may sell him either in this province or Florida.” Therefore, the subscriber offered seven pounds sterling if the slaves were captured in Georgia, and ten if captured in Florida.65 In such alliances between enslaved and free, it is difficult if not impossible to note the nature of the arrangement or the motivations of either party. Bradley and Cruse would have benefited economically from either the labor of the runaways or from their sale. One can only wonder, however, if the runaways went voluntarily to gain better treatment from Cruse and Bradley or even freedom in Florida.

In some cases of flight, however, runaways were assisted by other African Americans. In May of 1765, for example, there fled “a Negroe Fellow, name Carolina, “well known” in town and was “supposed to be harboured by some other negroes.”66 As more runaways fled to urban areas, subscribers found it more difficult to identify those who assisted them. Three weeks after the advertisement for Carolina was posted another was published for a fugitive named Toby who was “well known in town” and the subscriber suspected that Toby had been “encouraged by some persons who” supplied “him with rum and other strong liquors.”67 In June of 1765, an advertisement for four runaways named Quash, Quou, London, and Quamina mentioned that all “well know in

65 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 6-7.
66 Ibid., p. 12.
67 Ibid., p. 13
Savannah,” where the subscriber supposed they were harbored.\textsuperscript{68} The group had fled on 24 May 1765 and avoided recapture for three weeks.

Many runaways showed that they were able to overcome ethnic differences or linguistic barriers to accomplish mutual flight and secure harboring. One such example happened in October of 1766, when an African named Hector who was “of the Angola country” fled with another runaway named Palm who was “born in Jamaica.” Both were “supposed to harbour at Little-Ogechee and Savannah.” Furthermore, the subscriber stated that no expense was to “be spared in the prosecution of any person who employs or entertains them.”\textsuperscript{69} Eventually, royal magistrates identified enclaves of clandestine trade.

Within the borders of Georgia, many fugitives continued to rely on assistance, through harboring. For instance, “a slender middle sized NEGRO fellow named Abraham” absconded with “an iron about his neck.” Despite the impediment of the iron, Abraham evaded recapture and the subscribed suspected that the fugitive was “harboured somewhere near town.”\textsuperscript{70} In May of 1765, another subscriber posted an ad for “a Negroe Fellow, name Carolina” who was “well known” in town and was “supposed to be harboured by some other negroes.”\textsuperscript{71} Three weeks later an ad was posted for a fugitive named Toby who was “well known in town” and the subscriber suspected that Toby had been “encouraged by some persons who” supplied “him with rum and other

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 13
\textsuperscript{69} Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Volume 4, p. 19
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 48
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 12
strong liquors.”72 In the first week of June 1765, yet another advertisement was posted for Four Negroes, Quash, Quou, London, and Quamina, all “well known in Savannah,” where the subscriber supposed they were harbored.73 They fled in May 1765 and had been at large for two weeks before the advertisement was posted.

The threat of slaves harboring each other manifested clearly in 1766, when one-hundred and seven slaves absconded in an alleged attempt to join an established group of runaways in the Collecton County swamps.74 However, the large exodus and gathering together of slaves were not the most pressing issue for the royal government in 1766. Royal governor James Wright penned a letter to the British Board of Trade regarding “Several Persons” who “had signed an association to Oppose & Prevent the distribution of the Stamp’t Papers.” Wright was particularly alarmed because he “received intelligence by the two Captains of Ranges, Milledge & Powel, that the Liberty Boys,” as they were called, “had assembled together to the Number of about 200 & were gathering fast and that Some of them had declared they were determined to go to the Fort & break open the Store & take out & destroy the Stamp’t Papers &c.”75

In the same year, the magistrates of Georgia passed measures to crack down on the mobility of all blacks. The grand jury demanded the enforcement of the Negro Act to prevent slaves from “attending funerals in large bodies in the night, rioting . . .and in a

72 Ibid., p. 13.
73 Ibid., p. 13.
74 Kenneth Wiggins Porter, Negroes on the Southern Frontier, p. 69.
most notorious manner breaking the Lord’s Day.” Such large assemblies provided blacks, enslaved and free, to associate, to trade, and to establish relationships with people to assist them to abscond in the future. In 1766, subscribers also became more aggressive in their tone against those who assisted their troublesome property. In one example, Hector “of the Angola country” and Palm who was “born in Jamaica” fled in unison. However, the subscriber stated that they were “supposed to harbour at Little-Ogechee and Savannah.” Furthermore, the subscriber stated that no expense was to “be spared in the prosecution of any person who employs or entertains them.”

Despite the colonists’ efforts to thwart harboring, the networks persisted into the next year. In 1767 Philip Box posted an ad for “a Negroe fellow named York” who had been “about three weeks missing” and was “supposed that he has been decoyed away from the service of his master by some runaway Negroes.” Two years later Joseph Gibbons noted that “Three New Negroe Men” had fled his Carolina plantation and he suspected that they were “carried away from the bluff (where they were fishing) by some runaway Negroes in a canoe.” Eventually, royal magistrates identified enclaves of clandestine trade. In 1767, Governor Wright reported the problems of squatters and clandestine bartering to the Board of Trade. Wright reflected Habersham’s concerns and stated that “Augusta my Lords appears to me to be a place of Some Consequence and I consider it as a kind of Frontier Town or Settlement. It is a Receptacle of Goods


78 Ibid., p. 23.

79 Ibid., p. 37.
of Considerable Value for the Indian Trade, and the General Resort of Indians themselves, & in the Neighborhood of a Set of almost Lawless White People who are Sort of Borderers, and often as bad if not worse than the Indians.”

Governor Wright was also aware that Creeks, despite the aforementioned treaty, harbored runaway slaves. During the Autumn of 1767 at least sixteen slaves were known to have fled to Creek territory and Wright formally requested that the Creek return the runaways. Robert McIntosh, Creek Commissary, talked directly to the Creek about the matter. By February 1768, they returned nine of the sixteen but the other seven absconded when they learned of the Creeks’ intention to return them to their masters. Of those who fled, one was recaptured, another was killed, and the others were unaccounted for. Despite the treaty that Creek signed in 1763 espousing their willingness to return any slaves that fled to them, runaways slaves still fled to the Creek and by doing so posed their own threat to the alliance the Royal government continually sought to build with Native Americans.

Even without maroon-like settlements, slaves assisted one another in flight. The advertisements revealed that some plantations were notorious for harboring fugitive slaves. In September of 1774, “THREE NEGROE MEN, named HECTOR, BOATSWAIN, and FREDERICK” fled from “the Island of Skidaway.” Although Boatswain was “well known in Savannah and its neighborhood,” the slaves were “supposed to be harboured by some Negroes at Matthew Roche, Esq.’s plantation.”

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82 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 55.
During the next month, “SIX NEW NEGROES, four men and two women” absconded
“from the Governor’s plantations at Ogechee.” The fugitives “crossed over Ogecgee
river in a canoe, which was afterwards found at the mouth of a creek near Mr. William
Elliot’s plantation.” Therefore, the subscriber supposed that the said runaways
“probably got in with a parcel of Mr. Elliott’s Negroes who” had “been run away some
time.”

Slaves assisted runaways for a variety of reasons. When white citizens harbored
slaves, however, the harboring was often linked directly to illegal hiring. The
percentage of skilled slaves who ran away increased by fifty percent during the
Revolution and the early republic. That increase was affected by changes in
availability of white artisans. Apprenticeship of white artisans declined, and for those
who still entered the practice, work became more exploitive as artisans grew more
concerned with attaining a profit from their investment. As a result, the artisans worked
their apprentices harder and taught them less to extend the period of their
apprenticeship. As the numbers of white apprentices declined, more slave owners
hired their slaves to artisans to learn valuable skills. The use of skilled slaves benefited
slaveholders in two ways. Foremost, skilled slaves maintained plantations and reduced
the need to pay white artisans. Secondly, skilled slaves could be hired beyond the
plantation to earn money. As such, the use of skilled slaves proliferated during the
Revolutionary Era.

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83 Ibid., p. 58-59.


85 W.J. Rorabaugh, “I Thought I Should Liberate Myself from Thraldom of Others: Apprentices, Masters,
and the Revolution” In Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American
James Bulloch, for instance, posted an ad for three runaways “called POLYDORE, MORRIS, and JULY” who “were well know in town as porters”, and had “absented themselves from their Master for several weeks.” Bulloch offered “a reward of five shillings, over and above what the law allows, for each.” Furthermore, the subscriber also gave a stern warning to “whoever harbours or employs them . . . without a ticket” from him. He stated that they could “lay their account with being dealt with being dealt with as the law in that case directs.”

As in trade amongst slaves, the hiring of slaves exceeded the ability of owners or lawmakers to contain it. In 1774, the legislature tried to establish the maximum rates that unskilled slaves could earn. Furthermore, masters were required to register the slaves they hired out and to purchase a badge for such slaves at the rate of ten shillings per badge. Despite those restrictions, slaves established extensive networks and those alliances were pivotal to the success of some runaways. In September 1774, an ad was posted for a slave who had run away “near three years” prior. The subscribe noted that “such a Negroe” had “been seen at a settlement near the Indian Line on Ogechee very lately.” Graham offered a reward of ten pounds sterling for the person who delivered the slave and a twenty pound reward for anyone who could provide “information at whose plantation the said Negroe” had “been secreted for some time past.” William Colville offered twenty shillings reward for “A NEGROE MAN, named ADAM who he suspected was “harboured in town, being well known in and about it.” However, Colville offered “a further reward of five pounds upon information of his being

86 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 55.


88 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 56.
harboured by any white people."\[^{89}\] The hiring of enslaved workers clearly facilitated flight in many cases. Alex Wylly posted an ad for “A NEGROE MAN, named Ishmael” who had worked “as a jobbing carpenter” and had “been seen frequently of late about the wharves, and working on board vessels, particularly at Yamacraw, notwithstanding he has not ticket” or “any other license authorizing him to work out.”\[^{90}\]

**Runaways and the Practice of Hiring-Out**

By the time Georgia published the colony’s first newspaper in 1763, runaways had established an extensive record of flight and clandestine hiring. Therefore, the first advertisements for runaways revealed a group of slaves that were experienced and knowledgeable of their surroundings. Moreover, the colony was directly affected by international events as well. The Treaty of Paris, signed in February of 1763, ended the French presence east of the Mississippi river and accented an era of ambivalence in the lowcountry. Spanish Florida, long a bastion for runaway slaves fell to Britain as well. With the southern border secured, colonists pressed Native Americans for more land. In November 1763, the Creek ceded more lands between the Savannah and Ogeechee rivers north to the Little River. The western boundary between the Ogeechee and St. Marys was moved several miles inland.\[^{91}\] Veterans from the Seven Years War were to be compensated for their military service with the newly acquired land; the amount that each person received depended on their rank and varied from fifty to five thousand acres. In April of 1763, however, South Carolina governor Thomas Boone tried to

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\[^{89}\] Ibid., p. 56.


secure lands for his fellow Carolinians. Governor Boone issued grants for more than three thousand acres to less than two hundred Carolinians with some 16,000 acres going to one person. Georgia Governor James Wright sent a letter of protest and caveat to Governor Boone which the latter refused. Governor Wright then appealed to the Board of Trade which revoked the warrants issued by Governor Boone. However, armed Carolinians ignored the revocation, ventured southward and surveyed the land. In October 1763, a royal proclamation established the northern boundary of Florida at the St. Marys River with boundaries extending from the head to the St. Marys to the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers, north to the 31st parallel, then west to the Mississippi river.

Land expansion facilitated the growth of rice industry, a venture that favored the migration of more prosperous planters. John G.W. DeBraham estimated that a rice plantation of two hundred acres cost £2,476. It cost £100 for the land. Forty working hands cost £1,800. Incidental for forty working hands, such as slave clothes, oxen, horses, provisions, plantation tools, medicine and doctor fees was £206. Timber and boards for a barn and a pounding machine equaled £22. Overseers’ wages were £50 and £100 due to the death of slaves. The factorage system encouraged credit and drove many planters into debt by diminishing their profits. Factors deducted service charges, at an interest rate of five percent, and also charged a commission for marketing the crop.92 Nevertheless, many entered the business of rice production and soon found that new colonial policies posed equally daunting obstacles to their prosperity.

As colonists sought to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the war, Britain faced the burdens of the debt incurred by the war. British Prime Minister George Grenville initiated a series of acts meant primarily to establish more royal control and to place more of the costs of empire upon the colonists. To achieve the former, Grenville commissioned the Royal Navy to suppress smuggling, forbade migration west of the Appalachian mountains, and established a standing army in the colonies. In order to extract more capital from the colonists, Grenville ushered through Parliament the Revenue Act of 1764 which raised taxes of goods imported by the colonists, the Currency Act of 1764 which forbade the issue of currency not redeemable in gold or silver, and the Stamp Act of 1765 which required colonists to purchase revenue stamps on formal documents.

The new royal policies increased the benefits of clandestine hiring and trade. Formally, the colonists expressed their dissent through organized political speeches, meetings, and publications. Informally, they searched for ways to evade the increased costs of goods and services brought on by Grenville’s new policies. As the prices of artisan work increased, skilled slaves became a more significant part of the workforce. As goods became more expensive, hucksters or enslaved peddlers found more buyers who sought to avoid the increased costs of taxed goods. Yet, as the use of enslaved artisans and hucksters became more profitable, the royal magistrate implemented a badge system that required slaveholders to purchase badges for all slaves that they hired out or permitted to peddle goods beyond their plantations. Though slaves had no political voice in the brewing turmoil over mercantilist policies and taxation, slaves and runaways played a pivotal role in clandestine trade as colonists sought common means
to evade the increasing costs of goods. Flight likewise became more rewarding for slaves that had marketable goods or who possessed marketable skills.

Codes were passed to prevent slaves from dominating the labor market. In 1750, Georgia mandated that planters employ one white worker per every four slaves and eight known planters complied. In 1755, the ratio was increased to twenty slaves per one white worker, to which six known planters complied. To protect white artisans, masters were forbidden to employ their slaves in craft work and restrictions were implemented to prevent white artisans from taking on slave apprentices. Johann Martin Bolzius noted that Georgia also made it illegal for Africans to “learn any craft except the cooper craft” or to perform any “work on Sundays.”93 However, the expansion of building still demanded more labor than white workers could provide.94 Like huckstering, hiring grew from plantation owners’ efforts to minimize their costs and maximize their profits. The use of skilled slaves allowed slaveholders to maintain plantations cheaper than hiring white artisans. Furthermore, skilled slaves could also be hired out for cash, credit, or goods. Much like the slaves who stole valuable goods, runaways who possessed skills also found welcome clients in the lowcountry.

In the aforementioned advertisement for Santee and Jemmy, it was also worth noting that both fled from James Donnom of Ponpon, South Carolina the preceding December. Jemmy the Cooper may have learned the craft when he was “formerly owned by John Gould of Ponpon.”95 The subscriber, Joseph Gibbons, lived in


Savannah when he posted the advertisement, but had migrated from Pon Pon in 1755. Gibbons settled near Savannah, and by 1759 had established a lumber yard near Savannah bluff, along with rice reservoir with the use of 174 slaves. In 1761, Gibbons established another plantation 10 miles west of Savannah to supply timber. His brother, William Gibbons owned a wharf in Savannah from which he exported lumber, shingles, staves, and cattle. As such Jemmy and Santee were more than likely hired out and met the likes of Bradley and Simon prior to absconding.

In September 1764, an ad was posted for Cato, who had fled the preceding August. The subscriber described Cato as being “well known in Savannah” and as “a good drummer.” In December of the same year, an ad was posted for a Mulatto slave named Isaac, who had fled the previous July. Isaac possessed several marketable skills, whereas he could “hew, draw boards, tan leather, and make shoes and chairs.” Perhaps Isaac had extensive experience because the subscriber suspected that Isaac would “endeavor to pass for a free mulatto” and possibly attempt to get to Virginia. By the 1760s, skills and hiring apparently aided long-term flight. In June of the same year, an ad was posted for a fugitive who fled the previous month and was described as “an exceeding good carpenter and copper.” The slave was Carolina born and an “artful cunning fellow” that was expected to attempt to pass for a free man.

96 Chesnutt, *South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia*, p. 112.
97 Ibid., p.162.
99 Ibid., p. 9.
100 Ibid., p. 14.
Sometimes slaves with experience and skills united in flight. Such was the case when in April 1765 a 40 year slave named old York who was “well known about Ebenezer and Abercorn” fled with a 46 year old slave called Pompey who was “a good axeman.” The elder fugitives were joined by a 26 year old slaved named Sampson who was “by trade a carpenter.” Both Pompey and Sampson were born in North Carolina before being taken to Georgia. 101 During the next month, an ad was posted for two slaves “Dick and Pompey,” who were “both carpenters, country born.” The fugitives fled from “Mrs. Butler’s plantation on Great Ogechee river” and “they took each a gun and all their cloaths, that their dress: could not “with certainty be described.” The subscriber was Benjamin Fox. 102 Fox was one of the middling planter-merchants from South Carolina who settled the Ogechee-Savannah district in the 1750s. 103

In July of the next year, three men and a woman fled together. The men were “all prime sawyers” and along with the female slave, were suspected of fleeing in a canoe that had been “cut away some nights after from a wharf at Sunbury,” whereas no one in the area of Frederica from which they fled was missing a canoe. 104 The preceding advertisement, like many others, also revealed that slaves often stole items that facilitated both their ability to flee and to avoid recapture. Such advertisements often mentioned the slaves’ means of escape such as horse or watercraft, while others featured means to avoid recapture such as extra clothing. Some advertisements mentioned that slaves took work-related items such as tools or axes. A few even stated that runaways stole cutlasses or guns, which could have been used to find work in as a hunter in cattle industry or as a means to resist recapture with violence if necessary. In many examples, runaways stole items that they had access to in the daily routines.

101 Windley, Runaways Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 11.
102 Ibid., p. 12.
103 Chesnutt, South Carolina's Expansion Into Colonial Georgia, pp. 141-142.
104 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 17.
In July of 1763, an advertisement was posted by Robert Bolton for “a careful Negroe Boy and good Horse.” The boy was allegedly a well experienced writer because he had been commissioned to “always be ready to set express with letters to any part of the province, at per mile and five shillings a day when detained employer’s account: the money to be paid at the return.”\textsuperscript{105} One month later, another advertisement was posted for “a Negro man named Jasper”, who was about 30 years of age and had “his country marks on his temples, has been used to the boat,” spoke “good English”, and was “very well known about town.” To facilitate his escape Jasper, “took away with him a canoe.”\textsuperscript{106} In February of 1765 two runaways named Colerain and Derry, neither of whom spoke English, “carried away a small canoe with a forecastle.”\textsuperscript{107} In those episodes of flight, the watercraft taken directly enhanced the fugitives’ mobility. The taking of weapons or instruments, however, provided different benefits for runaways.

In August of 1763, a group of four runaways named Whan, Jack, Isaac and Christopher fled and with them “carried off three guns and a cutlass.”\textsuperscript{108} Those guns and the cutlass had many possible uses for hunting or protecting themselves along the frontier. They could have used the weapons to resist recapture, even as barter items. In April of 1764, an advertisement was posted for “a young Angola Negroe Fellow” who spoke “very little English” but nonetheless “took with him a felling ax” which could have used to either find work, fend off attackers, or even to sell or trade.\textsuperscript{109} Two months later, another subscriber posted notice for a runaway named Bain who fled on the ninth of

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\textsuperscript{105} Georgia Gazette Number 9. Thursday June 2, 1763.
\textsuperscript{106} Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p.10.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 5.
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July and “carried away a gun.” During October of 1764, ad posted for Frank who spoke “broken English, with the Spanish accent” and “carried of a gun and shot pouch with him.” Runaways could have use those items for multiple reasons such as armed-resistance, hired-work, or even to trade. In some episodes of flight, however, runaways with specific skills stole items such as clothing that would have allowed them to change their attire and appearance from any description given by the subscriber.

In December of 1764, ad posted for a Mulatto slave named Isaac, who had led the previous July. Isaac could “hew, draw boards, tan leather, and make shoes and chairs” and was suspected to “endeavor to pass for a free mulatto.” Another such advertisement was posted in May of 1765 for two fugitive slaves named “Dick and Pompey, both carpenters, country born” who “took each a gun and all their cloaths, that their dress” could not “with certainty be described.” During the next month, an advertisement was posted for a fugitive who had fled in May of 1765. The runaway’s name was Prince and he was described as “an exceeding good carpenter and copper” who was Carolina born, an “artful cunning fellow” that was expected to attempt to pass for a free man. On August 1, 1765, Scipio who fled from Charleston but commonly called himself Tom, was expected to run to Georgia where he had previously been in goal under the name Isaac. Furthermore, the experienced fugitive “stole from his master, a dark coloured jacket with vellum button holes, a linen jacket, several pairs of cotton, thread, and worsted stockings.” Isaac was formerly owned by a merchant, so it

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110 Ibid., p. 7.
112 Ibid., p. 9.
113 Ibid., p. 12.
was probable that he understood the importance of dressing to create the image of a free black or a hired slave.\footnote{Ibid., p. 15.}

Despite Grenville’s polices, Georgia’s economy burgeoned and the expansion of Georgia facilitated the widespread use of slave labor. In 1756 Georgia exported 2,996 barrels of rice. The output increased to 7,500 in 1763 and steadily increased to 25,000 by the outbreak of the Revolution. Indigo was introduced by Henry Yonge in 1751 and was exported in excess of 9,000 pounds during the same era. Tobacco production was introduced in 1763, and exports for tobacco products totaled 176,732 pounds by 1772. The cattle industry expanded to herds in excess of 1000 head of cattle which produced an annual average of 1000 barrels of beef for export.\footnote{Williard Range, “Agricultural Revolution in Royal Georgia 1752 – 1775,” p. 252 – 255.} Cattlemen also exported to the West Indies 50,000 pounds of tanned hides by 1772 and 1000 pounds of pork the same year.\footnote{Mart A. Stewart, “‘Whether Wast, Deodand, or Stray’: Cattle Culture, and the Environment,” in Early Georgia Agricultural History, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Summer, 1991), pp. 15 – 16.} The production and exportation of lumber, staves, and timber also increased to produce 100,000 tons to Caribbean and Europe.\footnote{G. Melvin Herndon, Forest Products of Colonial Georgia, pp. 133 – 135.} Savannah burgeoned in kind. In 1760, forty-one vessels docked in Savannah. By 1766, the number of vessels that docked in Savannah increased to one-hundred and seventy one.\footnote{Smith, Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860, p. 23.} The expansion of those industries mandated an increased importation of more slaves, and those slaves were spread over more territory and in more occupations.

Colonial merchants and planters accepted no limitations on how they utilized slave labor. Such activities were tolerated as long as they remained on plantations. When slaves were hired beyond the plantations as porters, workers, and traders, however, the bondsmen gained autonomy and experience. As one views the

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advertisements for the runaways, it is important to note the drastic changes of the colony that often influenced their escape.

**Cattle-Hunters on the Frontier**

While some runaways benefited from their experience to blend in or present the image of a free black, the opposite was true for slaves engaged in the cattle industry. As those transplanted communities evolved, Carolinians also established plantations and cowpens. Both signaled the emergence of large numbers of slaves spread over massive landholdings. Cow-pens expanded greatly from those of the Trustee period and with that expansion cattle-rustling also became a greater problem. The demand for cattle-hunters increased and they ranged over more frontier than before. The expansion of the cattle industry and elevated risk of cattle rustlers increased the opportunities for cattle hunters to abscond and exacerbated the clandestine trade in beef as well.

The expansion of the cattle industry provided opportunities for runaways. Planters established ‘insular estates.’ The cow-pens of the Royal period were manned by hirelings and black cattle-hunters. They functioned as outposts, excluded from all other economic activities. The use of such estates was probably established from practices on the barrier islands because the islands provided year round food without competition from other animals, and isolation from natural predators. Other cow pens were established inland fifty miles from the Ogeechee and Savannah rivers. The owners used the rivers to transport beef to markets as far west as Mobile, Alabama. Cattle accounted for approximately thirty-two percent of the non-human wealth of plantations.120

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The cattle frontier also extended along communal lines. The Midway district’s largest landowner, John Stevens accrued 2,000 acres in 1758 upon which he utilized thirty five slaves and fifty four cattle. Another Carolina migrant, John Elliot, the 3rd was a registered planter and Indian Trader. Elliot also had 1,400 acres, twenty-two slaves, and ninety-five head of cattle. John Mitchell, 1765 – 1,050 acres, 20 slaves, 50 cattle. Richard Spencer, 13 slaves 1759. In 1767, he was involved as a petty merchants: corn mill, rice, cattle, milling 800 acres, 15 slaves, 300 cattle, 14 horses. A cohesive group from Dorchester moved en mass to Midway. With the church as the center of the community, leadership overlapped both religious and political arenas.

Records reveal that cattle and slaves were often linked in transactions. Grantor, James Penny, who was a merchant in Frederica, granted to Raymond Demere, Esq. Frederica an “assignment and power of attorney” March 30, 1758. It was for the “fulfillment of a debt of £1577.0.0 owed by Penny to Demere, Penny grants to Demere a Negro man named Will, his wife Lenah, and their children; all his cattle, horses, and swine on St. Simon Island.” Another Grantor, John Spencer, who was also an Indian Trader of Augusta, granted to a man named Thomas of Augusta a “deed of gift with trust agreement” on October 25, 1758 for “a stock of cattle and horses” that were “ranging at boggy gut on the south side of briar creek” along with “the following Negroes: a mulatto fellow named Catoe, his wife Emilia, and her son Dick; a Negro woman named Memba and her daughter, a mulatto named Sapphoe; a Negro boy Jack; and a Negro boy named Sharper; a Negro fellow named Jamie and his wife, Penda.” In memorandum, however, Spencer gave all of the aforementioned property to Lachlan

121 Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia, p. 103.
122 Chesnutt, South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia, pp. 103-111.
McGillivray and John Fitch of Augusta in trust for the grantee. The slave Dick was given in the name of possession of all the property.”125 Cattle, land and slaves of all ages were hallmarks of westward and southern expansion in the backcountry.

The same conditions that fostered the growth of the cattle also inspired cattle rustlers. Once slavery was permitted and Carolinians populated the region, larger cowpens and a different type of cattle-keeper signaled the change. Throughout rural areas of the Southeast, planters used isolated cow pens to grow cattle for market. Since many areas operated as open-ranges, cattle-owners needed mobile cattle-keepers to govern their stocks. Slaves and Indians were used. Subsequently, the autonomy afforded to “cow-chasers” undermined supervision.126 Gary Dunbar has argued that cowpens as a distinct practice or animal husbandry originated in South Carolina before migrants extended the practice into North Carolina and Georgia. Dunbar stated that the practice began circa 1733, and was usually composed of 100 to 400 acres of large enclosures for horses, pigs, cows as well a dwelling, buildings, and a garden plot for the manager. Cattle owners tried to locate their ranges between savannas and cane swamps so that the “cow chasers” could herd cows to the former during the summer and the later during the winter. Though the cowpens were often in “back settlements”, many were owned by merchants, absentee owners in Charleston.

The size of the Georgia cowpens distinguished them from those of the South Carolina. The most prominent grazing areas were along the Savannah river. As the colonial period ended, the largest cowpen in South Carolina had an estimated 2,000 head of cattle, whereas Georgia had one cowpen that contained a herd of 6,000 bovine. Dunbar argued that the difference was due to the fact that the usage of the cowpen, or the people who actually used them, migrated northward into North Carolina and

125 Ibid., p. 176.
southward into Georgia. Moreover, the cowpens of Georgia were so large and that they facilitated the increased use of Negro cattlemen called hunters. Whereas white managers supervised cowpens, black slaves hunted cattle in the brush. Hunters became, in many ways, the most likely runaway because the hunters’ “knowledge of the countryside and a willingness to hunt down cattle: proved to be “precisely the qualities that slaveholders valued in their slaves.”¹²⁷ Hunters were often armed, “mounted and became highly skilled in horsemanship,” so much so that when such a slave decided to take flight, “the owner often lost both slave and horse at once.”¹²⁸ In the context of an expanding cattle frontier, the existence of cowpens, and of slaves who stole guns or horses signaled a myriad of possibilities for fugitive slaves.

Two Carolinians embodied the transition and expansion noted by Dunbar, the brothers Jonathan and Hugh Bryan. Jonathan Bryan lent slaves to Oglethorpe to clear land and erect buildings, while Hugh supplied cattle and barreled beef to Ebenezer, Savannah, and Frederica. Jonathan Bryan petitioned for 500 acres of land in 1755. In 1759, Bryan received the grant for 500 acres and an additional 250 acres the same year specifically for a cowpen along the Great Ogeechee River. In 1760 Bryan petitioned for another 600 acres which he was granted in 1762. In 1766 Mary Bryan conveyed another 500 acres to Jonathan Bryan in her will. The area was sparsely populated, but Jonathan and his son Hugh were among seven road commissioners who started a road for the purpose of herding cattle to the Savannah market. Many other settlers built cowpens as a result of the road.

In April of 1757, Ebenezer granted 100 acres of land to be used as “a cowpen for the feeding and pasturing the cattle of the inhabitants.”¹²⁹ The presence of squatters

¹²⁷ Berlin, Many Thousands Gone, p. 69.


¹²⁹ Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWWGMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB149).
and cattle in the unpoliced Georgian back-country eventually led to clandestine trade. February 1758, the administration of Georgia passed the act restricting illicit trade with the Indians, colonists also addressed theft. The magistrate passed “An Act to Prevent Stealing of Horses and Meat Cattle.” In the case of livestock, the magistrate stated that “no law hath hitherto been provided in this province, to prevent the great evils of stealing horses, and meat cattle, and unlawfully branding, marking, or killing the same.”\textsuperscript{130} The extent of runaways in clandestine networks is undeterminable. When, however, fugitive tooks items directly linked to cowpen management, such as guns, knives, or horses, then it is plausible that cowpens factored into their reasoning.

Land, cattle and slaves were often synonymous with estates of the lowcountry. For instance, Isaac Young and Martha Young entered an arrangement with George Galphin and John Morell, who were trustees, planters and merchants. In August of 1760, Mathew Roche, Esquire, Provost Marshal of Georgia, noted that Roche sold to Isaac Young: a “600-acre tract of land on the southeast side of Wilmington Island” along with a separate “500-acre tract” and “town lot No. 116 in Hardwicke”. Young also acquired a “100-acre-tract of land on Wilmington Island” along with “19 Negro slaves including six men, Pompey, Cuffey, Bristol, Cato, Simon, and King, and 13 women and children, Sylvia and her child Frank, Jenny, Florida and her child Dianna, Charity, Susannah, Rose, Charlotte, and Amey and her children, Joseph, Newberry, and Amazon; and 35 head of cattle, 18 horses, a ‘parcel’ of hogs, sundry plantation tools and implements of husbandry, a sailing boat, flat canoes, and sundry household goods and furniture.” As matter of legal procedure, “all of the above property was seized by the provost marshal following a decision of the General Court in Savannah at the suit of William Bradley, Gentleman, of the city of Westminster if Great Britain. The property was sold towards payment of a debt of 1000 pounds lawful money of Great Britain due

from the deceased John Barnard, late of Wilmington Island, to Bradley.” Galphin and
Morell got all “the goods and chattels”131

Other concentration of slaves and cattle were mobilized by marriage settlements
with trust agreements, such as the one established between Elizabeth Elliot, William
Elliot, Thomas Elliot and Walter Butler, trustees & planters, all from Colleton County,
South Carolina. On December 10, 1758 Elizabeth Elliot was to marry William Butler,
and she had “a right to an equal share of pcell [parcels?] of negroes willd by her
grandfather M’Thoé Elliot” which when divided between her and her two brothers
Stephen and William Elliot, equaled “to about six or seven negroes of those left . . .and
thirteen negroes, and fifteen or twenty head of cattle, of those belonging to the Estate of
her said father William Elliot”132

Grantor William Carr extended to Grantees Grey Elliot, John Gordon, and
Francis Arthur a “bill of sale” on May 12, 1761 in Sunbury for a total of 726 pounds, 3
shillings, 9 pence sterling in exchange for “three Negro men, Prince, Ceaser, and
Baalam; two Negro boys, George and Captain; six Negro Women, Cloe, Jenny, Sue,
Nanny, Hannah, and Philis; one Negro girl, Kate [kale?]; 14 head of cattle and horses
and 100 hogs . . .and 500 acres of land on North Newport, bounding eastwardly on
Richard Hazzard’s land and westwardly on John Burnett’s land.”133 The arrangement
like so many others included a combined movement of mass numbers of slaves and
livestock unto vast tracts of land.

133 Ibid., p. 209.
Several cowpens existed in the backcountry. Some cowpens were under the management of individual landowners. At other times, ethnic communities devoted lands specifically for cowpens. Ezekil Backler received 100 acres in St. Matthews parish and the “original warrant "stated that the tract was "located upon Tuckasee Kings and Mount Pleasant for a cow pen." In 1759, Christian Zeperer was granted 200 acres in St. Matthews Parish. However, the lands were bounded on the “east by the cowpen lands of Ebenezer.” July 1761, Jonas Mick was also granted land, 150 acres, in St. Matthews Parish which was “bounded on the northeast by a Dutch Cowpen land.” John Staley was granted 50 acres in 1766 and his land was bounded northwest by Ebenezer cowpen land.” In 1767 Hannah Polhill was granted 1150 acres in St. Matthew Parish and the land was bounded on the south by “the cowpen land.” As late as July 1774, the 150 acres of Earnest Lewis was still “bounded on the south by cowpen land.”

Though scarce, evidence exists that some slaves frequented cowpens and that cowpens became places that granted them autonomy from supervision and another place to interact with Native Americans. A “Peter Randon” misnamed Rander in the Grant Book, also had land in St. Matthew Parish, and even though the land was not

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134 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWWGMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMABS4.GIF)
135 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWW.GMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB197)
136 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWWGMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB114)
137 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWWGMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB168)
138 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWW.GMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB137)
139 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWW.GMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMABS38)
140 Colonial Georgia Land Records (HTTP://WWW.GMHOPE.COM/GALNDREC/STMAB154)
designated as cowpen lands, the judges of Georgia issued a charge against Randon because he was under suspicion “for keeping a cow pen on great Ogechee River under the directions of Negroes and Indians.”\footnote{Helen Tunnicliff Catterall, Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume Three (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), p. 6.} The presence of cowpens shed light on the possible motives of some runaways who stole items associated with cattle husbandry.

July 21, 1763, ad posted for “a Negroe man named Bob” who “carried off with him a large roan horse.” The subscriber offered “ten pounds sterling reward, besides a reasonable allowance for the expence [sic] of conveying him to Savannah or Charleston.”\footnote{Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 2.} On August 3, 1763, ad posted, for the “yellowish” Whan, “lusty” Jack, and the less-well described Isaac and Christopher who “carried off three guns and a cutlass.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 3.} On July 26, 1764, James Gray posted an ad for Bain who fled the ninth of July and “carried away a gun.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 7.} Later the same year, in October of 1764, James Gray posted another ad for Frank who spoke “broken English, with the Spanish accent” and “carried of a gun and shot pouch with him.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 8.} On April 25 of 1765, William Mackenzie advertised for two fugitives. One of them was “named Pompey” whom he described as “a good axman and hunter.” The other was “named Sampson” and was “by trade a carpenter.” More significantly, both fugitives “were born in North-Carolina.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 11.} Thus, they may have been experienced to both flight and cowpens. The next month, Benjamin Fox advertised for “two slaves, named Dick and Pompey, both carpenters, country born,”
and "took each a gun and all their cloathes." Fox was a South Carolinian who had only the year prior to the advertisement petitioned for 450 acres on the Savannah Ogechee district in Georgia. He registered four slaves in 1764 and eventually registered seven grants for a total 1,350 acres. As late as 1768, a subscriber from Charleston posted an advertisement for “a Negro Boy named Tom, supposed to be about some Mr. Bryan’s plantations in Georgia.” The subscriber noted that the fugitive Tom had a gun and suspected that he might also have “gone towards some of the cowpens.” Several Carolinian migrants to Georgia carried the surname of Bryan: Hugh, Jonathan, and Josiah. The only one of those Bryans to register slaves was Jonathan Bryan who accumulated 8,877 acres and 125 slaves. Along with autonomy of the cowpens, the presence of non-slaveholders along the frontier also offered runaway slaves with places to escape or exchange stolen goods.

**Salt Blacks: Flight among Africans and Afro-Caribbean**

In stark contrast to the slaves who established pre-existing networks through work and trade, were those who were recently imported from Africa and the Caribbean. Scholars have estimated that slaves from the Caribbean accounted for fifty-three percent of all Africans imported to Georgia from 1755 to 1767, while slaves from Africa

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147 Ibid., p. 12.

148 Chesnutt, *South Carolina’s Expansion Into Colonial Georgia*, p. 221.


represented thirty-five percent over the same span. Based on the advertisements, slaves experienced with Atlantic travel tended to favor maritime escape routes.

Country-born fugitives could and did use the experiences they gained in trade, herding, or trading to increase their chances of escaping and avoiding recapture. In contrast to slaves who traded or hired out, many African runaways were less acclimated to the culture of the lowcountry and consequently lacked skills and knowledge conducive to find work or self-sufficiency when they absconded. The inability to speak English also presented barriers, but those runaways who were born in Africa seemed undeterred by their lack of knowledge or their inability to communicate fluidly. The first direct reference to a runaway of African descent was published in May 1764 for “a Negro Man” described as “Bamba born” and spoke “little English.” Despite the language barrier, the fugitive had been gone for more than a month. In July of the same year, an ad was posted for “a short thick black Negro fellow, named Marquis” who had fled only three days prior, yet spoke “little or no English.” The subscriber made no indication of the slave’s suspected ethnicity. Therefore, the runaway’s inability to speak English represented little more than the likelihood that he was born outside of the colony. Later that year, for example, an ad was posted for “a Negroe man named Frank” who spoke “broken English with a Spanish Accent, having been several years at the Havana.”


152 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 6.

153 Ibid., p. 7.

154 Ibid., p. 8.
The advertisements reflected that as time progressed slaves identified as Africans managed to avoid recapture without gaining fluency in English. In January of 1765, an ad was posted for two African fugitives. The first fugitive was for “A New Negro fellow named Will” who had fled “above four months ago.” Will was described as “Guiney born” and spoke “little or No English.” The second runaway was “a Negro Fellow named Martin, of the same country” who also spoke “little or no English.” In the description of Martin, however, the subscriber noted that the fugitive had “some of his country marks on his forehead like scratches.”  

Many historians have noted that Africans tended to flee in groups more frequently than creoles. In Georgia, however, those groups included creoles more often than not. Therefore, group flight seemed to depend less on a sense of unity from an African past and more so from relationships formed in the Americas. Africans were subjected to the same hiring-out process as creoles. In June of 1764, Carolinian Joseph Gibbons posted an ad for runaways “Santee and Jemmy” who had “run away form Mr. James Donnom,” a planter who still resided in Ponpon, sometime “December last.” In August of the same year, a group of “three Negroe men” fled together. Two were “this country born.” The third was “a lusty well made fellow new Negro” who spoke “little English.”

One of two female fugitives recorded during the period was African. The other, a creole, fled from the estate sale. The African was a “Young New Negroe wench, named

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155 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 9.
156 Ibid., p. 6.
157 Ibid., p. 7.
Sidney” who had “her country marks on her breasts and arms.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 10.} On May 16, 1765, a fugitive ran “away from the sloop Pembroke” which was “lying at Thunderbolt.” The runaway was “Bermuda born” and “bred to the sea.” Therefore, “all masters of vessels” were “hereby desired not to carry said negroe off.”\footnote{Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 12.} Five weeks later another slave named Joe absconded as well and he had “been for two years past used to a coasting vessel.” Thus, the “masters of vessels” were “desired not to carry him off the province.”\footnote{Ibid., p.14.} On April 29, 1767, “a Negroe Fellow named Will” fled “from the sloop Sally” which was “lying at Belfast.” The fugitive spoke “English and French.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 21.} On July 8, 1767 an ad was posted for “a likely new Negroe fellow named Joe” who spoke “very little English” and who had fled eleven days earlier. Joe took flight “in a cypress canoe, from Colonel’s island, near Sunbury.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 23.} On September 16, 1767, “a Negroe fellow named Charles” had fled some ten days prior and had “formerly attempted to get off for the West Indies.” Therefore, the subscriber warned “all masters of vessels and others” not to harbor the said fugitive.\footnote{Ibid., p. 24.} Three weeks later, John Graham posted an ad for “two negro men” named Anthony and Frank. The fugitives had “run away from Mr. Drayton, at St. Augustine.” Graham stated that they were “both sensible artful fellows,
born on the estate of the late Hon. Thomas Drayton, Esq. at Indian Land, in South-
Carolina.”164

Despite their lack of familiarity with the environs of the lowcountry, slaves from
the Caribbean still managed to abscond and avoid recapture. George M’Kintosh posted
an ad for a runaway in 1768. However, another ad had been posted for “a mulatto boy
named Billy” who was “born in Jamaica” and had been in flight for two months in July of
1766. The subscriber “supposed” Billy “to be skulking about some vessels in order to
get there again.”165 Evidently the subscriber was correct, for in July 1768 George
M’Kintosh posted another ad for “a mulatto boy, named Billy” fled “from Mr. Forrester’s
sawmill.” The runaway was “just brought back from St. Kitts in the schooner Salley. .
.where he was carried about two years ago by one Capt. Simpson, who employed him
ever since as a sailor.” As such, the subscriber anticipated that Billy “would pretend to
be free, and attempt to get off again in a vessel.” Furthermore, he stated that the
“mulatto was advertised in this paper about two years ago.”166

Eventually New Negroes absconded in ways similar to country-born fugitives.
John Mullryne posted an ad for two slaves on July 27, 1768. Both spoke English and
one also spoke “bad French.” Mullryne suspected that they would try to “get off the
province by pretending to be free.”167 December 20, 1768, “a Bermuda Negroe Sailor

164 Ibid., p.44.
165 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p.16.
166 Ibid., pp.30-31.
167 Ibid., p. 31.
named Daniel” fled “from on board the schooner Susannah” and “took with him all his sea clothes.” The fugitive had experience “at Van Rensselaer and Peat’s wharf.”

“THREE NEGROE MEN, named HECTOR, BOATSWAIN, and FREDERICK” fled from the Island of Skidiway. Of the three, “Boatswain” was “well known in Savannah” while Frederick had “lately come from the Island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies.” The subscriber “supposed” that the runaways were “harboured by some Negroes at Matthew Roche, Esq.’s plantation.”

Like country-born slaves, recently imported bondsmen benefited if they had specific skills. In February of 1774, an ad was posted for “A Negroe man, named Jack who “formerly belonged to Mr. Alexander, Merchant, of St. Croix,” and had been gone for “some time.” Jack spoke “good English” and understood “a little of the house carpenters business.” The ad also mentioned “A NEGROE MAN, named Ben” who was “born in Bermuda,” and had “been employed in the drogging business for some years in” the “province.”

Whether by skills, trade, or harboring, salt blacks were able to escape recapture for extended periods of time. In April of 1774, John Clark posted an ad for “A Likely young Negroe wench, named Hannah” who had “run away from the subscriber about three weeks prior.” Hannah was “lately imported from Jamaica.” In July of 1774, an ad was posted for “a negroe wench, named Cherry” who had “run way from the subscriber the 19th of June last.” The ad was posted by Alexander Cunningham, and

168 Ibid., p. 34.
169 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 55.
170 Ibid., p. 47.
171 Ibid., p. 49.
Cherry “was born in the West Indies.” In March of 1775, “FOUR NEW NEGROE MEN” fled “from the subscriber’s plantation on Augustin’s Creek.” Cuffy, Stephen, Stepney, and Robin all had “not been above five months in the province.” They could not “speak English.” Approximately the same time “A NEGROE FELLOW, called FORTUNE” fled Graham’s plantation on Mulberry-Grove. Fortune, however, was more experienced with terrain than the previous four. Fortune had “run away” the previous “summer, and after being out some months, was taken up at Brier-Creek settlement in October last by Thomas Yarborough.”

Slaves from the Caribbean managed to escape and maintain their distance from their masters. Though unfamiliar with the local environment, they still understood the workings of maritime travel and used that escape along creeks, rivers, and even to the Atlantic. Africans, on the other hand, were the farthest removed from their homes and way of life. Yet, the question remains as to whether or not flight by Africans must be viewed in a different light than flight by country-born slaves or those imported from the Caribbean.

Georgia and South Carolina imported predominantly from areas on the western shores of Africa such as Gambia, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Senegal. During the span of 1766 to 1771, for instance, approximately 2,500 arrived in Savannah alone. Forty percent were from Gambia, sixteen percent from Sierra Leone, ten percent from Angola, fourteen percent from the Rice Coast, six percent from the general region of the ‘Gambia and Sierra Leone,’ five percent from the Grain coast, and three percent from

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172 Ibid., p. 52.
173 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 61.
Senegal. Records for the year 1768 and the years 1769 to 1771 revealed the origins of slaves imported into Georgia. Of the 510 recorded slaves shipped into Georgia in 1768, 170 were brought from Gambia; 250 were from Angola; and 90 were from Antigua (Windward Coast). Other entries listed arrivals from Africa, Antigua, and Senegambia. The only other listed source of slaves was Barbados.

Despite the heavy ethnic concentration of certain groups, one must beware of ‘the hermeneutics of the observer.’ While African cultures were central to formation of Afro-American cultures in the New World, historians warn against assuming similarities where they were differences. Instead, scholars should acknowledge the creation of new social and cultural worlds. They suggest that sometimes ethnic identities are based on point of departure from Africa which might only imply the last port of call. That disregarded both the complexity of inland networks from which many captives were taken, and the subsequent movement of slaves along coasts. In regards to New World identities, more attention should be attributed to invention, convenience, and reconstruction achieved through borrowing, adaptation, modification.175

The aforementioned gatherings that troubled colonists in 1766 coincided with the massive influx of slaves from West Africa. Wood and Frey suggested that those occasions were arguably burial ceremonies transcendent from West and West Central Africa in which instrumental and vocal music were preformed near the grave of the

174 Frey and Wood, Come Shouting the Zion, p. 44.

deceased after sunset. At the beginning of the decade of the 1760s, there were 3,000 blacks and 6,000 whites in Georgia. By 1773 those numbers had multiplied to 15,000 and 18,000, respectively. Charleston played a critical role in supplying Africans to Georgia; during the colonial period the latter relied upon the port for slaves rather than develop a trade of its own. Of the 7,000 Africans imported into adjacent colonies from Charleston between 1717 and 1775, Georgia received the lion's share, with fifty percent going to either Savannah or Sunbury, a port city on the Medway River.

An examination of the role of the Senegambian presence in colonial Louisiana, Carolina, and Georgia reflects the broader demographic trend in which Senegambians came to North America in sizable numbers. It has been argued that the ethnic concentration of Senegambians laid a foundation for the development of African culture in America. The Bambara in particular brought with them certain cultural and social constructs, including the Bambara worldview and the warrior-cultivator tradition. Little-Ogeechee received many because the region was settled by more capitalist farmers than other areas. In other areas many became yeomen who farmed for safety first; they focused on producing subsistence crops for the consumption of their families and only cultivated crops for market once their own dietary demands were met. In contrast, Little Ogeechee was dominated by capitalist farmers who used slaves or hired labor. The

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settlements in that region were focused on staple crops, and supported by financial instruments to market produce for the Atlantic market. \(^{179}\)

The African element of the Revolution can be noted by some of the most longstanding settlers. John Graham became a resident by 1735.\(^{180}\) By the 1750s, Graham was an established merchant and an active slave owner. He purchased a “Negro man named Jemmy” for 45 pounds in 1755.\(^{181}\) However, his trade in human bondage escalated: In May of 1756, granted five hundred pounds in a bill of exchange to Harriott Crooke “eight male and two female Negro slaves, lately purchased” for him “by R Colhoune, Esqr: of St. Christophers[Islands, West Indies] & ship for Georgia in the schooner Pelican.” The bill of exchange was “drawn by Mrs Cooker on Daniel Cunnyham, ESqr of St. Christophers.”\(^{182}\) A few years later John and his brother James purchased a 8,840 acre tract of Little St. Simons Island. The land was only accessible by water and consisted mainly of a low tidal marsh with forest tracts on the upland section of the eastern side.

Graham established several plantations and the diversity of his holdings. The expansion and diversity of his economic ventures required Graham to import Africans like many other planters. At the time, the location of his holdings exposed some of those slaves to considerable amount of movement. Both developments were reflected in his advertisements. In 1769, Graham advertised for “THREE NEW NEGROE MEN,


\(^{180}\) Immigrants from Great Britain to the Georgia Colony (Morrow, Georgia: Genealogical Enterprises, 197-?), p. 10.


\(^{182}\) Ibid., p. 53.
of the Conga country, called BEN, PETER, and TOM.” The fugitives had fled Graham’s “plantation on Hutchinson’s Island, opposite Savannah,” and “carried with them a canoe with three paddles.”  The next year, Graham posted an ad from East Florida for “TWO NEGROE MEN” who had “RUN AWAY from Mr. Drayton, at St. Augustine.” Graham described them as “sensible artful fellows, born on the estate of the late Hon. Thomas Drayton, Esq. at Indian Land, in South Carolina.” In 1774, Graham again posted an ad Somerset “of the Cormantee Country,” and his companion Fortune. Neither spoke English well and the subscriber doubted that either of them could tell their master’s name. Later the same year, Graham posted another add for “A short well made NEGROE FELLOW, called Mahomet.” The said fugitive had “RUN AWAY from the subscriber’s plantation on Augustin’s Creek near three years ago.” A slave fitting that description had “been seen at a settlement near the Indian Line in Ogechee very lately.” For that reason, Graham offered a separate reward for “information at whose plantation the said Negro has been secreted for some time past, so as the person who employed him may be convicted.” Somerset, who had “Also RUN AWAY from the said plantation in May last,” was still at large.

Not all planters left accounts as detailed as Graham but the advertisements revealed the increased frequency of Africans absconding in the lowcountry. The influx of Africans coincided with another major land cession. In June of 1773, the Creek and Cherokee ceded another 2.1 million acres in what became known as the New

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183 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 40.
184 Ibid., p. 44.
185 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 51.
186 Ibid., p. 56.
Purchase. The Creek and Cherokee were in vicious cycles of debt to Carolina traders. Georgia assumed the accumulated debt that ranged from £40,000 to £50,000. In return the Creek and Cherokee ceded two extensive tracts of their territory, one along the Broad and Little Rivers between the rivers Ogeechee and Savannah, and another between the Ogeechee and Altamaha west and southwest of the previously ceded land. 187 As planters expanded their holdings into those lands, they brought in African workers.

In July 1773, from a plantation “on Great-Ogechee River” there fled “Five New Negroes, of the Gola Country, viz. three men and two women” all could “speak a little English.” 188 Two weeks later, [was Ogechee in St. John’s Parish], from St. John’s fled “two Negroes, named Billy and Quamina, of the Guiney Country.” Both spoke “good English” despite the fact that Quamina had “his country marks on his face.” 189 In January 1774, trader James Laurens posted an ad from Charleston for slaves that had fled during the months of September and December 1772. The first was “Somerset.” However, the subscriber noted “his country name, Massery” and that the runaway was “of the Mandingo Country.” Another was named “Limus” who also bore “his country name Serrah,” and was “likewise of the Mandingo Country.” The third fugitive was “Mark” with the “county name Mussee,” and was “of the Guinea Country.” The slaves had fled from Henry Laurens’ plantation at Wright’s Savannah in 1772. Much like the country-born slaves, however, the subscriber had “great reason to believe the said Negroes” were “harboured by some evil minded person.” Therefore, “further reward of

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188 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 53.
189 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 53-54.
ONE HUNDRED POUNDS” was offered “for information thereof, upon the conviction of the offender, if a white person, and TWENTY POUNDS if a Negro.”

Africans occasionally fled with creoles. In June 1774, “two Negroes.” One was named “Somerset, a tall likely fellow” who was of the “Cormantee Country.” The other was “Fortune.” The subscriber noted that “neither of them” spoke “English well.” “A Negroe Woman, named Lucinda” who had “run away from the subscriber on the Island of Skidaway about three weeks” prior. Lucinda had “her country marks on her cheeks.” Despite her origins, Lucinda had evidently some adjustment to the new world for the subscriber also noted that the fugitive “may have changed her dress, as she” had “plenty of other cloaths in town.” In June 1774, “Four Negroe Men” fled “from the subscriber’s plantation on Little-Ogechee.” One was named “Dick, of the Angola country,” and he spoke “good English.” Brutus, who was apparently a creole of “about 26 years old,” “Sambo . .a Guinea Negroe,” and “Nero, a young lad, about 18, also of the Guinea country.” In September of the same year, there fled “from the plantation of the late Benjamin Fox at Little Ogechee, FIVE NEGROE MEN,” one creole and four members of the group were “of the Guiney Country.” A few months later in December 1774, St. Philips on Sunday, fled Solon, Romulus, and Hercules. “The two first were of the Sierraleon Country,” and “took with them four Bristol duffel blankets.”

190 Ibid., p. 46.
191 Ibid., p. 51.
192 Ibid., p. 51.
193 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 51.
194 Ibid., p. 57.
195 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
Alliances with creoles, however, apparently had their limits. January 1775, an ad was posted for “FOUR NEW NEGROE MEN and A WOMAN,” who had “WENT AWAY from the Governor’s plantation at Ogechee about the 18th of November” 1774. They fled “in a small paddling canoe” but put the woman “on shore somewhere near White Bluff, where she was taken up.” The men “told her they intended to go to look for their own country, and that the boat was not big enough to carry her with them.” 196

Some Africans were experienced in maritime travel. May 1775, “A NEGROE MAN, named Lancaster, of the Guinea Country” who had “RUN AWAY from the subscriber’s plantation about three weeks” prior. Lancaster spoke “good English”, whereas he had “been used to the sea” and the subscriber suspected that he “may probably attempt to get on ship board.” 197

In some cases, ethnicity apparently unified Africans of disparate occupations. There fled a group of eight, “most of them well known about the district of Little-Ogechee.” “Will” who as “by trade a cooper,” Isaac, who as listed as “a squarer and sawyer;”; Primus and Ishmael, both listed as “a field Negro.” All the men were “of the Guinea Country.” Two female runaways, “A Wench, named Penda, about twenty-one years of age,” and ‘Chloe, a girl, about fourteen years of age” both were also “of the Guinea Country.” Wapping, another male fugitive was not given an ethnic identity but was “much marked on the face, shoulder, and back, with his country marks.” The only “country born” was “a Boy, named Sawney” who understood “part of the carpenter’s business.” 198 The group had been absent for a month.

196 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
197 Ibid., p. 65.
198 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 69.
Africans also fled to preserve the sanctity of their families. An advertisement posted in October for two slaves that had fled the preceding June. One of the fugitives was “Boson,” who was “of the Guinea Country, with his country marks on each side of his face.” Boson spoke “a little English,” but his co-heart, “Daphney a very likely wench, of the same country,” spoke “very good English,” and also “carried off with her a young child.”199 The fact that a family of three had been away and avoided recapture for four months suggests that Africans had learned the intricacies of absconding in the lowcountry.

**Religious Upheaval on the Eve of the American Revolution**

As political tensions between England and the North American colonies worsened, religious factionalism contributed to the overall dissatisfaction of the later with the mother-country. In Georgia the conflict revolved around the establishment of churches for public worship. Certain Georgians wished to include all of the houses of worship in the Church of England. Dissenters supported the building of the churches but objected to their inclusion in the Church of England. A third group did not support the building of churches for public worship at all. Dissenters had the most representatives on the council who voted for the proposal and were geographically located along the Atlantic coast of the colony between the settlements of Augusta and Darien. German Protestants and Congregationalist of the Midway formed another powerful contingent against support for the Church of England. As opposition to

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199 Ibid., p. 70.
England grew in the lowcountry, ecclesiastical divisions manifested among communities according to the political differences.\textsuperscript{200}

The religious life of the colonies was shaped by divergent tenets, such as the ongoing conflict between the evangelicalism of Methodist movement and the Calvinist doctrine of the Anglican Church. The Countess of Huntingdon, Selena Hastings, was a benefactor of Whitefield and even established her own cadre of Methodist ministers called the Huntingdon Connection. In July of 1736, John Wesley began his personal mission in Charleston, South Carolina. In the next year, Wesley traveled to the plantations of prominent planters such as Stephen Bull, Hugh Bryan, John (?) and William (?) Palmer, William Bellinger, some of the planters who would later establish slavery in Georgia. Evangelicals faced legal pressures due to their opposition to the state-sponsored church. The conflict and competition caused Methodist groups to adopt strategies which eventually imbued the movement with anti-slavery sentiments. Thus, when Whitefield visited the lowcountry, he furthered Wesley’s mission to provide religious instruction for bonded people of the lowcountry.

The evangelical nature of Whitefield’s sermons appealed to and included relatively large black populations. The emotional style of preaching was comparable to traditional African forms of worship which made it appealing to Africans and those of African descent. When Whitefield toured the lowcountry, planter-merchants like John and Hugh Bryan, and James Habersham, who were later central to legalizing slavery in Georgia, supported his evangelical crusade to proselytize enslaved Africans. The widespread fervor of the revivals caused an uproar in St. Helena Parish. Slaves

participated in such large numbers and their emotional brand of Afro-Christianity alarmed so much so that an anonymous writer posted fears of an uprising in *The South Carolina Gazette.*\(^{201}\) The ecstatic style caught the attention of Pastor Johan Martin Bolzius and brought the disdain of Reverend Jones of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel. Regardless of outside views and criticisms, the movement burgeoned and in 1743, the planter-merchants and other dissenters formally left the Church of England and formed Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church. The church formally admitted two slaves in 1745, who were even permitted to sign the church covenant. Whitefield's influence, however, exceeded the confines of organized services.

Two decades later, Whitefield toured the lowcountry again and it was then that he initiated an evangelical revolution that would coincide with the broader war for independence. The religious revolution undertaken by slaves of the backcountry during the American Revolution would reorder their spiritual lives, eventually spreading to Canada, to the Caribbean and even to Africa as well. Whitfield converted John Marrant, a religious pioneer who bridged the gap between the Native Americans of Georgia and Africans prior to the Revolution. Marrant was born in New York. His family later moved to Georgia circa 1767 and eventually settled in Charleston. Marrant became a much sought after violin player while in Charleston, and it was there he had a conversion experience during a sermon by the Reverend George Whitefield. After his conversion Marrant devoted himself to evangelizing. An 'Indian Hunter' befriended Marrant and the latter soon began proselytizing among the Cherokee, learning to speak the Cherokee language in the process. Marrant became so enthralled in his religious mission that he

\(^{201}\) Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, pp. 93-94.
eventually spent several weeks unabated among the Cherokee. After his personal crusade with the Cherokee, Marrant went on to dedicate several months spreading the gospel to the Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw as well. John Marrant, born 1755, June 15, in New York, to St. Augustine circa 1760, about 18 months later to Georgia after his father died, apprenticed to a trade and sent to Charleston circa 1766-67, learned a to play the violin and French horn by age twelve and became a popular musician, invited to assemblies, balls circa 1769-1770, Rev. George Whitefield visited Charlestown, Marrant attended one of the meetings, had a conversion experience after which he became a diligent reader of a pocket bible and a Dr. Watts hymnal. He spent ten weeks in the woods with an Indian he befriended and after learning some of the Indian language, they fled together to a village in the Cherokee nation. After being tortured he spoke to them in their language. There he proselytized to the chief and his daughter and converted them. For six weeks thereafter, he traveled with fifty warriors preaching to the Creeks, the Catawbas, and Howsaws; who were not as receptive as the Cherokee. He then returned to the Cherokee after six months and soon thereafter to Charlestown, where no one recognized him. He lived among his family until the Revolution. Though Marrant crusaded alone, his actions were part of the ongoing reinterpretation of religion in the colonies. As such, the actions of John Marrant were a continuation of the evangelical movement that bridged social differences between masters, slaves and Native Americans.

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Whitefield encouraged slaveowners to extend evangelism to their slaves beyond the church. George Galphin, for instance, who owned a plantation at Silver Bluff, either encouraged or tolerated religious instruction for his slaves. Such tolerance was of great significance due to Galphin's effort to establish a town. Galphin established a cowpen and Indian trading post south of Augusta in 1764 and the settlement became known as Old Town or Galphin's Old Town. Though Galphin constructed several large cowpens, the settlement lacked European or native born white settlers. It took several years of petitioning and recruiting before Queensborough was established in 1771. Meanwhile, slaves were able to experience evangelicalism in relative isolation. Even after settlers from Belfast arrived from Charleston in January 1771, slaves had the opportunity to interpret Christianity in the absence of a consistent orthodoxy as violence and abandonment created turmoil in the backcountry.

In 1771, James Habersham, a leading merchant and acting governor from 1771 to 1773, reported another gathering of runaways. According to the report, a large number of fugitive Negroes had not only gathered but had already committed numerous robberies and insults between the towns of Savannah and Ebenezer. The governor sent the Georgia militia along the Indian hunters to destroy the camp. In December of 1771, mass violence erupted again but this time it flared between the residents of Queensborough and the members of the local Creek. Galphin fielded a posse that

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included his own slaves and suppressed the violence. More settlers arrived from Northern Ireland on approximately thirty emigrant ships until 1773. In 1773 the Cherokee ceded two million acres to Georgia. However, the Creek claimed that the land was rightfully theirs. The Creek expressed their animosity towards the cession and the settlers in two massacres, one on Christmas Day 1773 and another in January 1774. After those incidents fewer Europeans migrated to Queensborough and moved instead to South Carolina and North Carolina.\textsuperscript{207}

Despite Queensborough's violence and isolation from more established colonial settlements, it seems that the slaves of Queensborough were willing to assist runaways. Mordecai Mires posted an ad for "A NEGROE WENCH, named Lucy." Mires stated that the "said wench" was supposed to have gone to George Galphin, Esq.'s." The most ironic point of the advertisement, however, is Lucy had "been absent for four years."\textsuperscript{208} The bonds formed by slaves through religious meetings might have flourished in the isolation of the settlement and provided a haven for the runaways mentioned. Several pioneers of black evangelicalism shared a common background in the lowcountry.

David George was born of African parents in Essex County, Virginia. George endured cruelty while enslaved in Virginia, from which he escaped to the Pee Dee River. Due to South Carolinians' common practice of hiring slaves out, George found work until the local populace was alerted of a reward for his recapture and he fled for Savannah. He eventually Ocmulgee River where he was captured by Blue Salt of Cussita and his hunting party. George lived among the Native Americans during which

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\textsuperscript{208} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 63.
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time he tended fences, harvested corn, and dug entrenchments. The son of George's former owner eventually located him and traded rum, linen, and a gun for George. However, George refused to be passively exchanged. Instead, he escaped again and for his resilience, was sold to George Galphin, deerskin trader and American Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the American Revolution. So George once again lived and traveled among the Indians as a packhorseman. After three years of such service, he asked to be transferred and was to Galphin’s Silver Bluff, South Carolina.²⁰⁹ Some accounts of George's life suggest that he not only lived among the Creek for two years as a servant to Blue Salt but also worked for King Jack of the Natchez and that it was King Jack who sold him to a plantation along the Savannah River approximately twelve miles northward of Augusta. The children of George’s new master taught him to read and write using the Bible as a primer.²¹⁰ By either account, George showed that the act of running away actually broadened the knowledge of slaves and prepared them for future acts of resistance.

George Liele was contemporary of both David George and John Marrant. Liele entered Burke Country, Georgia, with his master Henry Sharpe, who was a Baptist Deacon. Due to his zeal and devotion to learn the gospel, white ministers eventually brought George Liele into the formal clergy. The white ministers eventually licensed Liele as a probationer for two years during which time he preached throughout the slave quarters along the Savannah River from Silver Bluff, where he crossed paths with David George. Liele even preached in and around the suburbs of Savannah. Prior to the


outbreak of revolutionary warfare, Sharpe manumitted Liele and joined with the Tory faction of the lowcountry. When hostilities erupted, Sharpe was killed. Liele migrated to Savannah. Sharpe’s heirs tried to re-enslave Liele but the British officer for whom he worked thwarted their efforts. For the three years that the British controlled Savannah, Liele gathered congregations and preached without strict supervision from a white minister. Andrew Bryan and David George were among the many who worshipped with and learned from Liele.211

On the eve of the Revolution, resistance took a distinctly religious tone for African and country-born slaves alike. Reverend William Percy requested a pastor to minister to the flock as Bethesda. To oversee the process, the Countess of Huntington coordinated with James Habersham, who held influence as a planter, a merchant, and a magistrate. As a Royal governor of Georgia, he was also a staunch loyalist and had served with Whitefield as Bethesda. The Countess strongly believed in predestination and therefore found slavery compatible with Christianity as long as slaves were properly instructed and baptized. The Countess sent an African minister to Christianize the slaves at Bethesda in 1775. David Margate, the minister she chose to send to Georgia, however, did not share her accommodating ideology of amelioration.212

Margate arrived in Charleston en route to Georgia. Upon his arrival in the lowcountry, Margate delivered his first sermon, after which Percy expressed concern. Margate preached liberation and insurrection from slavery. Late in 1774, Margate arrived at Bethesda and proclaimed himself a second Moses, commissioned to deliver


his people from slavery. Margate went on to preach a message of insurrection to the slaves in South Carolina. Chaos erupted at Bethesda. Colonists noticed a certain fervor among the slaves and many feared that Margate had incited a plot to poison all white people. Tolerance collapsed and a lynch mob organized in South Carolina to silence the heretic. Only by a decisive and secretive maneuver by allies of the Countess was the life of Margate spared. The meteoric evangelical was boarded on a ship bound for England and his departure marked the unceremonious end to the Countess's efforts to Christianize the slaves in the lowcountry.213

The effects of evangelicalism did not end with the withdrawal of support from the Countess. Instead, the diminished efforts of the Huntingdon Connection left a vacuum to be filled by bonded people inspired by Margate and other evangelicals. A less radical but more enduring cadre of black preachers would soon follow in Margate's wake. The black preachers that emerged in the lowcountry in the following years would experience greater success not only in spreading the gospel but in establishing their own institutions and defining the gospel for themselves. It was during these turbulent years that David George allegedly founded the first black Baptist church in North America at Silver Bluff.214 The continued success of the black clergy fringed less on their differences from Margate and more on the changes that ensued in the society.

Only months after Margate escaped the lowcountry, Georgia was swept into a greater movement, one that would transform the fledgling colony once again. As Revolutionary ideology came to fruition throughout the colonies, Georgia again had to

213 Schlenther, Queen of the Methodists, p. 91.
redefine notions of freedom. The colony that began as a bastion against slavery had transformed into a premier slaveholding society. Yet, Georgia was about to enter a Revolution that was ideologically opposed to tyrannical rule and the oppression of individual rights. As Whigs and Tories drew arms to define freedom in blood, they did so in the midst of a black populace that had not only grown to unprecedented numbers, but had also become more African, more skilled, and more imbued with notions of freedom not totally different from those held by their masters.
CHAPTER 5
REVOLUTIONARIES IN A REVOLUTIONARY AGE

The American Revolution and subsequent founding of the United States of America witnessed the final stage of transformation for Georgia from the antislavery colony of British North America to the ardent advocate for continuation of both slavery and the African slave trade. Runaway slaves were once again central to the transition, for both royalists and rebels acknowledged how the enlistment of black troops would tip the balance of power in the lowcountry, yet at the same time both considered the truly revolutionary implications of arming slaves in a war fought for liberty. Had slaves sat idly by the matter would have been one of many debates held by both factions. However, runaway slaves took the initiative and fled, choosing sides they made slavery a central issue of the broader revolution. In fact, some historians consider the agency exhibited by slaves during American Revolution as one mass slave rebellion.1

A Colony Divided

Like the citizens of other colonies, Georgians divided between those loyal to the crown and those loyal to the notion of the new republic. The conflict in Georgia, however, was particularly severe. For instance, when the Continental Congress convened in September of 1774, Georgia was the colony that did not send a representative cadre. Furthermore, the dissention over loyalty fell along regional lines.

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1 Philip Morgan and Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “Arming Slaves in the American Revolution” in Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age Edited by Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 187; also noted the catalytic event for slaves in both North America and the Caribbean; Gary Nash, The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), also argued that the American Revolution was the first mass rebellion in American history, the first Civil Rights movement, and the first reconstruction of African American life; Jon Sensbach, “Self-Evident Truths” on Trial: African Americans and the American Revolution, American Revolution: People and Perspectives Edited by Andrew K. Frank (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2008), pp. 60, Sensbach argued that for slaves the American Revolution was part of a large rebellion that spawned revolts in the Caribbean as well as North America.
For Revolutionary Georgia, the fear of domestic insurgencies was central to the dichotomy between the Whig faction of Augusta and the Loyalist government of Savannah. Harvey H. Jackson argued that longstanding divisions existed between a conservative faction from Savannah and Christ Church Parish who favored loyalty to the Crown and the provincial factions centered around St. John's Parish who favored change. The conservatives proliferated during the Royal period and more than half of the first rank assemblymen who served during the Royal period came from their ranks. The colonists from St. Johns were either migrants from New England or their descendants.² In contrast, James Harvey Young argued that Georgians were divided between the rural and liberal who distrusted the presence of the royal military, and the more conservative urbanites of Savannah who benefited from the stability that the royal militia maintained in the city.³ Regardless of their affiliation, Georgian colonists acknowledged that slaves and Native Americans both threatened to tip the balance of power for either side to which they devoted their efforts. Runaways slaves bolstered those fears because they embodied the uncontrolled and perhaps smitten slave who forges an unknown alliance with disgruntled Natives Americans, the unified horrors of slave rebellion and Indian uprising amidst an increasingly divided white society. The fissure manifested just prior to the outbreak of the Revolution when the Creek drove settlers from the frontier of the backcountry. The refugees sought refuge in Augusta. Governor Wright retaliated and banned all trade between colonists and Native Americans, making the disputes of the frontier a royal matter. When the British passed

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³ James Harvey Young, “Lyman Hall”, in Georgia’s Signers of the Declaration of Independence, p. 32-33.
the Coercive Acts of 1774, the merchants of Savannah protested but in lieu of the need for royal support along the frontier, the people of Augusta signed petitions of loyalty to the Crown. In previous negotiations with Native Americans, the Crown had secured addition cessions of land. When the governor reopened trade without requiring the Creek to cede more land, however, that omission fed into rumors that the British planned to mobilize the Native Americans against the settlers of the backcountry. With the fear of an Anglo-Creek alliance, Augustans reversed their once loyal support for the Crown and joined Revolutionary protest in 1775.\(^4\) Once Georgia joined the Continental Association and appointed committees to uphold the ban on trade with Britain, Augusta, the town that Captain William Thompson described as collection “of lawless Indian traders” who “unlawfully employed Negroes,” became a focal point of revolutionary activity.\(^5\)

Though Georgians absented themselves from the Continental Congress in September, they did organize a local assembly to address their own concerns the following month. Foremost among their issues were the aforementioned fears of Indian uprising, slave revolt, some alliance between Africans and Native Americans, and the possibility that both or either could be mobilized against them by the British. To thwart any unity between the Amerindians or Africans, a treaty was written and signed at an Indian Congress in Savannah. Georgians increased the reward for the return of runaway slaves to fifty pounds of leather or the equivalent value in goods for every runaway slave delivered to the white person who applied for the runaway. Native


Americans were promised an additional ten pounds if the Creek returned them to Savannah. Despite the compliance exhibited by the Creek, the agency of runaway slaves continually bolstered the colonists’ fears because it embodied the image of the uncontrolled and perhaps smitten slave who forges an unknown alliance with disgruntled Natives Americans, awakening unified horrors of slave rebellion and Indian uprising amidst an increasingly divided white society.

The British also intended to keep Native Americans out of the colonial conflict. David Taitt, British agent to Upper Creeks, worked to keep Native American out of colonial conflicts and to prevent an allegiance between slaves and Indians. In January of 1775, Taitt requested that the Creeks return seven fugitives. In May 1775, the Creeks brought in six and were rewarded; the six were sent to Savannah under Indian guard. Four of the six captives escaped en route to Georgia and fled to a different part of Creek territory from the one in which they were originally captured. Tuckabatchee warriors recaptured two, named Toby and Ned. Taitt had to pay another reward for their recapture. Toby and Ned were reunited with the two runaways that had not escaped and sent again towards Savannah with an Indian guard. They broke free again. This time one runaway was killed by a Creek, another drowned. One escaped entirely. In pursuit of the fugitives, however, the Creek captured three different runaways, and for their efforts demanded and received yet another reward. By the time Taitt settled his affairs with the Creek he had paid they a £114.1.10 in addition to trade goods also given

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for rewards.\textsuperscript{7} As the episode indicated, the legal agreement between Native Americans and colonists did not prevent slaves from absconding.

\textbf{New Negroes: African Runaways of Revolutionary Georgia}

Georgia imported captives directly from Africa until the eve of the Revolution. Once the American Revolution began in earnest, the physical disruption of the war increased the mobility of all slaves. The struggle between the British and rebellious colonists provided a myriad of opportunities for runaways throughout the lowcountry to exploit as both armies mobilized slaves for war-related tasks. Slaves participated on both sides of the conflict as builders, guides, porters, and soldiers. Some slave owners fled to East Florida and transplanted hundreds of slaves in the migration, while untold numbers of slaves were confiscated by rival banditti. During the pivotal siege of Savannah, French and British regiments alike recruited hundreds of slaves and free men of color from the Caribbean.

The slaves who absconded during 1775 reflected the broader trends of the Revolutionary era. Georgia continued to import Africans during the winter of 1774 into the Spring of 1775.\textsuperscript{8} According to the statistics compiled by Karen Bell, the proportion of Africans imported to Savannah increased to sixty-eight percent during the years of the Revolution.\textsuperscript{9} Hence, the advertisements reflect a high proportion of Africans. The advertisements also revealed that female slaves fled more often, and more of them took


\textsuperscript{8} Darold Wax, “’New Negroes Are Always in Demand’: The Slave Trade in Eighteenth-Century Georgia” In \textit{Georgia Historical Quarterly}, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Summer, 1984), pp. 193-220.

the additional risk of taking small children with them. Overall group flight increased and a higher proportion of those groups were composed of family units that included small children. The number of enslaved blacks ranged from an estimated 16,000 to 15,000.\textsuperscript{10}

Historian Jeffrey Bolster argued that Africans possessed tangible skills as well as intangible ideologies based on African traditions and spirituality. Because the New World relied so heavily on pettiaugers and canoes, African boatmen were able to maintain a high degree of autonomy with little supervision. As such, seafaring vessels served as physical connections to the spirit world and granted black seaman a constant environment to define their own world view distinct from both white mariners and non-seafaring slaves.\textsuperscript{11} Four of the nine fugitives listed for January supported that argument.

Among the nine fugitives listed for January were “FOUR NEW NEGROE MEN and A WOMAN.” In this instance, the group indicated the purpose of their flight and also revealed how useful maritime avenues were for runaways. The notice stated that the group had “WENT AWAY from the Governor’s plantation about the 18\textsuperscript{th} of November” 1774 and “went away with the wench in a small paddling canoe.” However, the group “put her on shore somewhere near White Bluff, where she was taken up by one Mr. Johnston,” and stated that “the other Negroes told her they intended to go to look for their own country, and that the boat was not big enough to carry her with


them.” In March another group of “FOUR NEW NEGROE MEN” absconded “from the subscriber’s plantation on Augustin's Creek.” The runaways Cuffy, Stephen, Stepney, and Robin had “not been above five months in the province.” As such the subscriber notified the public that the aforementioned runaways "cannot speak English, and will probably not be able to tell their Master’s or Overseer's name.” Evidently the lack of linguistic ability did not deter group flight, for in July of the same year, "TWO NEGROES" named Adam and Isaac fled together despite the fact that neither could "speak English so much as to tell their Master's name.” Though the runaways’ inability to speak English may be viewed as a hindrance to their escape, historians have noted that peoples of mixed African- Amerindian ancestry were the fastest growing population of the lowcountry during the Revolutionary era. People described as métis, mestizos, or castas proliferated, so while their incapacity to speak English may have impeded Africans’ ability to blend into urban areas amongst creoles, it would be less of an obstacle among the burgeoning amalgam of races of the backcountry.

The advertisements for the Africans who fled alone indicated that they were able to evade recapture effectively despite their lower level of acculturation. For instance, "CATO, of the Fulla Country," and Smart "of the Guinea Country" had both been away

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13 Ibid., p. 61.

14 Ibid., p. 66.

15 Daniel S. Murphree argues that the the mixed culture of the backcountry transcended any category and developed without much hegemonic influence of the English colonial society. See “‘Redcoats, Regulators, and the Rattletrap:’ The Backcountry Experience During the American Revolution,” in Frank, ed. American Revolution: People and Perspectives.
for two weeks or more before their owners posted ads for them. The advertisements further reflected that female Africans were also able to abscond and evade capture alone. Such was the case with "A NEGROE WENCH, named Venus" who spoke "but little English" and had "many country marks on her face." Venus had been away for more than a week at the time the advertisement was placed.

Though Africans may have been able to mesh with the diverse populations of the frontier, some African-born slaves gained experiences in the Americas that actually facilitated their ability to remain within the mainstream of colonial culture and evade recapture. The advertisement for "A NEGRO MAN, named Lancaster, of the Guinea Country" noted that he had "RUN WAY from the subscriber's plantation about three weeks" prior, but also had experience in the Americas that facilitated his escape, whereas he had "been used to the sea." In another instance, "A NEGROE FELLOW named TOM" had lived in Africa long enough to earn "his country marks." Yet, during his enslavement in Georgia he "worked at the cooper's trade with Mr. Cunningham" and became "well known about town."

In some cases, Africans bonded and developed a group identity based on ethnicity and their experiences in the lowcountry. One such group was able to evade their owner for a month, even though "most of them well known about the district of Little-Ogechee." The group included "A BOY, named Sawney, country born" who knew "part of the carpenter's business," and Wapping who was "much marked on the face,

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16 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 62.
17 Ibid., p. 67.
18 Ibid., p. 65.
19 Ibid., p. 65.
shoulder, and back, with his country marks." All of the other runaways were "of the Guinea Country." They included "A NEGROE FELLOW, named Will, by trade a cooper"; Isaac, who was "a squarer and sawyer"; Primus and Ishmael both listed as "a field Negro; Penda with "her country marks on her face" and "Chloe, a girl, about fourteen years of age."  

The other slaves who fled, however, were more in line with the ongoing power struggle between colonists and the Crown.

The British focused their military efforts against the revolutionaries on the Middle and Northeastern colonies until 1778. Even in the absence of large engagements, however, colonists and British both recognized the unsettling potential of mobilizing the black masses. For long slavery had been an endless cycle of adaptation, resistance, and concession in the lowcountry. Slaves and owners sought to protect their own interests and could vary their actions and reactions to changing circumstances and opportunities. The Revolution presented the most dramatic environment for this enduring power struggle. Slaveowners were the elite minority, instilled with ambivalent currents of wealth and dependence, confidence and fear. Absconding was a desperate risk met with much repression, such as flogging or maiming. Yet, running away was also a frightening display of self-mastery because absconding challenged the very foundation of the status quo. Thus, as the conflict with Britain posed a greater overall threat to the colonies, historians have argued that it was the mobilization against slave

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20 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 69.
unrest and insurrection that inspired residents of the lowcountry to break with the Crown and gave the revolutionary government credibility.\textsuperscript{21}

In that light, it is noteworthy that the many of the runaway advertisements posted for the Spring and Summer of 1775 were for slaves owned by the planters, merchants and traders who made up the elite of Georgia's society. The first four runaways who fled during the month of January were from the plantations of the influential family of Indian traders, Lachlan and William M'illivray. In March, William M'Illivray posted an ad for “THREE NEGROE FELLOWS, named MAY, JULY, and FROST.” Less than a month later, M'Illivray notified the public once again that “FOUR NEGROE MEN, Abraham, Frost, October, and November” had fled from his plantation “on Hutchinsons Island.”\textsuperscript{22} In May, Lachlan M'Gillivray posted another ad for "THREE NEGROE MEN" who had "RUN AWAY from the subscriber's plantation at Vale-Royal."\textsuperscript{23}

John Graham was one of the most active merchants in importing Africans into the lowcountry of Georgia. In March of 1775, Graham post an ad for "FOUR NEW NEGROE MEN" who had "RUN AWAY from the subscriber's plantation on Augustin's Creek." Graham noted that the fugitives had "not been above five months in the province, cannot speak English, and will probably not be able to tell their Master's Overseer's name." Graham's problems were widespread, for he also advertised for "A NEGRO FELLOW, called FORTUNE," who had "RUN AWAY from his plantation on Savannah River called Mulberry-Grove." Unlike the Africans, Fortune had experience

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\textsuperscript{22} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 64.
with flight in the lowcountry, because he had "run away" during the "last summer, and after being taken out some months, was taken up a Brier-Creek settlement in October last."\(^\text{24}\)

The merchant James Mossman experienced high numbers of runaways. In March, Mossman posted an ad for "ELEVEN NEGROES, seven men and four women," who had "RUN AWAY from the subscriber's plantation on Hutchinson's Island, about six weeks" prior. The runaways were evidently an experienced and knowledgeable group because Mossman noted that they were "all well known in and about Savannah."\(^\text{25}\) As the events of the Revolution unfolded, however, evidence revealed that religious unrest might also have played a role in group flight from Hutchinson's island and other low country plantations.

**Religious Upheaval among Slaves**

In the spring of 1775, the lowcountry was also rife with unrest linked to the religious fervor caused by the recently departed David Margate and the black preachers who remained in his wake. Once again, events in South Carolina were linked to those in Georgia. In February, the Charleston Grand Jury accused a white colonist named Peter Hinds of 'entertaining and admitting Negro Preachers in his House on his grounds, where they' were allowed to 'deliver doctrines to large Numbers of Negroes, dangerous to and subversive to the Peace, Safety, and Tranquility of this Province.'\(^\text{26}\)

Some runaway activity in Georgia can be linked to the religious meetings of South Carolina. In May of 1775, Mordecai Mires posted an ad for "A NEGROE


\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 62.

\(^{26}\) Olwell, "Domestic Enemies," p. 29.
WENCH, named Lucy” who had “RUN AWAY from the subscriber.” As for the whereabouts of Lucy, Mires stated that “the said supposed to have gone to George Galphin, Esq.’s.” Mires offered one hundred pounds reward for the return of Lucy and five hundred pounds reward for information that she was harbored by some white person.\(^{27}\) George Galphin’s estate served significant historical significance. At an unspecified date between 1773 and 1775, eight slaves formed the Silver Bluff Church after they converted and baptized by a white preach known Palmer. Palmer, like other white ministers, was forbidden from ministering to slaves, whom he left to themselves in control of the instruction of the black congregation and the subsequent social networks that existed through the church. When the British invaded the area, Galphin fled with some of his slaves to Savannah.\(^{28}\) The Galphin estate, however, would continue to be a hub of slave resistance even in his absence.

The history of Galphin’s estate or perhaps the assistance offered by the slaves who remained at Silver Bluff possibly inspired “A Country-born NEGROE WENCH, named Sukey” who fled with “her son named Simon, about eight years old.” Sukey and Simon were mentioned in conjunction with “A FELLOW named Will,” who had been “seen lately in South Carolina, near to Mr. George Galphin.”\(^{29}\) As a prominent slave trader and Indian merchant, Galphin and his activities garnered much attention. As the Revolution unfolded, however, the clandestine preaching of lesser known residents, which had previously gone unnoticed, was also brought to light.

\(^{27}\) Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, p. 63.


\(^{29}\) Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, p. 72.
Rumors spread throughout the colonies that Britain supported slave uprisings. Moreover, in May of the same year, Charleston residents got word that slaves 'entertained ideas that the present contest [with Britain] was obliging us to give them liberty.' As war with England loomed the enslaved took actions that caused more colonial unrest, as it awakened all citizens to the ever present dangers both slave insurrections and a unified revolt between African-Americans and Amerindians. The enslaved in Connecticut, Virginia, and North Carolina mobilized. Some petitioned for freedom, others cried aloud for liberty in lieu of British invasion. Committees of Safety in each state, investigated, imprisoned, flogged and cropped suspected insurrectionists. White Carolinians moved quickly to quell the threat of slave rebellion, and it was the ensuing struggle between the Charleston General Committee and the Royal government that accentuated Revolutionary ideology.

Thomas Hutchinson sent a letter to the Council of Safety warning them on unrest in the Chehaw region of St. Bartholomew's Parish. A slave named Jemmy stated that George and as many as fifteen other slaves had preached insurrection for the previous

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31 Peter H. Wood, "Liberty is Sweet: African American Freedom Struggles in the Years before White Independence" in *Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* Edited by Alfred Young (DeKalb, North Illinois University, 1993), pp. 150-152, Wood noted that black notions of freedom were not spillovers for the American Revolution but were instead the evolution of centuries of resistance based on the black experience in the colonies; Woody Holton, * Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, Holton argued that the founders were compelled to lead the Revolution because their position was threatened by both the imperial policies of England and the growing demands of the under classes, which included slave unrest. Sensbach, "Self-Evident Truths" on Trial: African Americans and the American Revolution", noted that cases of resistance such as arson, poisoning, murder increased during the decade leading to the American Revolution and both sides were very aware of how the involvement of slaves could influence the conflict; Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America*, outlined how the enslaved mobilization in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, was repressed by Committees of Safety, 59-61.
two years to ‘Great crowds of Negroes in the Neighborhood of Chyhw [Chehaw].’

Based on the evidence presented by Hutchinson and the testimony of slaves, the Council concluded that over period of two years twelve different slaves from six different masters had preached insurrection to large gatherings of their fellow bondsmen. Two of the preachers were women, and along with male preachers had allegedly composed some sort of book whose mysterious contents may have contained the planned revolt that some many lowcountry residents feared. The setting of the unrest was of historical significance. Most of the meetings allegedly took place on the plantation of George Austin, an absentee owner who lived in London and whose plantation also suffered from the constant killing and stealing of his livestock. Moreover, it was only a few miles from the plantations of Hugh and Jonathan Bryan where George Whitefield preached to the enslaved masses of the lowcountry a generation earlier. The Council investigators eventually narrowed their focus to two people: a slave named George who belonged to Francis Smith and a Scottish overseer named John Burnet.

The freeholders and Court of Justices ordered the execution of the slave preacher named George. The Scot overseer, however, could not be convicted on the testimony of slaves. Nevertheless, his confession was compelling. Burnet denied any knowledge of the book or of a planned revolt. He did, however, confess that he had indeed preached to the slaves of the area in private and wooded places without the knowledge or consent of their masters. Burnet insisted that he preached a message of salvation and subservience, not liberty and insurrection. Burnet was warned, released

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and like Margate before him, fled from a contentious situation in South Carolina to enter
Georgia. So for the second time in six months, Georgia received a person who had
been cast from South Carolina because his religious practices threatened the status
quo by bringing clandestine religious meetings and teachings to the enslaved masses.34
One can only wonder if Burnet continued his clandestine preaching in Georgia and
persisted his efforts to gathering slaves for surreptitious religious services. One might
also ponder how far and how soon his influence reached into the lowcountry and
affected those enslaved in Georgia.

To focus on the political boundaries of Georgia and South Carolina would be to
overlook the natural setting that unites the region far more than political markers divide
it. The region that South Carolinians referred to as the Chehaw is actually a part of a
larger ecological system that stretches from the present locations of Georgetown, South
Carolina to St. Mary’s, Georgia. It stretches inland until the ridges of the sand hills and
upland hardwoods mark the eastern boundary of the low country. Thirty-eight miles of
river and twenty-five miles of streams permeate the terrain and contribute to an
extensive network of estuarine rivers, and tidal wetlands, along with freshwater
marshes, and creeks.35 As such the low country, a source of much colonial wealth,
became the seat of a great potential danger: a black majority, accustomed to
waterborne liberty, infused with religious unrest, and knowledgeable of the rift between
colonists and the Crown.

34 Harris, The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah, p. 118.
35 United States Wildlife Reserve publications: Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, p. 1; Savannah
Coastal Refuges Complex, p. 3.
Black Boatmen and the Saga of Thomas Jeremiah

In May of 1775, Lord Dunmore, royal Governor of Virginia, received a letter from William Legge, the Second Earl of Dartmouth and Secretary of State for the colonies, informing him that Legge planned to arm all his “own Negroes and receive all others that” would come to him whom he would “declare free.” This was perhaps a reaction to the use of blacks at Camp Howe in Georgia which had two companies of Negroes employed by Henry Laurens, the President of the Council of Safety in South Carolina. Legge’s message reached Arthur Lee, the American correspondent in London, and asserted “that a plan was laid before the Administration for instigating the slaves to insurrection.” Laurens went before the provincial Congress and stated that the rebels should be prepared to deal with “the actual commencement of hostility against this continent-the threats of arbitrary impositions from abroad and the dread of British-instigated insurrections at home.”

During the next month, Charleston hosted trials for several black residents, enslaved and free, who were accused of plotting an insurrection. Since many colonists suspected that the British instigated unrest among the enslaved, they did not trust the colonial officials that represented the royal government. As a result, the Charleston General Committee exerted control of the trials and convicted suspects ‘On Strong Negro Evidence’. Several blacks were severely flogged and banished, while as many as three white citizens were committed to prison. One of the notable black suspects was a free black harbor pilot named Thomas Jeremiah. The implication of Jeremiah was

36 Frey, Water from the Rock, p. 56.
37 Ibid., p. 56.
38 Ibid., p. 57.
noteworthy because colonists feared any collusion between pilots and the British and his story sheds more light on the role of black mariners in shaping the American Revolution.

At the time of his trial, Jeremiah had been a pilot for at least twenty years. Over that time, he had also established himself as a fisherman, merchant, and slave owner. Jeremiah had an estimated value of $200,000 (equivalent 2009), which made him one of the richest persons of African descent in British North America. Jeremiah held invaluable knowledge of the channels that provided a natural hindrance to potential naval attacks or movement of any British vessels for the purpose of landing troops. Throughout the levees and wharfs of the low country, pilots like Jeremiah held significant positions because pilots of seafaring vessels were often completely dependent on their skill and knowledge of local winds and tides. The Charles Town Pilotage Commission required that all vessels incoming or outgoing vessels have a licensed pilot. That mandate created a market for local pilots who used their knowledge of local waterways to direct seafaring vessels who lacked familiarity with lowcountry travel. Pilots like Jeremiah would depart Sullivan’s island, racing to be the first to greet incoming vessels and procure a fee to guide the vessel inland. The occupation was very dangerous due to underwater shoals, breakers, winds and tides but it was also rewarding. Historians have argued that boatmen like Jeremiah also benefited because they were of great value to both local ship merchants and the networks they maintained with the slave communities of the backcountry. 39

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From 1732 to the end of the Revolution, maritime work was the third largest occupation for slaves in South Carolina behind only agriculture and woodcutting. An estimated forty-six percent of water-borne slaves were listed as sailors, not boatmen or fisherman, which suggests that they worked with great liberty, individualism and earned income without supervision. Although the sailors were only nine percent of the skilled slave population, they accounted for twenty-five percent of the skilled runaways.\textsuperscript{40} As the relationship between the colonies and the mother country diminished, however, Whigs expressed a heightened concern over the loyalty of black boatman because their knowledge of local waterways and their experiences of navigating them would be a great strategic asset for the British.

Prior to the Revolution, before tensions peaked, Jeremiah was convicted for assaulting a white ship captain named Thomas Langer and sentenced to serve one hour in the stocks then receive ten lashes. However, Lieutenant Governor William Bull granted Jeremiah a pardon and the community accepted the governor’s leniency. Thus, the trial, conviction and execution of Thomas Jeremiah revealed how much the liberty of black boatmen was redefined by the Revolution. The fear of slave insurrection increased tensions for slaves on the mainland. Moreover, a dreaded collusion between black boatmen and the British threatened to rid Charles Town of its best defense against naval invasion, the currents, winds, and underwater obstructions. To that end, historians have noted that Jeremiah’s execution was less about any actual offense that he committed and more about the broader fears of the union of the black majority with

\textsuperscript{40} Bolster, \textit{Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail}, pp. 21-23 & 135-136.
the British and the special strategic importance of black boatmen in the context of naval invasion. 41

Though a free man and a slaveholder, Jeremiah was convicted on the testimony of slaves. Two slaves gave separate and non-supporting statements. One stated that Jeremiah boasted of having collected enough guns and ammunition to arm the black masses and lead them against the British. The other witness stated that Jeremiah vowed to guide British vessels into Charles Town and set fire the city. Both efforts were allegedly to aid the British. Scholars have also noted that the area was still astir from the Sommerset v. Stewart decision in England and the insurrectionist preaching of Margate who had fled the colony just a few months earlier and the investigators quite possibly led the witnesses to the feared conclusion.42 Nevertheless, the trial, conviction and execution carried over into the month of July and it was then the unrest of South Carolina was linked more directly to Georgia.

In the following July, Jeremiah, though a free man, was being held in the Work House along with runaway slaves. Three runaways were returned from the Creek nation where they were captured. Two of them were Ben and Glasgow, who had fled into Georgia.43 One can only ponder the level or type of interaction that Jeremiah might have had with the slaves which whom he shared confinement. As Jeremiah languished in the work house, however, another plot reinvigorated local fears of insurrection.

41 Ryan, The World of Thomas Jeremiah, pp. 3-7.

42 Ryan, The World of Thomas Jeremiah, pp. 17-19; Harris, The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah, p 98: Charles Steward purchased James Somerset in Boston and returned to England with the enslaved African. Somerset escaped but was recaptured. In 1772 the English Court of Kings Bench rendered the judgment that chattel slavery was not supported by British common law in either England or Wales. Therefore, Somerset was freed. Though the decision was ambiguous about slavery elsewhere in the British empire. Scholars have argued that the decision concerned slaveholders in the Thirteen Colonies.

43 Harris, The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah, p. 120.
Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation in the Lowcountry

Amidst the atmosphere of fear and dread of slave revolt, word of Dunmore’s Proclamation reached the lowcountry in the summer of 1775. Fearing the ‘accursed design of the British’, the white minority of the lowcountry took control of their local affairs. Several royal officials fled to St. Augustine and those who remained were unable to stop Carolinians from executing suspected conspirators. John Stuart, the Indian Superintendent was driven from Charleston and sought refuge in East Florida. Georgians later discovered a letter Stuart wrote his deputy Alexander Cameron which emphasized the importance of maintaining good relations with the local Indians should their assistance be needed in the outgoing upheaval against royal authority. By September even the royal governor Campbell feared for his personal safety. Campbell dissolved the colonial assembly, abandoned his home and fled to the Tamar, a sloop of the royal navy that was positioned in the harbor. The British eventually established an encampment on Sullivan’s Island. Ironically, the fear that drove Carolinians to depose the royal governor actually facilitated an alliance between the slaves and the British that the colonists most feared.

Carolinians accused Governor Campbell and the captains of the vessels of harboring fugitive slaves but the royal contingent collectively denied the allegations. Colonists suspected that slaves also heard rumors of the British allegedly harboring runaways and had spread the word throughout the lowcountry. At some point in September, a group of eight fugitives, "most of them, well known about the district of

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45 Harris, *The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah*, p. 126.
Little-Ogechee," absconded in unison. The descriptions of the runaways indicated that they were a motley crew of Africans and creoles, artisans with access to the 'wonderfull art of communicating Intelligence' along with plantation-bound field hands, male and female. The group included Will, who was "by trade a cooper," Ishmael who was listed as "a field Negro," another artisan named Isaac who was "a squarer and sawyer." The female fugitives were "A WENCH, named PENDA," and "CHLOE, a girl about fourteen years of age." The runaways did have one thing in common; all were "of the Guinea Country." They were also joined in flight by "ANOTHER FELLOW, named WAPPING" who was "much marked on the face, shoulder, and back, with his country marks," and "A BOY, named SAWNEY" who was "country born" and understood "part of the carpenter's business."\footnote{Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 69.}

While the runaways may have sought liberty from the British, their skills would have been useful on Sullivan’s Island, to where at least five hundred slaves had escaped by mid-November. On the islands, huts and buildings were built to accommodate the swelling numbers of runaways who sought refuge among the British. Their knowledge of the lowcountry would have also been useful because the fugitives 'made nightly Sallies and committed robberies and depredations on the Sea Coast of Christ Church' from their 'den of runaway slaves'.\footnote{Olwell, "Domestick Enemies," pp. 21-48.}

As the turmoil heightened, slaves were mobilized by their Loyalists masters, creating more chaotic conditions for colonists, slaves and fugitive slaves alike. The Whig governments of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina gave an ultimatum
for all free adult males to either swear their allegiance or vacate the colony within one month. In November of 1775, Governor Tonyn of British East Florida invited loyalists to St. Augustine. He offered a ‘happy Asylum’ of ‘gratuitous grants of land’ and promised migrants that they would be 'exempt from quit rents for ten years.' Once again, Georgia was disrupted by slaves who trekked southward for St. Augustine, except this time they journeyed with their owners.

Georgians tried to establish order during the tumultuous month of November 1775. The Council on Safety requested that General Charles Lee enclose the military storehouse and to impress one-hundred slaves to do so. In December of 1775, however, the chaos of the Revolution intensified. Maritime activity was central to the havoc. Colonists noted that “daily complaints” were received “from inhabitants on the sea-coast of robberies and depredations committed on them by white and black men from on board some of the ships” under British flag. South Carolina had such problems with the British harboring slaves that they passed a law to stop provisioning vessels that gave asylum to fugitive slaves.

It seems that the fear of the British offering asylum to runaway slaves motivated some owners to post ads for slaves who had been missing since the early summer of 1775, the approximate time that the news of Dunmore’s Proclamation reached the lowcountry. Moreover, Africans continued to constitute a high percentage of the runaways. William Baker, for example, notified the public in the last week of October of


50 Ibid., p. 125.
“TWO NEGROES, Boson,” who was “of the Guinea Country, with his country marks on each side of his face,” and Daphney a very likely wench, of the same country.” The couple had “RUN AWAY from the subscriber in June,” and most likely had assistance because Daphney “carried off with her a young child.”

On the first day of November 1775, John Mulkey notified the public of “A NEGROE FELLOW, named Joe” who had “RUN AWAY for the subscriber at Queensborough the beginning of June.” Though Mulkey did not attribute an ethnic identity to Joe, he noted that the fugitive had “many of his country marks of his cheeks.”

Exactly two weeks later, the aforementioned merchant John Mossman posted an ad for “THREE NEGROE FELLOWS, named Quash, Caesar, and Sam” who had absconded “from the subscriber six months ago.”

A week later, James Herriot alerted the public of “A NEGROE MAN, named LEITH,” who had “RUN AWAY about six months ago.” Leith had useful skills, whereas he could “work at the cooper trade” and also had prior experience along the “Ogechee, where he is well known, and also in town.”

During the last week of year, Theodore Gay also posted an ad for “A NEGROE FELLOW, named Bob” who had “RUN AWAY from the plantation of William Williamson, Esq. of Savannah river, some time in May.” Gay stated that the runaway was “of the Guinea Country,” and had “his country marks on his face.”

51 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Volume 4, p. 70.
52 Ibid., p. 70.
53 Ibid., p. 70.
54 Ibid., p. 70.
55 Ibid., p. 72.
By December of 1775, approximately 500 slaves had fled to Sullivan’s Island. Captain Jacob Milligan confirmed the presence of the runaways and the numerous huts they had already constructed. Henry Laurens, South Carolina Council of Safety, sent Colonel William Moultrie with a force of 200 soldiers to capture the runaways, destroy their structures along with any livestock slaves could use for sustenance. Alexander Wylly was summoned the Council. Wylly stated that the aforementioned fugitives had been warned of the pending attack and approximately twenty had actually boarded nearby Men-Of-War vessels. Wylly had personal interest in this because one of his own slaves, Ishmael, had taken advantage of the situation to work without license.56

In early January of 1776, the Revolution directly disrupted life in the lowcountry. Colonists sighted the British warship *Tarmar* near the Tybee lighthouse. After, the *Tarmar* fired a shot, the Whig Council feared a British invasion and ordered searches of all houses of overseers and slaves on either side of the Savannah River.57 The British left Charleston during the same month and carried “a very considerable number” of Negroes with them. The number of slaves moved from the lowcountry to Florida is estimated to exceed 8,000 and outnumber Loyalist by a ratio of three to one. The British, however, were not the only source of new opportunity that expanded during the Revolution. Instead, fugitive slaves still found avenues of escape that exceeded the political boundaries of Revolutionary Georgia. Many runaways became ‘village Negroes’ as they escaped to join the Seminoles and establish autonomous black


settlements.\textsuperscript{58} Ironically, the long tradition of slaves attempting to escape to Florida overlapped with, and gained new impetus from the Revolution.

Despite the Loyalists’ withdrawal, some runaways still fled northward and sought refuge in the coastal parishes of South Carolina. During the month of February, the council of Safety sent a military campaign to employ thirty-four "Catawba Indians to scout & catch runaways in the parishes of St. George, Dorchester, St. Paul, and St. Bartholemew."\textsuperscript{59} Turmoil also persisted along the southern boundary. Later that same year, “the Georgia Frontier was being harassed through raids from St. Augustine and Pensacola. Florida Tories crossed the border to carry off cattle, seizing Negroes and murdering those so bold as to offer even token resistance."\textsuperscript{60} As flight and violence increased, however, Whigs and the Tories both acknowledged the importance of mobilizing the enslaved masses and grappled with the question of how to best utilize them.

With such turmoil, the remaining advertisements of the time were scarce. The Georgia Gazette stopped publication in February of 1776. The few advertisements that were posted, however, reflected a continued trend in which experienced slaves used their knowledge to take flight. For instance, an ad was posted for “TWO NEGROES, named Pompey and Caesar.” The two had spent “considerable time with the late Mr. Watts, Ship-Carpenter, therefore must be well known in town, where they” were

\textsuperscript{58} Landers, \textit{Black Society in Spanish Florida}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{59} Quarles, \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution}, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{60} Hugh Rankin, \textit{The North Carolina Continentals} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 76.
“supposed to conceal themselves.”\(^6^1\) Richard Murray noted “A NEGROE WENCH, named Jenny” who “used to sell milk and work about town.” Along with her experience in the urban setting, Jenny could also change her appearance. Murray noted that Jenny could “dress herself well,” and even carried away “a small box or chest in which she had her cloathes.” Despite her knowledge of Savannah and her ability to blend in, Jenny would have likely needed assistance whereas she also “took with her her daughter about four years old.”\(^6^2\) The activities of runaways in Georgia, however, were influenced to an undeterminable degree by demand for male laborers in the war

**British Invasion and the Mobilization of Enslaved laborers**

Despite the inherent dangers of arming the enslaved masses, military leaders often took the lead in their demands for enslaved laborers. John Laurens hastened to Carolina where he prepared for an expected British invasion. The Colonel “was elected a member of legislature where he used every arg’ to call out the military and forward the black levies which he had begun to recruit.”\(^6^3\) Numerous slaves continued to join the Redcoats, however. By the middle of March 1776, approximately two-hundred slaves had fled to Tybee Island, to join British men-of-war.\(^6^4\) Henry Laurens advised Stephen Bull that action be taken against the runaway slaves encamped on Tybee island and Bull persuaded the Council of Safety to send a military force, supported by Creek Indians, to attack the settlement. A Whig leader named Bulloch led a force of one-hundred men to Tybee Island in March; it consisted of seventy white men described as


\(^6^2\) Ibid., p. 72.

\(^6^3\) *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the Years 1777-8*, pp. 42-43.

riflemen, light infantrymen, fusiliers and volunteers. Thirty Creek mercenaries accompanied them as they torched three houses and drove as many as three hundred slaves to seek refuge elsewhere.\textsuperscript{65}

For the Continentals, however, the need to grant slaves a high degree of mobility overrode fear of the runaways in some cases. Stephen Bull, for example, sent a letter from Savannah in March of 1776 to Henry Laurens in Charleston using as the carrier ‘a Negro hired to ride post in the Continental service’.\textsuperscript{66} Despite their concerns of slave insurrection and loyalty, the Georgia Council of Safety acquiesced to the Colonel Laurens’ requests. The Council permitted the military to employ black laborers to finish a entrenchment around Sunbury and also ordered the use of twenty enslaved axe-men that had been taken from the plantations of two Tory owners, to be employed in building a battery at Tybee.\textsuperscript{67}

With a British invasion imminent, John Laurens privately expressed his position on arming blacks to his father. The younger Laurens wrote that he was “tempted to believe that this transported people have so much left in them, as to be capable of aspiring to the rights of noble exertions, if some friend to mankind would point the road, and give them a prospect of success.” Hence, the proposal for “A well chosen body of 5,000 black men properly officer’d, to act as light troops, in addition to our present establishment, might give us decisive success in the next campaign.”\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{65}Ryan, \textit{The World of Thomas Jeremiah}, pp. 142-143.
\textsuperscript{66}Quarles, \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution}, pp. 95-97.
\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., pp. 103 & 106.
\textsuperscript{68}\textit{The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the Years 1777-8} (New York: [s.n.], 1867), pp. 115-117.
Carolinians promptly rejected the proposal. Laurens, however, would persist with his intent of arm and mobilize slaves for the Patriot cause.

Loyal slaves were employed on an individual basis. For example, Lachlan McIntosh operated from Charleston and dispatched “his Negro fellow weaver to carry correspondence to General Robert Howe,” during the winter of 1776.69 Ironically, Governor Tonyn also mobilized the black men of East Florida when he created four black militia companies. Tonyn’s measures were far from egalitarian, however, because he also enacted harsh codes on the rest of the black masses in fear that the Revolution would incite a slave insurrection. Even amidst the violence and turmoil that persisted in Florida as England and Spain competed for jurisdiction, the black population continually increased from twenty-seven percent of the population in 1768 to fifty-seven percent of all East Floridians by 1814.70

The Council in Georgia continued to mobilize black laborers. In September of 1777, Georgians passed an act to employ slaves to build forts, batteries, and public works in preparation for hostilities; the act went into effect February 1, 1778. Masters were forced to furnish lists of male slaves between the ages of sixteen and sixty, one-tenth of whom were supposed to be subjected for draft of twenty-one days at three shillings a day. Masters who did not comply were fined.71

By 1778, the British developed a lucid southern strategy. The main objectives were to enlist loyalists, to deprive the South of labor and production, and to enlist pro-

British Indian tribes. In that light, Georgia was of central importance. Savannah was a principal trade port and one of the few southern ports that could receive a sloop of war. Furthermore, Savannah had a concentration of loyalists and resources such as ship timbers, staves, Indian corn and livestock. Slaves became a central issue to war strategy. Some of the Georgia runaways fled northward and joined the Black Pioneers as early as 1777, a company of runaways commissioned into an official unit by the British. Eventually, the Revolution brought opportunities to the slaves who remained.

In 1778, the physical disruption of the Revolution intensified. The lines of distinction between Rebels and Loyalists solidified as each group came to control specific areas of Georgia. General Augustine Prevost led a cattle raid in lower Georgia. Prevost took 2,000 cattle and 200 slaves as he trekked from East Florida through Georgia sold for £8000 in public auction. In April 1778, a group of Loyalists led by Colonel Scophol marauded from Ninety-Six, South Carolina to East Florida and pillaged, plundered and occasionally burned Whig settlements along their march.

Scopholites was the derisive term generally applied to Tory partisans of the backcountry that raided rebels and assisted British in Georgia or South Carolina. Viewed as thieves and plunderers, the people originally descended from Scotch-Irish

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73 Rankin, North Carolina Continentals, pp. 81-82.

74 Douglas R. Egerton, Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America (Oxford: University Press, 2009), p. 87; The Black Pioneers, also called the Black Dragoons, consisted of runaway slaves. Although the British commissioned the military unit in South Carolina, some of the runaways were from Georgia. The unit also saw action in New York.

75 Ward, Between the Lines, pp. 198.

76 Daniel T. Elliot, Ebenezer Revolutionary War Headquarters: A Quest to Locate and Preserve Report Number 73 (The LAMAR Institute Inc., 2003), p. 27.
pioneers who migrated from Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina to the South Carolina backcountry during the 1760s. By the time that the Revolution began, members of the group had expanded into Georgia. During the Spring of 1778, allegedly 2,500 people who resided near the Saluda River pledged to join Loyalists. On April 3, 1778 Loyalists commandeered trade boats in South Carolina and crossed the Savannah River approximately 40 miles south of Augusta. They joined other Loyalists led by Colonel John Thomas near the Ogeechee. The combined force neared 600 members. From there they raided and looted as they marched to the Satilla River, causing mass panic in both South Carolina and Georgia. The marauders also had immediate impact on the enslaved masses. When the Scopholites reached the St. Marys and congregated at Fort Tonyn their numbers eventually included 1,500 whites and 1,000 blacks.77

The Georgia Executive Council mandated that two-thirds of each battalion of the state militia mobilize and dispatch to drive the bandits out of Georgia.78 The Executive Council also granted Colonel Andrew Williamson the authority to hire blacks to repair roads Ogechee and Alatamaha rivers or to impress them if their masters refused to hire them out.79 In June 1778, the Executive Council authorized militia captains to use confiscated slaves as pioneers for a proposed expedition against East Florida.80 Patriots

77 Ward, *Between the Lines*, pp. 188-196.
78 Ibid., p. 196.
80 Ibid., p. 106.
even descended upon the plantation of Royal Lieutenant Governor John Graham near Savannah and confiscated one-hundred and thirty slaves as well as all of his horses.\textsuperscript{81}

In order to counter the Patriot advances, Sir Henry Clinton, British commander in North America, ordered Archibald Campbell to attack Georgia. Campbell was an experienced leader who had been captured by the Patriots in Boston in 1776 and held captive until he was exchanged for Ethan Allen in May of 1778. In November of 1778, just six months after his release by the Patriots, Campbell received his orders to sail with a force of 3,000 men and restore royal order in Georgia. On December 28, 1778, Archibald Campbell landed troops on a bluff near Savannah and marched on the city. With an uncontested landing on a bluff below Savannah, Campbell and his forces attacked the city and awaited reinforcements from General Prevost and a group of Rangers from Florida. Marching through the lowcountry, the marauders sequestered ninety slaves that belonged to George Galphin and marched them to Savannah, capturing the city in January. On the last day of January, the troops also took Augusta and were soon joined by approximately 1,400 Loyalists from the backcountry. Despite the popular support, however, the British lacked reinforcements from their regulars and had to evacuate Augusta by the middle of February. Many prominent slaveholders fled to East Florida. The Governor of East Florida claimed that four hundred Loyalists had fled to St. Augustine in 1778 and some had received land grants as large as five hundred acres.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81} Nash, \textit{The Unknown American Revolution}, p. 330.

\textsuperscript{82} Williams, “East Florida as A Loyalist Haven,” pp. 467.
Runaways in Royal-Controlled Savannah

The British conquest of Savannah opened a void for black autonomy that persisted until the Redcoats evacuated the lowcountry three years later. It was the not freedom promised by Lord Dunmore, however, but the autonomy practiced by black clergyman. David George, who had maintained a congregation at Silver Bluff, led his followers to Savannah when his master joined the Patriots. Other black clergy, including George Liele and Andrew Bryan, also made their way to Savannah. George Liele had moved to Burke Country, Georgia with his master Henry Sharpe, a Baptist Deacon. White ministers eventually brought George Liele into the fold and licensed him as a probationer. As colonial unrest increased, however, longstanding divisions of ecclesiastical control manifested between the white clergy. German Protestants and Congregationalists of the Midway District voiced the strongest opposition to the Church of England in Georgia and expanded to support the broader Revolutionary sentiments.83

Amidst an environment of religious dissention, Liele preached throughout the slave quarters along the Savannah River for approximately two years prior to British occupation of Savannah. They not only maintained autonomous congregations that may have housed and benefited runaways during the Revolution, the trio of black preachers also propagated freedom through religion, a link that would persist and burgeon into a transatlantic movement in the years to come.

In the midst of such turmoil and change the line between freedom and slavery shifted literally and figuratively. On July 10, the first Supreme Executive Council met in Augusta to establish a Whig government in Georgia. Four days later, Governor Wright

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officially restored a royal government in Savannah. On July 14, then, Georgia had two
governments. In the broader course of the Revolution, the governments represented
the political divisions over issues of taxation, representation and loyalty to the Crown.
For the enslaved masses, however, the rift was ideological. The Whig faction
represented a preservation of the status quo under home rule. The Royal government
also maintained vestiges of the old order but presented new notions of liberty
associated with Dunmore’s Proclamation as well.

In the theatre of battle, two pivotal engagements solidified the divisive course that
the Revolution took in the lowcountry. In February of 1779, the Continentals fielded a
combined force of South Carolinian and Georgian militias to win the Battle of Kettle
Creek against loyalists and in doing so maintained the independence of upper Georgia.
In early March, however, Lieutenant James Mark Prevost defeated Revolutionary forces
at Briar Creek and maintained British control of lower Georgia. Slaves were quick to
take advantage of the fissure. Approximately ninety slaves from George Galphin’s
estate sought refuge amongst the British in Savannah. Moreover, some of the most
infamous bandits of the backcountry assisted Prevost and after the battle became
roving disruptors, enlisting runaway slaves along with their motley and nomadic crews.

Daniel McGirth and his brother James McGirth were two such bandits that
marched with Prevost. Daniel McGirth not only included blacks in his banditti but also
recruited more from the estates of rebels whenever he had the opportunity. McGirth’s
willingness to include runaways was significant because he and his bandit forces
routinely plundered specific areas along the Ogeechee River and Liberty county for the
remainder of 1779. Even as the chaotic raids of the backcountry provided runaways with countless opportunities to escape, the more stable royal control of Savannah also presented the chances for slaves to flee rebel masters and gain a higher degree of liberty.

With each faction firmly entrenched, one must wonder what slaves thought of the dichotomy. Did the enslaved view Savannah as their ancestors viewed Gracia Real de Sante Teresa de Mose? Did they see it as a physical location that offered freedom to all brave enough to abscond from British masters and seek refuge within its boundaries?

With the Royal order restored in Savannah, the Georgia Gazette reopened as the Royal Georgia Gazette in February 1779. The advertisements for runaway slaves were very insightful for a few reasons. Foremost, the Royal Gazette was controlled by the British. Therefore, the subscribers would be Loyalists. Therefore, advertisements would in part be a reflection on the ways fugitives reacted to the notions of freedom that persisted behind British lines. Many slaves fled Patriot masters to attain freedom by joining the British, but what of the slaves who belonged to Loyalists? The British only extended liberty to the runaway slaves of their enemies, not those enslaved by the comrades. How then did the slaves of the Loyalists seek freedom amidst the upheaval of the Revolution? Moreover, how did the potential of runaway slaves influence both Patriots and Tories? The enslaved left no records but the official records reflect how fugitives provided answers to the preceding questions.

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84 Ward, Between the Lines, pp. 204-205.
Once again the mass-recruitment of slave labor was central to facilitating slave mobility. To maintain Royal control of Savannah, Governor Wright mobilized able-bodied men both free and enslaved, and placed a group of 400 to 500 black men under the command of Captain Moncrief, the chief engineer. Apparently, the black workers were a highly mobile force as they raised thirteen redoubt gun batteries, and placed eighty cannons around the city.\textsuperscript{85} The British also took the bold step of arming two hundred blacks for military service.\textsuperscript{86} Over the summer of 1779, the Royal government employed approximately two hundred black soldiers who fought mainly on the outskirts of Savannah but were also involved in the capture of two dragoons and eight horses.\textsuperscript{87} While the arming of two hundred black men was modest in comparison to the numbers proposed by Laurens or Cruden, it set a precedent that would have great ramifications for many years after the Revolution.

The advertisements for slaves who ran away during 1779 are both scant and scattered. Only twelve were posted for the calendar year. However, subscribers posted several advertisements in 1781 claiming that the slaves in question actually absconded in 1779. The few ads subscribers posted for runaways in 1779, however, reveal that slaves of various ages, divergent skill sets, and levels of experience tended to flee in groups. The first advertisements reflected a tendency for slaves to abscond in groups more often than not. In February of 1779, for example, an ad was posted that featured “four Negro men” who had “RUN away from the subscriber’s plantation of Skidaway, the first instant in a small two oar’d canoe about three foot wide, and about


\textsuperscript{86} Lawrence, \textit{Storm Over Savannah}, p. 157.

\textsuperscript{87} Quarles, \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution}, p. 148.
fifteen long.” 88 Meanwhile, the success of runaways from the beginning of the Revolution eventually influenced the leaders of the Continental to consider implementing a plan that would have fundamentally redefined the American Revolution for the enslaved.

In March of 1779, Congress adopted a plan to arm slaves for the Patriot cause, but left it to the governments of South Carolina and Georgia to accept and implement the plan. 89 The statement issued to both South Carolina to Georgia suggested that each state should “take measures immediately for raising three thousand able-bodied negroes” who were “not exceeding thirty-five years age.” The black men were to receive no pay, but would be granted freedom and 50 dollars at the end of the war if they served “well and faithfully.” John Laurens, aide de-camp to General Washington, had already proposed a similar plan in South Carolina and continued to advocate the plan for manumission. 90 Laurens called upon his friend Alexander Hamilton to forward his ideas of raising black troops to John Jay, the President of the Congress. The basis of John Laurens’ suggestion was that if the Patriots did not arm and use the black majority of the low country, the British would and gain an decided advantage. Henry Laurens then reaffirmed his support for his son John’s plan and in March of 1779, wrote a letter to General Washington. In the letter the elder Laurens assured Washington that he could provide arms for three thousand black men and that such a force would be of great use in driving the British out of Georgia and even subduing East Florida. During the same month, Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina also dispatched an agent

88 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 73.
89 Eric Foner, Blacks in the American Revolution, p. 63.
90 Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution, p. 60.
to Congress and requested authorization to recruit black men from Georgia and South Carolina. Ironically, the report revealed that the need to arm blacks stemmed in part from the success of runaways. The account stated that blacks were absolutely necessary to save Georgia and South Carolina for the Patriot cause because the state militia lacked the manpower to do so. The militia musters were insufficient because many residents thought it more important to remain near their homes to prevent the desertion of slaves and from fear of a black insurrection.\textsuperscript{91}

As with the Trustee Period, the actions of runaways drew focus and manpower away from broader issues. In the midst of the American Revolution, however, the activity of fugitives proved even more potent. Fugitives threatened to tip the balance of power in the lowcountry, and perhaps the entire war in the South. Had the plan been approved the Revolution would have taken an all new meaning, as would liberty in the new republic. Despite the military advantages of arming the black majority of the lowcountry, General Washington disliked the broader social implications. The Whig governments of both South Carolina and Georgia rejected the suggestion outright. Runaways would have to define their own liberty.

The advertisements reflected the slaveholders’ fears, whereas they revealed an increased mention of slaves that fled in groups of divergent ages and of both genders. With a higher proportion of women and young children absconding along with the males, plantation owners were indeed faced with total desertion. In July, for instance, an advertisement was posted for “TWO NEGROES, a Boy and Girl, named Charles and Nan, each about 14 years old.” In July, “a NEGROE FELLOW, named JACK,” who was

\textsuperscript{91} Foner, \textit{Blacks in the American Revolution}, pp. 45, 61-62.
a “copper by trade,” fled “with a little BOY, named MINGO, about three years old.” In August, “Two Negro Fellows” and “Two Wenches” one of which was “Sall, about 19 years old, and big with child,” fled in unison. The fact that Sall would risk flight while pregnant and that the rest of the group also assumed the greater risk that she posed, suggests that the runaways had a high level of confidence in their plan of escape. Less than two weeks later, another ad was posted for two groups that “RAN AWAY from the estates of Williams Gibbons and John Martin, deceased, The group included “Summer, Toney, Harry Jack, George, Bess, Cloe with two children, Cretia with three children; likewise August, a boy and Abel, both young fellows; Polydore, Tomboy, June, and Fanny.”

The fact that such a large group fled and took children along with them indicated that they hoped either to find sanctuary with the British Army, join maroon groups, or find another means to avoid detection and recapture as their masters were drawn into the tumultuous war for independence.

In some cases, the runaways had skills and prior experiences that they could use to increase their ability to escape and remain at large. The aforementioned Robert Baillie, posted an ad from St. John’s River East-Florida for “Four Negroes.” Thomas and Jamie, who had “his country marks thus )))) upon each side of his face,” absconded and “carried away a canoe and rifle gun.” The other two, “MARY-ANN, a stout young wench,” and Abraham, who described as “a good boatman,” both “formerly belonged to a Mrs. Randel upon John’s Island in South-Carolina.”

92 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 74-75.
93 Ibid., p. 75.
Country-born and African slaves alike took advantage of the turmoil and fled together despite their ethnic or linguistic differences. The groups reflected the fugitives' willingness to connect with fellow bondsmen who had very different level of assimilation. In February of 1779, "four Negro men" fled from "the subscriber's plantation on Skidaway." Titus, who spoke "very good English" and told "his story very plausible", fled with Cato who was "of the Ebo country." They were accompanied by Bacchus who spoke "but indifferent English" and "Griphia, alias Tony" who also spoke "but bad English." In August another group of four absconded. One of the four, Jamie, spoke "bad English" and had "his country marks thus )))) upon each side of his face." At approximately the same time, another group of three fled. The group reflected the ability of some slaves to overlook ethnic distinctions for the purpose of flight. The three included Peter who spoke "good English", Aaron who was "of the Ebo Country" and Clarissa who was allegedly "of the Guinea country."

Advertisements for the runaway slaves revealed that by the summer of 1779 some runaways reacted directly to turmoil and opportunities created by the Revolution. John Morel was one of the more prominent residents of Ebenezer. The British took control of Ebenezer and held it until autumn of 1779. Approximately three-hundred Hessians assisted the British from June of 1779 until the Continentals recaptured it the following October. Evidently Morel evacuated with the Loyalists and his slaves soon used the chaos to relocate as well. In December of 1780, John Morel posted an ad for "Hercules*, a short stout fellow, of the Angola Country," along with “Betty”, his wife, a

94 Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, p. 73.
95 Ibid., p.76.
96 Elliot, *Ebenezer Revolutionary War Headquarters*, pp. 28-35.
country born wench.” The couple also took with them “Winter*, her child, about five years old.” As runaways weighed their options between Whig and Tory, between Augusta or Ebenezer or Savannah, the Revolution took yet another turn that broadened the options of slaves and runaways.

**The Siege of Savannah**

In the fall of 1779, French forces sailed to Savannah and assisted the Patriots in placing a siege on Savannah. In September and October the British countered and intensified their overtures to slaves as they granted freedom to runaways who reached their lines, and organized them into armed companies of volunteers. Prior to initiating the Franco-American siege of Savannah, the French Commander Count d'Estaing held two ranks simultaneously, Lieutenant General and Vice admiral. As such he recruited both black sailors and troops from the Caribbean before he departed from Le Cap Francais in Haiti on August 16, 1779, bound for North America with approximately 3,900 troops.

When d'Estaing arrived in September he sent message to Benjamin Lincoln the American military commander of the area that he was there to assist them. Though the main objection of the Franco-American siege was to break the British stronghold on Savannah, the arrival and conduct of the French directly affected slaves by causing even more disruption. As d’Estaing waited to coordinate with the Continentals, a few of his crew landed on Tybee Island on the ninth of September. Three days later the main body began to disembark on Beaulieu plantation approximately twelve miles south of

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97 Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, pp. 82-83.

Savannah. By the time the French contingent landed in the lowcountry they were in need to supplies and since the Whigs did not replenish them, they pillaged nearby farms, taking untold numbers of sheep, hogs, poultry, horses, wagons and prized Jamaican rum. Only after they had restocked themselves at the expense of local plantations did the French forces advance to attack Savannah.  

In conjunction with physical havoc that the French caused by pillaging in the lowcountry, came also chaos that accompanied the infusion of hundreds of mobile blacks from the Caribbean. Count D’Estaing landed a force that included “hundreds of free blacks and mulattoes taken on board in the West Indies” from islands such as Martinique, Cape Francois, Port au Prince, and Guadaloupe. For a society more accustomed to the conduct of enslaved blacks, this group was allegedly “badly mannered,” and behaved “very fickly.” Estimates placed the number of ‘fickly’ immigrants at eight-hundred free mulattos, with many from Saint Domingo. The Paris Gazette described the black troops brought in by the French as approximately five-hundred and forty-five “volunteer chauffeurs, mulattoes, and Negroes, newly raised at St. Dominque.” An equal group of 545 was also recruited from San Domingo with 156 volunteers from the West Indies. For male runaways, the increased number of

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mobile black men would have made it easier for their own movement to blend into the environment of revolutionary Georgia. For the lowcountry in general, however, the French contingent embodied black freedom and brought immeasurable interpretations of what the revolution meant for the black masses.

On September 16, d’Estaing officially called for General Augustin Prevost to surrender. Prevost, under the common practice of noblesse oblige, requested a brief truce during which time he received approximately 800 reinforcements under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Maitland. The reinforcements increased the number of troops defending Savannah to more than two-thousand. On October 4, artillery bombardment of Savannah began. Bothered by slow progress, d’Estaing initiated a direct attack with a force of 3,500 French and 800 to 1,000 Americans. The assault failed. French casualties exceeded 600. The American contingent lost over two-hundred lives. In contrast, the British only lost 150 troops. The Franco-America siege ended and the French re-embarked from the nineteenth to the twenty-first of October, and sailed away from the twenty fourth and twenty eighth of October. The Continentals retreated to Charleston. The siege ended with the British still in control of Savannah, but troubled about the black masses thereof.

Bandits were not the only source of chaos. Smallpox affected thousands during the Revolution and in their efforts to contain outbreaks, leaders created voids of quarantined camps in the lowcountry. Outbreaks intensified in 1779, when General Prevost retreated southward, along the eastern seaboard, and abandoned white and black followers who were stricken with typhus, typhoid, dysentery and smallpox.
Hundreds of black refugees died on Otter Island alone. An estimated 20,000 runaways fled to British lines despite the danger of infection. Smallpox, however, took an especially heavy toll near Charleston. The numbers of affected blacks became so large that the Redcoats quarantined pox-stricken blacks in a camp approximately one mile outside of Charleston and abandoned them without nurses. Eventually, the presence of the disease and the British practice of isolating affected peoples caused American armies to avoid certain areas, leaving miles of the lowcountry void of Continental troops.

A void exists in the records for the Royal Georgia Gazette from August of 1779 until July of 1780. The first advertisement revealed that despite the chaotic fall of 1779, some runaways devised routes to gain freedom and avoid recapture. The first advertisement was for a man and woman who had fled "from the plantation of the late Benjamin Fox about two months ago, a likely NEGROE Fellow, named Dublin" who spoke "tolerable good English." Dublin was accompanied by "A NEGROE WENCH, named HAG AR" who had "her country marks on her face." According to the subscriber, "they went off together, and pass for husband and wife." Moreover, they had devised a plan, whereas "they crossed Savannah river at Savannah, and were some time at Mr. Baillie's plantation." They left from that location and "went into South Carolina." However, about three weeks prior to the posting of the advertisement, "they crossed Savannah river again at Mr. Hall's plantation into Georgia." To note the


complexity of the fugitives' plan, the subscriber also stated that "the Negro fellow changes his name in some places, and calls himself Dick." 106

Despite the aforementioned ravages of smallpox, General Prevost managed to establish a headquarters at Ebenezer from where British officers returned with 300 Negroes that had been "carried off." During the same span, British Governor of East Florida Patrick Tonyn sent a letter to London expressing his concern over the constant arrival of ‘the Negroes who multiply amazingly’. 107 With the lowcountry continually disrupted by raids, combat, and outbreaks of disease, droves of slaves not only fled, but also established a more permanent freedom.

Near the end of the siege, Colonel de Rouvray also complained that the blacks exhibited a "spirit of insubordination." 108 White residents of the lowcountry complained that “beside the tyranny of the enemy the inhabitants had to bear the insolence of the Negroes, who had first been employed by the enemy as laborers and then armed.” Along with the unruly conduct of the black masses, came also actions that were reminiscent of insurrection. Reports abounded of roving groups of slaves from whom “robbery and deeds of violence were committed.” In droves, “the people petitioned and petitioned Governor Wright to check the Negroes; but his majesty allowed it to continue until it became so intolerable.” Once he decided to take action, he “then found it a difficult matter.” 109 Banditry by white citizens further disrupted the environment.

106 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 77.
108 Lawrence, Storm Over Savannah, p.129.
109 F.D. Lee, Historical Record of the City of Savannah (Savannah, J.H. Edstill, 1869), pp. 65.
Group Flight and Mass Exodus of Runaways

Beyond the confines of Savannah, the departure of the French and the retreat of the Continentals gave way to “plundering banditti roved about unrestrained, seizing negroes, stock, furniture, weaving apparel, plate jewels, and anything they coveted.”¹¹⁰ The citizens complained about “The ribald language and licentious conduct of the soldiery, coupled with the insults of lawless negroes, rendered a residence in Savannah by all not in sympathy with the crown . . . almost beyond endurance.”¹¹¹ Soon thereafter, “An inquiry was ordered into the expediency of organizing a corps of negro slaves and the propriety of incorporation it into the militia of the Province.”¹¹² For runaways, the bandits would have posed the threat of recapture and re-enslavement, but the general chaos of the region would have also greatly increased their ability to avoid detection.

The advertisements revealed a pattern of runaways that differed from previous years. From 1779 to 1783, the fugitives featured in the advertisement fled in groups more often than during the years of 1763 to 1776, and the groups were also larger on average than the groups from the previous period.

Slaves had many reasons to flee. Many may have fled to escape violence. As each faction struck at the vital interests of the other, plantations became sites of intense violence.¹¹³ Some historians, however, have suggested that the ideology of the


¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 91.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 92.

revolution itself inspired slaves to abscond. Jane Landers, for example, argued that African creoles learned to interpret political events and manipulated them to their own advantage. Enslave Africans were inspired by revolutionary ideology but not hemmed in to predetermined notions of liberty and freedom. Sylvia Frey stated that black resistance was a blend of Republican ideology and a distinct evangelical faith that the enslaved developed apart from the message of subservience them were taught by white religious teachings. Peter H. Wood noted that black aspirations of freedom were not a spillover of the American Revolution but were instead inspired by slavery and racial discrimination which provided a long and bitter incentive to seek the ideals of liberty.

Many of the slaveholders who posted advertisements over the next four years stated that slaves fled to the British during the chaotic summer of 1779 never to return. Though the advertisements did not reflect the events for more than a year, runaways accomplished some of the largest recorded efforts of group flight during that pivotal year. In January 1781, a South Carolinian posted an advertisement for slaves who had "absented themselves from the subscriber, and supposed to have followed the army into Georgia in 1779." Eighteen months later, the group of eight male runaways remained at large. One week later, three other slave holders posted advertisements for slaves that had fled in 1779. One such slaveholder posted an advertisement for a group of runaways listed as "Cupid, Boatswain, Amey, Will, Eve, Mark, Perry, Dye, and

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114 Landers, Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution, pp. 7-14.
her two Children, Marquis, Sambo, Tom, Rue, Quash, Abel, Ham, Phoebe, Melinda, Hector, Phillis, and Berry." The group "RAN away from the subscriber on South Edisto Island, on or about the 20th June, 1779." Another slave owner sought to reclaim "Two Negro Fellows, named Jack and Cooper," who had "RAN away from the subscriber in July, 1779." Jack had "his country marks in his face." A subscriber by the name of James Witter, noted in 1783 that "A FAMILY of five Negroes went off with Prevost's army" from his "plantation on James Island, in the year 1779." Witter noted that some of the "five Negroes retreated out of Savanna with the Indians two or three days before that attack of that place." The family consisted of Tom who was "about 40 years old, . . . Rihan, his wife" who was "about 45 years old." They were accompanied by "POMPEY, their son, about 17 or 18 years old," and "Smart, another son," who was "about 14 or 15 years old. Portsmouth, the youngest son, about six or seven years old," also fled with them. The subscriber supposed that during the four years since the fugitives escaped, "the said Negroes might have returned into Georgia after the siege was over" and that they might "probably be harboured there." In particular, he was "apprehensive they might have continued with the Indians." Therefore, he offered "commissions, and all other charges they may be in securing them, or any of them" to be paid "at the Congress to be held with the Indians." The trend of flight by groups continued during the summer of 1779, when "two Negro Fellows; one named James"

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118 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 84.
119 Ibid., p. 84-85.
120 Ibid., p. 105.
and "the other named Isaac," fled with "Two Wenches; one named Fanny" and "the other named Sall" who was "about 19 years old and big with child."\footnote{Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 74.}

In February 1780, the Georgia Executive Council ordered that the slaves taken at the siege of Savannah, who belonged to persons in arms against the United States, be sold with the proceeds going to soldiers who fought in the siege.\footnote{Quarles, \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution}, p. 107.} In April 1780, four hundred former slaves fought under British arms against the Patriots as the latter tried to retake Savannah.\footnote{Nash, \textit{The Unknown American Revolution}, p. 330.} The following month, the British placed a siege on Charleston, and sent troops to the Georgian cities of Augusta and Camden as well. Gangs routinely marauded the territory between Augusta and Savannah. Lieutenant Colonel Elijah Clarke even led a force from North Carolina and harassed the lowcountry until April 1781.

The advertisements for 1781 revealed slaveholders’ fears that large groups of slaves fled in unison to the British army in 1779, and had evaded recapture for more than fifteen months. The subscribers also added a rather unique appeasement to their advertisements for runaway slaves, and the wording was indicative of their reduced power in the Revolutionary era. For example, D. Duncan posted a rather routine ad for “a tall slim made named Mary” who had fled the preceding December. Duncan offered a customary reward and a warning in which all readers were “strictly forewarned from harbouring the said wench on pain of being prosecuted as far as the law directs.” However, the ending of the post took a turn unprecedented in the advertisements.
Duncan stated that “if she returns home of her accord she shall be forgiven.” This raises the question of exactly to whom Duncan was directing his offer. Had the offer mentioned forgiveness for the person who returned her, it would seem as a appeasement to someone he suspected of harboring Mary. However, it seems as though Duncan was posting a message he assumed would somehow reach Mary and by voiding a punishment for absconding, entice her to return. Over the course of January, four subscribers granted the same offer to a total of sixty-eight runaways.

Jane Grove posted the first ad that linked runaways to the events of 1779. Grove posted an ad for Edinburg, Simon, Cudjoe, York, Primus, Billy, Johnny, and Isaac, all of who “ABSENTED themselves from the subscriber, and supposed to have followed the army into Georgia in 1779.” Benjamin Edings advertised for “Titus, Sampson, Prince, Isaac, Marquis, John, Taass, Cyrus, Hercules, Quamina, Sarah, Venus, Hagar, Rose, Cudjoe, Jethro, Abraham, London, Jack, Sam, Harry, Bristol, Caesar, Polydore, Stephen, Lymus, Bob, Amey, Catherina, Doll, Sabrina, Dido, Sarah, Maria, Phoebe, and Jenny,” all of whom “RAN away on or about the 20th of June, 1779, from the subscriber on Edisto Island.” In each case, the subscribers offered forgiveness to the slaves if they returned on their own accord. Even as the slaveholders recovered from large numbers of escapes of 1779, military engagements invoked more chaos in the lowcountry.

124 Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, p. 82.

125 In *Generations of Captivity*, Ira Berlin noted that the planters’ offer to forgive their slaves also reflected the losses of power and control over slaves that the planter class had incurred.

126 Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, pp. 82-86.

127 Ibid., pp. 83-84.

128 Ibid., p. 85.
Warfare centered around pitched battles for Augusta in 1780. Loyalists took control of the city during the summer of 1780 and Continentals countered by placing a siege on the city. After a siege, the Loyalists surrendered Augusta to the Patriots in June of 1781. After the Loyalists vacated Augusta in June of 1781, Patriots established their own legislature and began plans to oust the British from Savannah. General Wayne was dispatched to retake Savannah, and garrisoned with “a corps of one hundred and fifty negroes, armed, enrolled as infantry, and commanded by the notorious Brown.”

Nathanael Greene stated that it would be a “Herculean task” to defend the South without the assistance from Virginia or North Carolina. Thus, on December 9, 1781, he sent a letter to the South Carolina Governor which noted that ‘the natural strength of this country in point of numbers appears to consist much more in the blacks than in the whites’.” He wanted to raise four regiments, a corps of engineers, and a corps of artificers. To ensure their devotion, he wanted to offer freedom to all slaves who performed their duty. Males slaves would have been favored disproportionately by such a policy had it passed, but the legislature rejected the proposal. The fear of arming blacks superceded any military advantage they might have provided. However, the need for labor did prompt the legislature to permit the use of blacks for non-arms-bearing purposes: “140 wagoners, 150 pioneers, 120 artificers, and 20 or 30 servants.” Thus, approximately 300 blacks would be mobilized for the military operation. Perhaps inspired by the concessions of the South Carolina legislature, Laurens made similar requests from the Georgia legislature in 1782 and was

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once again denied on all fronts.\textsuperscript{131} However, the advertisements for 1780 revealed that many male runaways were concerned about maintaining their relationships with female slaves.

The advertisements for 1780 revealed that runaways were more likely to escape in groups than alone. Furthermore, the groups often included both women and children, which indicated a familial connection. In September, an attorney named Thomas Gibbons posted a ad for several slaves who had “RAN AWAY, At different times since Col. Campbell arrived in” Georgia. Among them were, “LYMUS, an active fellow” who “carried off with him his mother, named RENAH.” Another family included “TITUS, a likely sensible, black fellow, with SOPHIA, his wife.” The last group listed in the ad was “HESTER, his wife, and a child named BOB” who as “about four years old.”\textsuperscript{132} Some runaways absconded with even larger families, as was the case in an advertisement posted in October of the said year.

The subscriber notified the public of “Three Fellows, two Wenches with Children, and a Girl” who had fled in unison. One of the women was named Phebe. She displayed “her country marks on each of her temples” and had “five children with her, one of them at the breast.” The other woman, Juno, took “two children with her.”\textsuperscript{133} In another instance, a woman and child fled with a man enslaved by a different owner. That partnership occurred in September of 1780 when “A Negro Wench, named Juno,


\textsuperscript{132} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p, 79.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 81.
with her Child Phillis, about four years old" fled “with a Bermudian Negro Fellow of Mr. Hall’s.”\textsuperscript{134}

During the same month of September 1780, "a Negro fellow, formerly called Peter," absconded from a deceased slaveholder. The subscriber did not post an advertisement for the said Peter for another six months, and he suspected that Peter had taken " a Negro wench named Kate with him, as she" was considered "his wife." Moreover, Kate "ran away from the subscriber three days after the said fellow."\textsuperscript{135} Likewise, the ability for family groups to evade recapture was also revealed in October of 1780, when "a NEGRO FELLOW, named Sampson, and his BETTY," absconded and were yet to be recaptured seven months later, when an advertisement for their recapture was posted.\textsuperscript{136} In December of 1780, another family who fled consisted of “Hercules*, a short stout fellow, of the Angola Country” along with “Betty*, his wife, a country born wench,” and “Winter”, her child, about five years old.”\textsuperscript{137} The group evaded recapture for at least one month, for the advertisement for them was not posted until January of the next year.

The advertisements for other groups who fled during the year did not reveal such direct relationships. However, the tendency for so many to flee in groups of four or more suggests at least a high degree of familiarity and trust.

The advertisements for 1781 also reflect an increased mention of family members who took flight together. The first advertisement listed a group headed by

\textsuperscript{134} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 87.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., p. 91.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., pp. 82-83.
“Old Rose” who was “about 56 years old; Celia” who was “(daughter to the above Old Rose)” and “about 36 years old.” They were accompanied by “Elsey” who was “(a grand daughter of said Rose) about six years old,” and “Cato, an elderly fellow” and “husband of the above Celia.” The remaining family members were Dick, the twenty-two year old “son to Old Rose” and Country Sue, “a sister to Celia and daughter of Old Rose, 32 years old.” The non-family members of the group were Kate, “of the Angola country” with her “country marks about her face,” Scipio, Town Sue, and Will. In November of 1781, a bondsmen named Paris fled with "Venus, his wife, and three children, named Elsey, Luna, and James.”

The influence of military service also manifested in the advertisements. Black people served among the Hessians and allegedly constituted many of the drummers. In January of 1781, Peter Henry Morel posted an advertisement for “TWO NEGROES.” The first-mentioned was a male named “York, who had on when he absconded an old blue coat of the Hessian uniform.” York was joined in flight by “PRISCILLA, his wife.” During the next month, “A Negro Fellow, named Dick*” fled wearing “a pair of new yellow cloth soldiers breeches with a number on the buttons.” Dick must have been very knowledgeable of the area. Although he spoke “very bad English” and could not “tell his master’s name,” Dick made his way to South Newport from “which he then left in company with his wife* and a child about a month old, and a Negro fellow named

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138 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 81-82.
139 Ibid., p. 102.
140 Elliot, Ebenezer Revolutionary War Headquarters Report Number73
141 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 84.
Morris.”¹⁴² In June, several slaves fled on consecutive days for Argyle Island. Among the refugees were “Hercules, a black fellow, about 22 years old” who wore “a soldier’s uniform, red and buff,” and “Jacob, about 19 years old” and who wore “a Hessian uniform.”¹⁴³

For the enslaved, life among the British could provide economic opportunity in numerous ventures. January of 1781, “A young Negro Man named WILL” ran away “whilst employed at the public works in Savannah.”¹⁴⁴ Though Will’s motives for absconding are unknown, is possible that he fled to secure his own earnings because the Royal government paid slaves and free blacks directly for their service. Governor Wright’s account for June 1781 revealed that the governor paid 14 shillings to "one of Mr. Zubly’s Negro's for Bringing convoy the Ferry Boats" on one occasion and rewarded another group of ‘Zubly’s Negroes” one pound, seventeen shillings, and one pence conducting a separate ferry boat at a different time. "Davis Negro" also earned two pounds, twelve shillings and eight pence from the royal budget for "storing the Provisions.”¹⁴⁵ Had Will sought economic opportunities, many were available.

Certain areas and conditions facilitated slave flight during 1781. One was the aforementioned plantation of George Galphin which had been the historic site of so much religious and social autonomy for slaves. When Patriots finally captured Fort Dreadnought, the fortified plantation of Galphin, they found sixty-one slaves, many of

¹⁴² Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 87.
¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 93.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 85.
¹⁴⁵ Elliot, Ebenezer Revolutionary War Headquarters, pp. 85-85.
whom were armed. Fourteen armed boatmen were also in Fort Dreadnought.\textsuperscript{146} It is not documented how and when so many slaves congregated at Fort Dreadnought or how they were able to arm themselves. However, Fort Dreadnought stood as a stark example of unity and resistance among the enslaved. Slaves could have also found a more elusive route to freedom along the southern border. By 1781, the southern border regions of Georgia were particularly chaotic because the aforementioned Daniel McGirth focused his activity along the southern seaboard in order to escape into Florida.\textsuperscript{147} The conditions for bandits, however, were diminishing as the war drew to a close.

In January 1782, the Patriot legislature of Augusta elected John Martin governor and the newly elected governor pardoned all loyalists who were willing to show their loyalty by joining the militia. Some Tories, however, continued to resist Patriot rule and runaways benefited. Benjamin Thomas, for example, organized and mobilized a mounted group of white Loyalists and runaway slaves. The crew raided by horseback and liberated more slaves as they advanced toward Savannah. The Tories and runaway slaves reached Combahee River before a Patriot militia engaged them in battle.\textsuperscript{148} On May 4, 1782, the legislature passed the Confiscation and Banishment Act. Under the act, the 277 people convicted of treason had their property seized. The act also requisitioned the property of Loyalist who had abandoned the state. Governor Wright tried to maintain British authority by maintaining control of Savannah, but on June 14, 1782, he was ordered to abandon the city. Patriot Governor Martin


\textsuperscript{147} Ward, \textit{Between the Lines}, p. 208.

\textsuperscript{148} Egerton, \textit{Death or Liberty}, p. 91.
commissioned General Anthony Wayne to be on the lookout for continued aggression from bandits such as McGirth.

As the occupation neared its end, Savannah became the first place where the British had to contend with the combination of free and enslaved blacks. Approximately four thousand blacks fled with the British in July of 1782. They vacated aboard ships, private vessels and small craft. Some even took canoes to Florida. General Alexander Leslie commissioned six vessels in a convoy which carried ten families of Loyalists along with 1,568 blacks to Jamaica and also shipped 485 Loyalists and 748 blacks to St. Augustine. Lt. Governor John Graham hired five private vessels to carry more people to St. Augustine. For those who missed the British evacuation of Savannah, the pending departure of British forces from Charleston provided another opportunity to escape with royal forces. In early November of 1782, English officers and royalists formed a committee in Charleston to determine which black residents were free or enslaved. In a strange twist, the committee relied on the testimony of black residents to determine who among them should accompany the British as they left Charleston. As result, blacks accounted for 5,327 of the 9,127 passengers who left in December. Overall estimates of black desertion ranged from 10,000 to 12,000, with approximately 2,210 reaching East Florida. Some scholars have estimated that approximately 2,925 Loyalists and 4,448 enslaved blacks from the lowcountry entered East Florida after the British withdrawal. Those migrants brought the English population


from an estimated 16,000 to 17,375. Moreover, the drastic increase accentuated both
the plantation culture and the building of taverns, presses, and other structures
associated with a stable long-term society.\textsuperscript{152}

After the siege, residents of Savannah complained that “beside the tyranny of the
enemy the inhabitants had to bear the insolence of the Negroes, who had first been
employed by the enemy as laborers and then armed.” Indeed, alarming amounts of
“robbery and deeds of violence were committed.” In droves, “the people petitioned and
petitioned Governor Wright to check the Negroes; but his majesty allowed it to continue
until it became so intolerable.” Once he decided to take action, he “then found it a
difficult matter.”\textsuperscript{153} Georgians moved swiftly to re-establish order. Due to “theft of
domestic animals & personal effects,” the siege accounted for an estimated lost of fifty-
percent of all available property.\textsuperscript{154} Georgians formed an Executive Council on July
fourteenth and once again fugitive slaves were central to the legal structure of
lowcountry. With "there being many lawless, profligate, idle, and runaway Negroes in
the town and its vicinity one of the first acts performed by this body was the appointment
of Joseph Clay, James Habersham, John Houston, William Le Conte, John Wereat,
William O'Bryan, John Kean, Peter Deveraux, Thomas Stone, Peter Taarling, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} Linda K. Williams, "East Florida as a Loyalist Haven," \textit{Florida Historical Quarterly}, Volume LIV, No. 4 (April 1976), pp. 473-475.
\item \textsuperscript{153} F.D. Lee, \textit{Historical Record of the City of Savannah} (Savannah, J.H. Edstill, 1869), pp. 65.
\item \textsuperscript{154} Vedder and Weldon, \textit{History of Savannah}, p. 308.
\end{itemize}
Joseph Woodruff as special committee to capture Negroes slaves & all suspected property.\textsuperscript{155}

Georgia formed its Executive Council before the state ratified the Constitution of the United States, and the members of the Council indicated the economic and social underpinnings of the new political order.\textsuperscript{156} Members such as Clay and Habersham were some of the most active merchants for importing slaves directly from Africa. Their economic role would increase in the years following the Revolution. In 1782, the British evacuated Georgia and South Carolina and Georgia was arguably the scene of the most widespread seizure of British-held blacks.\textsuperscript{157} In 1782, the merchant John Graham fled to East Florida and took approximately two-hundred slaves with him. Graham utilized the slaves on five-hundred acres of lands on the Mantanza River. Other slaveholders were less fortunate. Whig leader Lachlan McIntosh, for instance, lost thirty-seven of his slaves during the mass exodus and in 1782 he tried to recover them. His brother lost seven of his own.

As the end of the Revolution drew near, concerns mounted about the loyalty of many people in the lowcountry, slaves included. In Antigua, South Carolina, for example, during the month of March 1783 several blacks were accused of being spies

\textsuperscript{155} O.F. Vedder and Frank Weldon, \textit{History of Savannah, Ga: from its settlement to the close of the eighteenth century, by Charles C. Jones, Jr., LLD; from the close of the eighteenth century} (Syracuse, New York: Mason & Co., 1840), p. 306.

\textsuperscript{156} Charles Austin Beard, in \textit{An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States}, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921) argued the importance of economic and class interests in the creation of American politics. Beard stated that “the primary objective of a government, beyond the mere repression of violence, is the making of rules which determine the property relations of members of society, the dominant classes whose rights are thus to be determined must perforce obtain them from the government such rules as are constant with the larger interests necessary to the continuance of the economic processes, or they must themselves control the organs of government.” pp. 12-13.

\textsuperscript{157} Quarles, \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution}, pp. 131-132.
and cited for “procuring in formation of the enemy’s movements and designs.” Even when some fugitives fled alone, the subscriber suspected they fled to rejoin family members. For instance, "a young Negro man, named Sandy" fled from his owner in April of 1783. Sandy was "supposed to be gone towards Bewlie, where he" had "a wife." When an ad was posted for "a NEGRO FELLOW, named DICK," the subscriber mentioned that had "a wife and child at Mrs. Patton’s."

In July of the same year, 1042 Tories entered East Florida with 1,956 slaves from Georgia and South Carolina. However, the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 returned East Florida to Spain and all Tories were ordered to leave. For the slaveholders, the turmoil continued. John Graham had all of his slaves transported and sold at Beaufort, South Carolinian. Border raids for horses and slaves continued and runaways fled amidst the chaos; it was during those chaotic years that many black men and women grasped freedom and joined the Seminoles. Seeking to retain as much economic standing as possible, the displaced Loyalist slaveholders filed for £17,750 in claims for the lost labor of 383 slaves.

An estimated 1,000 whites and 3,000 enslaved blacks evacuated British East Florida with most leaving between the years of 1783 and 1785. The only sizable population that remained were an estimated 460 blacks who primarily lived in and around the general vicinity of St. Augustine. Some have argued that St. Augustine

160 Ibid., p. 92.
became a *tabula rasa* in the wake of massive overturn of population during the Revolutionary era.\textsuperscript{162}

The Revolution brought independence to a new nation, but many questions surrounded the development of the new republic. No issue was as divisive as slavery and the subsequent debates that centered around the institution. What would become of slavery and the African slave trade? How would representation be determined between free states and slaves states? As the debates raged through continental assemblies, runaway slaves took the initiative to define their own place in the new republic, and as in eras past, their actions would have a notable impact on the broader society.

CHAPTER 6
CONDITIONS OF THE POST-REVOLUTION LOWCOUNTRY

Post-Revolutionary Lowcountry

Having gained liberty from Great Britain, the former colonies of British North America were set to complete the transition to a republic, the United States of America. However, the colonial legacy persisted. The economy of the new states struggled as raw materials were continually deported, manufactured goods imported, and hard currency remained scarce. Many planters and merchants fell into debt from British merchants, compounding the deficit during by the Revolutionary war.

The institution of slavery also underwent change. Throughout the colonies, many slaves expanded and extended their relationships beyond the plantation and the control of the slaveholders during the war. The use of homespun materials to resist British goods spurred the emergence of homegrown cotton as a new staple crop for southern states. The evolution of the cotton culture intensified westward expansion and increased the need for labor. The cultivation of cotton also fortified connections between Georgia and the Caribbean.1 Planters became more diligent in their efforts to retrieve and re-enslave fugitives. They also increased importation of enslaved Africans from the Upper South, the North and directly from Africa. As the cotton culture developed it did so with many unfamiliar elements mixing. Westward expansion brought more contact with Native Americans even as the enslaved labor force became

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1 Ray Crook, “Bilali—The Old Man of Sapelo Island” Wadabagei, Vol. 10, No. 2, (2007); Crook outlined how many leading merchants travelled to and from the Caribbean, shared information and flora to facilitate cotton production in the lowcountry.
more African than creole.\textsuperscript{2} Distinctions hardened between lowcountry and upcountry, between rural and urban, skilled and unskilled. In their struggle to regain control of the plantation, some slaveholders made concessions to the enslaved, while others resorted to sheer brute force to reestablish order. In their efforts, slaveholders managed to mobilize the power of the burgeoning states to support their status. \textsuperscript{3}

The Revolution disrupted the labor force in ways that increased the need for skilled slaves and subsequently created more opportunities for runaway slaves with skills to find employment. The chaos and ideology of the war eroded the mutually beneficial relationship between master artisans and apprentices. In the aftermath of the war, apprentices embraced the notion of liberty espoused during the Revolution and defied the levels of authority traditionally held by masters. As a result more apprentices fled before they finished their terms. In reaction, masters worked apprentices harder and taught them less to attain more on their investment in the relationship.\textsuperscript{4} Changes in immigrations further augmented the diminishment of apprenticeship, whereas the numbers of British and Irish servants decreased as the number of free European migrants increased.\textsuperscript{5} Overall, the master-apprentice relationship became more

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\item \textsuperscript{2} Douglas R. Egerton, \textit{Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 156, Egerton argued that the African percentage of the enslaved population increased by as much as sixty-eight percent in some states.
\item \textsuperscript{4} W.J. Rorabaugh, "‘I Thought I Should Liberated Myself from the Thraldom of Others’: Apprentices and Masters, and the Revolution" In \textit{Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism} Edited by Alfred F. Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University; 1993), p. 186.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Aaron S. Fogelman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: the Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," \textit{Journal of American History} (June, 1998), pp. 60-64.
\end{itemize}
exploitive, and the practice consistently diminished. Fewer servants migrated to North American in the years immediately after the Revolution. Slaves with skills took advantage, whether they were hired out or fugitives. Slaveholders benefited from skilled slaves in two ways. Skilled slaves maintained plantations without the need to hire and pay white artisans and skilled slaves hired-out for cash, credit, or goods.6

Georgia shared problems common to the other states but also experienced many unique issues. Georgia had to contend with unstable frontiers. Creek factions disputed western boundaries with violence. Creek society also changed as many Loyalist traders migrated westward established stores in Creek towns, taking slaves with them. As the fur trade diminished, some Creek began to practice chattel slavery.7 Spain regained control of Florida and once again runaway slaves could associate the southern border with the promise of religious sanctuary. Moreover, the Seminole continued to accept runaways and grant them protection and freedom in autonomous villages.8 Even as Britain relinquished official control of Florida back to Spain, banditti continued to raid southern Georgia for slaves, cattle and horses.9 Furthermore, a growing number of runaways established settlements among the Seminoles.

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9 Harry Ward, *Between the Lines: Banditti of the American Revolution* (Westport, Connecticut, Praeger Publishers, 2002), pp. 211-214; In July of 1784 Daniel McGirth led sporadic raid along the Nassau River capturing slaves, livestock, and household goods. In 1785, pillaging was most prolific between Camden County, Georgia and the St. Marys River until the military led to Colonel John Baker prioritized the capture and dispersal of the most notorious bandits.
For the enslaved, the disruption caused by the Revolution and subsequent establishment of Continental rule altered their opportunities and motives to abscond. The breakup of estates led to the subsequent displacement of slave families. Though slaveholders tried to reestablish control, the languishing economy propelled many of them to hire their slaves out even more. Georgia reopened the slave trade and became a leading importer of Africans as other colonies moved towards abolition.

The end of the Revolution was particularly volatile in Georgia because Britain actually reestablished colonial rule in Savannah, and left a bastion of black autonomy in their wake. There were untold masses of runaways and free blacks who lived among the British government but were left behind when the Royal government evacuated the lowcountry. Furthermore, some of those black residents had organized themselves into cohesive groups who looked after one another’s well-being.

**Runaways and Resistance in the New Republic**

As in the years prior to the Revolution, the advertisements of the post-Revolution era revealed the tendency of many slaves to escape with family members, compatriots from the same estate, or a work companion. Revolutionary Georgia was unique, however, because new groups formed during the war and presented the enslaved with other ways to unite once the war ended. One such group was the black clergy and their congregations who had worshipped in freedom since the British captured Savannah. Though leaders such as David George and George Liele would continue their message of spiritual liberation on distant shores, Andrew Bryan, Jessy Gaulsing and other religious leaders remained in the lowcountry to further the religious liberty that
burgeon under British control of Savannah.\textsuperscript{10} Another group consisted of more than a hundred armed black men who from the aforementioned King of England Soldiers, whose primary role was to cover the British evacuation of Savannah, and fled into the swamps of the lowcountry to found an autonomous settlement. The third group consisted of various groups of maroons whose settlements exceeded a hundred members before they were discovered. The members of these groups used divergent means to protect their autonomy but did share the common reality that each experienced a unity that greatly exceeded any that existed prior the Revolution.

The advertisements for the runaways revealed that fugitive slaves exhibited patterns similar to previous generations. However, runaways from the post-Revolutionary era also showed distinctions from those of previous eras. One distinction was the increased number of runaways who were not native-born males who fled alone or in small groups with other males. The advertisements for female runaways almost doubled the total of prewar years. The distinction was highlighted by the higher proportion of women who fled alone, with children or with other females instead of males. Yet, these female fugitives used the same methods of escape as their male counterparts. They fled by boat, relied on the assistance of family and friends, and used their experience to avoid recapture. Furthermore, female runaways exhibited the same motives of rejoining family members, escaping to specific destinations accompanied by younger relatives. Another distinction was the number of slaves who dared to abscond even though they were relatively aged or physically impaired. Slaves listed as blind,

lame, and even those wearing leg irons still ventured to take flight despite these noted disadvantages.

Slaveholders quickly staked their claim in the new socio-political order. Members of the Executive Council reflected the economic and social underpinnings of the new political order and ensured that the authority of the newly formed state would support the interest of the slaveholding class. Members such as Clay and Habersham were some of the most active merchants for importing slaves directly from Africa. Their economic role would increase in the years following the Revolution because in some areas two out of every three slaves had either died or disappeared during the war and Britain was compliant in meeting Americans’ demands for the return of their living property.

Runaway slaves of the lowcountry made a lasting impact on the economy of the post-Revolutionary era. Prominent slaveholders such as Josiah Smith noted that many of his slaves had either fled or were carried away by Tories. Those who remained were infected with smallpox. Due to combined costs of damages and replacing slaves, George Baillie stated that the costs of reestablishing plantations in the 1780s would be as expensive as the original cost of settlement.11 Moreover, the value or price of slaves also increased from £40 to £170, with an exchange rate of £1 to $3.33, the value of a “seasoned hand” was $333.00 by 1784.12 Thus, as the value of slaves increased, so did the cost of running away.

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12 Egerton, Death or Liberty, pp. 154 & 204; in regards to the return of slaves, on May 6, 1783 the delegations of Sir Carleton and George Washington, and Governor George Clinton met in Tappan. The preservation of property was atop the list of American demands, especially slaves that had been carried off. Washington was uncharacteristically angry when Carleton told him that many slaves had already
In 1782, the British evacuated Georgia and South Carolina with the former witnessing arguably the scene of the most widespread seizure of British-held blacks of all the former colonies. In 1782, the merchant John Graham fled to East Florida taking approximately two hundred slaves with him. Graham utilized the slaves on five hundred acres of lands on the Mantanzas River. Other slaveholders were less fortunate in retaining their troublesome property. Whig leader Lachlan McIntosh, for instance, lost thirty-seven of his slaves during the mass exodus and in 1782 he tried to recover them. His brother lost seven of his own. The migration of Tories into East Florida skewed the racial constituency of the population. An estimated 2,925 Loyalists entered in 1782 with approximately 4,448 enslaved, raising the overall population of East Florida residents to between 16,000 and 17,375.

Mass migration seems to have been disruptive for enslaved families, and made the preservation of family a prime motive for many runaways, whereas the advertisement revealed that many slaves either fled with family members or attempted to rejoin them. For instance, "a young Negro man, named Sandy" fled from his owner in April of 1783. Sandy was "supposed to be gone towards Bewlie, where he "had" a

sailed for Nova Scotia. Washington insisted continually that such conduct violated the Treaty of November 29, The Provisional Treaty. Carlton insisted that the article of the treaty, Article VII, only applied to property removed and slaves who had fled after 1782 accord was signed. Those who arrived prior to the signing of the 1782 were not liable to be returned.


wife.”¹⁵ When another ad was posted for "a NEGRO FELLOW, named DICK," the subscriber mentioned that had "a wife and child at Mrs. Patton's."¹⁶

Preserving family was a clear motive for some episodes of group flight. Female and male slaves fled in unison were often referred to as husband and wife. As Betty Wood noted, however, twenty five to thirty percent of slaves did not have to abscond in order to rejoin their spouses.¹⁷ Yet, the “Book of Negroes” indicated that black women accounted for forty percent of the black refugees who fled to Savannah during the British occupation.¹⁸ So even as some slaveholders enforced stricter discipline, runaways could rely on relationships to provide them with knowledge, and harboring. Slaves displaced by sale or death of an owner would have had such relations. One advertisement, for instance, featured “A NEGRO FELLOW and a WENCH, rather elderly.” The male spoke “bad English” and both “were purchased from the Estate of the late Rev. Mr. Rabenhurst.”¹⁹ So, it's possible and perhaps even probable that the couple had connections with the enslaved masses who had lived in quasi freedom during the British reoccupation of Savannah.

Work groups also established connections beyond the plantation. Such was the case when two runaways fled “From Mulberry Grove plantations.” One was “named

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¹⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁷ Wood, noted in “Some Aspects of Female Resistance to Chattel Slavery”, that her survey of the estates of Chatham County during the 1780s and 1790s, one-third of female slaves were registered as having marital relationships; males slaves registered as husbands made up twenty four percent of the male slave population; two-thirds of registered couples had at least one child living on the estate with them. p. 609.


¹⁹ Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 115.
Toney, about 24 years of age,” and “Adam, about 28.” Both were country born. In other cases the nature of a shared work experience facilitated flight. In June of 1785, for instance, an ad was posted for “the TWO FELLOWS that attended the flat, therefore must be well known.” Due to their connections the subscriber indicated that they were probably “still about the neighborhood and town.”

For the larger groups of runaways, harboring was probably more important for their success due to the extra obstacles brought on by the larger numbers involved. Not only would it be more difficult for large groups to avoid detection but they would also require more food than a single fugitive. As noted, however, some groups had a collective knowledge which helped them to evade recapture. For instance, one group of runaway slaves included Toma who was “aged about 37 years”; Brimer, who was “aged about 35 years”; Nero, “aged about 50 years”; and Jadie, “aged about 37 years.” In June of 1784, another group fled. One of the fugitives, Peter was “about 35 years of age.” He was accompanied by Edgar, who described as “a good sawyer . . . about 38 years of age.” Their companion Tom was “about 21 years of age,” while both Will and June were “about 30 years of age.” The youngest member of the group, Young June, was “about 20 years of age,” and Emanuel was “about 23 years of age.” The remaining two males of the group were Ishmael, who was “about 35 years of age, a jobbing

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20 Ibid., p. 114.

21 The term flat was commonly used to describe low lying areas of the waterways near Savannah; defined as “29. Flat or level ground; a flat area: slat flats 30. A marsh, shoal, or shallows” in Random House College Dictionary Updated Second Edition (New York: 1998), pp. 494; or “2[often pl.] an expanse of level land 3 a low lying marsh” in Webster’s New World College Dictionary 4th Edition (IDG Books Worldwide, Inc. Cleveland, 2001), p. 539.

22 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 128.

23 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 115.
carpenter and cooper by trade,” and Anthony who was listed as “a carpenter and cooper by trade . . . about 32 years of age.” Thus, the group had several members who by age and skill were probably experienced with their surroundings and destination. However, female runaways also joined the group and reflected the familial underpinnings of group flight. Nelly fled from the same plantation as the male runaways and “took with her a boy about 6 months old.” However, two women “from the plantation of Mr. Thomas Johnston” joined the group as well. They were Nelly, who was “a good sempstress, about 19 years old,” and “Sarah, sister to Nelly . . . a house servant” who was “about 17 years of age.”

A more striking example of group flight occurred in December of 1784. A female runaway “named Sall, well known in” Savannah fled one Sunday. The following Monday she was joined by “A NEGRO FELLOW, named WILL, husband to” Sall. The subscriber noted that in following Sall, Will “took with him all the remainder of he cloaths, and several suits of his own.” The slaveholder stated that the said “Negroes were absent once before for three years, a great part of which time they were in employment of Samuel Stirk, Esq.” Moreover, “during their stay there they altered their names, to WILLIAM and SARAH” and thought it “very probable they may again change them, and attempt to pass for free Negroes, having some many cloathes.”

In July of 1785, another ad was posted for a fugitive “named PHOEBE, country born” and “about 20 years of age.” Phoebe was a recidivist who had “ran away a twelvemonth ago, and was some time at Mrs. Cuthbert’s plantation on Savannah river.” In this case of flight,

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25 Ibid., p. 122.
however, Phoebe was joined by “SAMBO, her brother, a boy about 15 or 16.” Phoebe’s previous experience apparently served them well, because the ad stated that the two had “ran away from the subscriber in Sunbury upwards of three months past.” These examples of flight revealed that some runaways had both the intent and ability to remain quasi-free beyond their masters’ control.

The motive to preserve family must have been strong for runaways to take children with them in flight. Such was the case of large group that fled in 1784 and avoided recapture for more than two years. The groups was mostly older males, Peter who as “about 38 years of age; Morroe, “about 40 years of age;” Adjar, “about 40 years of age; Will “about 39 years of age”; Buck “about 45 years of age” and Tom, “about 25 years of age.” The lone female of the group was “Phillis” who was “about 28 years of age,” and "took with her a male child about 12 months old.” In December of 1785, “A NEGRO FELLOW named QUASH, about 40 years of age” who spoke “bad English” absconded “from Great Ogechee” along with “JENNY, his wife, about the same age.” They took also “a NEGRO GIRL, country born, named Sarah, about 8 years old.” The inclusion of children served to keep family units together but seemed to provide no benefit to avoiding recapture. When group flight was not based on familial unity, however, the advertisements showed that runaways benefited from their decision to abscond as groups.

The benefits of group flight were evident among advertisements for recidivists.

Even when slaveholders managed to reclaim their troublesome property, a few

26 Ibid., p. 130.
27 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 136-137.
28 Ibid., p. 136.
recalcitrant groups managed to break free in unison once more. Eleven slaves fled "from Mrs. Jones's Plantation at White Bluff." However, "Five of the foregoing Negroes were lately apprehended, and put into confinement at Ebenezer, from which they made their escape a few days" later.\(^{29}\) Another group escaped from "the subscriber's plantation at Little Ogechee." The fugitives were Brave Boy, George a "country born, about 25 years old," and Sunbury who was most likely African, because he had "some marks on his breast." The advertisement did not mention exactly how long the group had been away but did note that "the above Negroes were taken about two weeks" prior to the posting of the ad by another white citizen "on the other side of the Alatamaha." However, the group "made their escape from him a few days after." Although two of the slaves were hired from St. Augustine, the subscriber suspected that they had "recrossed the river, in order to get into the settlements on Great Ogechee, where one of the fellows" had "a wife, who was taken at the same time the others were apprehended."\(^{30}\) In lieu of the maroon encampments that developed during and after the Revolution, the use of the word settlements instead of plantations raises questions about the fugitives' destination.

The harboring of slaves became an ever increasing fear of slaveholders, reflected by their constant warnings to prosecute anyone found guilty of assisting runaway slaves. In some cases it seems that the runaways would not likely succeed without some form of assistance. For example, a group fled in July of 1785. Two of the runaways, Joe and Ben, were male. The others however, were "Zanna, a likely young

\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 127.

wench with a Mulatto Child” and “July” who was “a boy about ten years old.” The group also included “Daphne, a likely young wench; DOLL, a likely young girl, about 14 years old; Maria, an old wench walks lame; and Nelly, a likely new negro wench” who spoke “tolerable good English.”31 The youth of the aforementioned groups suggests that they would have lacked the experience needed for successful flight and would therefore need assistance.

In some scenarios, slaves seemed to share the common experience of method of enslavement and arrival in the lowcountry. The case of Africans was made evident by examples such as “Bacchus, Polydore, Bob, and Dick” who were “Four New Negroes” who “all young fellows of the Ebo country.” Bacchus and Polydore spoke “a little English, the other two scarcely any at all.”32 However, some country born slaves shared the experience of the “Second Middle Passage,” which had already begun after the Revolution.33

Recruiters from the lowcountry called Georgia Traders made great efforts to purchase and transport slaves from the Upper South and North as westward expansion and the development of plantations increased the need for slave labor in the former. Some plantations imported several slaves from the internal migration and likewise, many of them united to abscond together. For example, three slaves “ABSENTED themselves from the subscriber” of the advertisement in September of 1785. “Jery” and “Castalio” fled a complete wardrobe, but Castalio “carried with him several other

31 Ibid., p. 143.
32 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 132.
33 The term “Second Middle Passage” refers to slaves who were sold into the Lower South from the Upper South and North as slavery simultaneously expanded in the former and retracted in the latter. See Berlin, Generations of Captivity, pp. 131 & 132 for more on the internal migration.
clothes." The slaveholder also noted that “the two fellows” had been recruited “from the state of Maryland.” Furthermore, “they carried off with them some money, turkies and other provisions.” The third runaway was “A Negro woman, named Betty” who was “about 30 years old.” She had “her country marks very conspicuous in the face,” and understood “two or three different African languages” and had also “lived in the Indian nation.” Due to her travel experience and linguistic ability, Betty would have been as much of an asset to the male counterparts as they were to her. Not all females, however, fled with groups.

Female slaves who fled alone apparently fled for the same reasons as their male counterparts. For instance, "A Country born NEGRO MAN, named Clitus" fled in 1785 and his subscriber suspected that Clitus was "harboured in the town, having a wife and brother, and other connexions, in it." During the same year, another ad was posted for “A NEGRO WENCH, named Celia, about 25 years old” who had absconded “from the subscriber, about five weeks” prior. The slaveholder noted that Celia was “well acquainted, and she may conceal herself in or about the town of Savannah, or probably on Hutchinson’s Island, where she had been seen.” The great suspicion, however, was that “she may attempt to go to Charleston, or New Providence, where she” had “a husband.” Such examples suggest that female fugitives like Celia were motivated to run away in order to rejoin her spouse just as males like Clitus were apparently inspired to take flight in order to reunite with theirs.

35 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 125.
36 Ibid., p. 121.
In March of 1785, “A NEGRO WENCH, named ABBY” absconded “with a mulatto child.” Two weeks later “A NEGRO WENCH, named fanny” ran away alone. Later the same month another subscriber posted an ad for “A NEGRO WENCH, named Sylvia” who fled “with a female child about three years old.” Sylvia also increased her burden as she “took with her a good many cloathes.”37 “TWO NEGRO WENCHES, named CANDIS and JENNY” escaped their master and evaded recapture for “about three weeks” before he posted an ad.38 “Phillis, a stout strong made wench” who was “about 28 years of age,” and “took with her a male child about 12 months of old.”39 In each advertisement, the subscribers suspected that someone harbored the slaves.

Beyond harboring, female runaways used means common to their male counterparts to escape and avoid recapture. In April of 1784, a runaway “named Peg” fled. Peg had been “used to sell cakes and wash and iron in town.” The subscriber describer Peg as “very artful” and suspected that she “may endeavor to pass” as one “permitted to work out.” Due to her experience marketing goods and working in Savannah, the general public was “forewarned not to harbour, hire, or employ ” her.40 In November of 1785, another female runaway “named Judy, about 22 years of age” fled and “carried with her a variety of cloaths.” As such the subscriber assumed that Judy had the “intention to be taken off the country.”41 Sarah on the other hand used familial networks. Sarah was “aged about 25 or 30 years old” and described as “very

37 Ibid., p. 124.
38 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 124-125.
39 Ibid., pp. 125 – 126.
40 Ibid., pp. 113 – 114.
41 Ibid., p. 135.
knowing and sensible.” Though Sarah absconded from Steel Creek, the subscriber suspected that she would “pass herself for free, having a free sister in Savannah, and two other sisters at or near the same place.”42 Some female slaves managed to utilize their experience in urban areas. Overall, female runaways shared similar motives for and methods of flight as males. However, the westward expansion of trade provided male slaves with opportunities, such as escaping to the frontier, that were closed to female their females because the former worked as porters and the latter did not.

The continued success of traders like Lachlan McGillivray also ensured that slaves would continue to trek familiar routes as carriers of trade goods. McGillivray sided with the British during the Revolution and was granted the rank of colonel. Unlike many other Tories, however, McGillivray managed to benefit from the new order as well. When the revolution ended, merchants of the Atlantic seaboard sought to retain the exclusive trade arrangements of Panton, Leslie & Co. Despite his affiliation with the British, McGillivray was valued those who supported the American Revolution for his longstanding relations with the Indian trade. In June of 1784, McGillivray negotiated the Creek and Seminoles into a three way deal with Governor Miro of Orleans, Governor O’Neill of West Florida and Don Marton Navarro, who was the Intendment General of Florida. For his efforts, Spain granted McGillivray the rank and pay of colonel in the Spanish army. Viewing the influence of McGillivray, the newly founded United States government sent a commission to negotiate trade, land, hunting rights and to end conflict along the southern border. The open Treaty of Oconee negotiated lands. The secret treaty, however, agreed to terms that McGillivray would redirect the Indian trade

42 Ibid., p. 144.
to merchants of the United States in exchange for annual stipends to designated chiefs. For his troubles, the United States awarded him the rank and pay of a Brigadier General, the title of Indian Agent of the United States, and an annual stipend of twelve hundred dollars. 43 So as the new republic formed, the southern trade with Native Americans was controlled more so than ever by the slaveholder who dominated the system for decades. For slaves who traveled the trade routes, the Revolution brought both continuity and change. The slaves who were compelled to travel with their Tory masters also experienced increased mobility after the war. However, the nature of their movements brought more disruption than continuity.

The turmoil provided runaways with opportunities to exploit. An estimated forty-two percent of all the black residents of British East Florida were unaccounted for at the end of the evacuation, some 4,745 people. 44 The final destinations of the missing black residents is lost to history. However, there were still areas in Florida that welcomed runaways.

Some of the Tories who fled to East Florida during the Revolution managed to remain. In the region between the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers a group of Loyalists from the former colonies established a small agrarian society. Like the broader society of East Florida, the vast majority of settlers lacked adequate workers and languished for supplies under Spain's restrictive policies which provided them with little more than land. Furthermore, ownership of slaves was skewed because the majority of those slaves were possessed by two slaveholders. To meet their need for labor, the settlers


evidently rented or 'housed' slaves and engaged in smuggling and other activities to secure goods that were banned by the Spanish government. William Pengree, who owned the most slaves in the area, reported that he lost twenty-five percent of his slave force. Yet, during the same time period, the number of slaves reported in smaller households, those that held three or less slaves, doubled.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, despite the political climate, East Florida still provided a clandestine welcome to runaways.

Runaways also took advantage of instability along the western frontier. The western political boundary of the lowcountry was in flux in 1783 as Georgians and South Carolinians pressed to secure territory along the opening western frontier. The Cherokee remained the strongest Native American group along the western frontier of the newly formed states. Dragging Canoe led Cherokee resistance and held a stronghold near the Chickamauga River. General Andrew Pickens led American forces to quell any resistance. As the troops marched they encountered and recaptured slaves encamped at the Long Swamp village of Cherokee. The Cherokee evaded direct combat and eventually signed a treaty that ceded the new government’s lands from the headwaters of the Savannah and Chattahoochie rivers and returned any captives that joined them during the war for independence. By treaty then, the Cherokee no longer provided a welcome for fugitive slaves. Meanwhile, settlers moved in before the treaty was finalized.\textsuperscript{46}

The motives for the runaways varied from case to case. However, the patterns that emerged in the advertisements for the runaways reflected a few common goals

\textsuperscript{45} Susan R. Parker; "Men Without God or King: Rural Settlers of East Florida, 1784-1790," \textit{The Florida Historical Quarterly}, Vol. 69, No. 2 (October 1990), pp.136-152.

among the fugitives. Betty Wood has noted that in general runaways sought to rejoin relatives or acquaintances, to ally with maroons or fugitive bands, to escape to the western frontier and perhaps join Native Americans, and to reach Savannah where they could blend into the growing numbers of urban blacks or gain access to a seafaring vessel. The advertisements indicated that those core motives were tempered in each case by specific characteristics of the runaways such as gender, skills, work experience, ethnicity and degree of assimilation. Women and newly imported Africans who absconded faced different and perhaps greater difficulties than native-born male slaves because the former usually had less occupational experience and knowledge of the area than the later who experienced more opportunities to work and travel off the plantations. The advertisements for the runaways reflected the various ways that slaves of both genders and various ethnicities escaped bondage by taking advantage of the numerous opportunities that the Revolution created in Low Country.

In addition to the aforementioned motivations to abscond, Ira Berlin also noted that the level of violence on lowcountry plantations increased in the years immediately following the Revolution. At the heart of the violence was the struggle between slaves who attempted to maintain the liberties they gained during the Revolution and the slaveholders who tried to restore prewar levels of discipline and order. The violence associated with that struggle was apparent with some runaways. In January 1784, a subscriber posted an ad for “Two Negro Fellows” who had “Ran way from the subscriber near Sunbury in November last.” Isaac was “about 30 years of age,” and


48 Berlin, Generations of Captivity, p. 128.
“much marked upon the thighs with a whip.” Cato was described as “a young fellow, about 19 years of age” and “much marked upon the back with the whip.” Cato also had “a large scar on the top of his head.”

Physical abuses also inspired singular flight as well. A slaveholder posted an advertisement for "a likely young sensible NEGRO FELLOW, named HERCULES." The said runaway "was formerly the property of the Rev. James Seymour." Hercules was evidently a repeat offender because the subscriber noted that Hercules carried "the marks of the whip on his back for the same crime." Such as the case of “A NEGRO FELLOW named ADAM,” who had also ran away from a “subscriber’s plantation near Sunbury.” Adam was “lately from St. Croix, . . . about 23 years old” and “much marked on his thighs with the whip.”

December 1786, "A Negro Fellow, by trade a carpenter, named HARRY" who had been "seen near Ashley Ferry, but escaped into the woods." Harry had "his back and buttocks" were "much cut with the whip." Even while plantation slaves fled to escape increased violence, slaves who worked along trade routes had different incentives, such as a relatively high chance of escape and finding freedom on the frontier. This was especially true for those who trekked along the expanding trade routes of the interior.

The high degree of movement exacerbated labor shortages caused by the war. The merchant firm of Clay, Telfair, and Company advised that the young state of Georgia needed a great supply of new slaves to replace those lost by war and to take

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51 Ibid., pp. 141-142.
52 Ibid., p. 147.
advantage of the uncultivated lands in the interior. The markets of the West Indies and South Carolina dominated the slave trade. Though Georgia was of a lower priority to the greater Atlantic trade, London merchants acknowledged slavery as important 'to the Trade of this Country, as the Soul to the Body'. Georgians preferred Africans direct from the West Africa over those seasoned in the Caribbean. Though British merchants did not immediately adhere to the requests of the Georgians, merchants Patrick Crookshank and Alexander Speirs moved to Savannah and initiated the direct importation of Africans. The direct trade developed slowly but Georgians eventually imported cargoes composed mostly of Africans from the years 1784 to 1789. The most identifiable groups were the 1,444 imported from the Gold Coast and 1,174 wrought from the Isle De Los off the coast of Sierra Leone. Georgians maintained a steady importation of Africans until the Haitian Revolution inspired them to ban the trade.\textsuperscript{53} British, Dutch, Danish, and French slaves shipped as many as 11,000 slaves directly from Africa and the Caribbean to Georgia and South Carolina from 1783 to 1785. That not only reinforced slavery as an institution, it also reversed creolization and made the enslaved masses more African.\textsuperscript{54}

Advertisements from 1784 reflected the presence of African-born runaways. However, the advertisements do not indicate if the slaves were imported in 1784 or if they had been imported years earlier. The ages of the slaves further complicate any indication of the amount of time they had been in the colonies. Nevertheless, the


\textsuperscript{54} Egerton, \textit{Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America}, pp. 154, 156, & 204.
examples printed in the advertisements suggested that Africans shared similar motivations and methods of flight as country-born slaves.

African runaways fled over long distances and even across state lines to avoid recapture. In February 1784, a runaway "named Abraham" who exhibited "his country marks in his face" fled with "a woman, named Bina." Though the two fled from Beaufort, South Carolina, the subscriber had reason to believe that they had fled to Georgia.\(^{55}\) Thought the advertisement did not specify, it is also possible that they were married or had assumed an informal bond. Another ad, however, clearly indicated that Africans did flee with family, perhaps in an attempt to preserve their family unity.

In May of 1784, a subscriber posted an advertisement for several slaves who had absented themselves from his plantation. Among them was a couple described as married. Nanny, who was "about 43 years of age" and Robin who was "about 45 years of age" and a "cooper and carpenter by trade." Although they each had "their country marks on their faces", they seem to have been well assimilated whereas both spoke "tolerable good English" and were "well known in and about Savannah." The runaways evidently benefited from such experience because "they went off in February 1783" and were still away when the ad was posted fifteen months later. Nanny and Robin were probably intent on keeping their marriage intact. However, they also "carried with them a foolish child of 8 years of age."\(^{56}\) The advertisement did not state if the child was actually the offspring of the couple. Therefore, one can only speculate whether or not

\(^{55}\) Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4*, p. 112.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 114.
Nanny and Robin were motivated by the bonds of parentage as well as those of marriage.

Advertisements revealed that the Africans who fled alone were often as elusive as creoles and perhaps shared similar motivations when they took flight. Subscribers constantly suspected that creoles runaways might change their appearance or be harbored by their friends, family or acquaintances. Some Africans demonstrated a level of savvy similar to that of country-born slaves when they absconded. In July of 1784, for example, an advertisement was posted for "A NEGRO FELLOW, named Peter" who was "of the Kiffee country" and had "some country marks in his face." At "about 35 years of age" Peter seemed to posses some knowledge of absconding whereas he had been away since November 1783 and the subscriber suspected that "he may change his name." In November of the same year, “A NEGRO FELLOW, named George” fled and avoided recapture for a least one week before an advertisement was posted for his escape. George was allegedly “from the River Gambia in Guinea" but seemed well assimilated to the lowcountry, because he spoke “tolerable good English” and the subscriber suspected that “he may perhaps change his dress.” The subscriber also supposed that George was “harboured by some person in or near Savannah” with the intent of “going off in some vessel." Another "NEGRO FELLOW, named JOHN" fled from Port-Royal and the subscriber believed that the runaway had fled into Georgia. John had avoided recapture for three months before the advertisement was posted despite the fact he carried "his country marks in his face" and spoke "bad English."

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57 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 117.
58 Ibid., p. 119.
59 Ibid., pp. 120-121.
Despite their noted African birth and markings, the aforementioned fugitives seemed to flee for the same reasons as many creoles: they had the wherewithal to escape and avoid recapture.

Some female Africans also ventured to escape alone. Such was the case of a female runaway who was "about 35 or 40 years old, named MUNTILLA" who had "her country marks in her face." The subscriber suspected that the fugitive might "change her dress, as she carried other cloaths with her." Furthermore, Muntilla was "well known in and near Savannah, and Capt. Mackay's plantation on Great Ogechee." 60

Though many Africans did run away in groups, they often did so with creoles. So if Africans were motivated to flee collectively as many scholars have suggested, they did not abscond exclusively with other Africans. There were examples of ethnic-based flight such as that of "Four New Negroes: Bacchus, Polydore, Bob and Dick." All for were "likely young fellows, of the Ebo country." Bacchus and Polydore spoke "a little English, the other two scarcely any at all." 61 Africans also unified to preserve family bonds. "PRINCE" and "ROSE, wife to said Prince" fled together. Although Prince only spoke "a little English" and Rose "could not speak any" 62, the two avoided recapture for more than four months before the advertisement for their escape was posted. In another example, "a fellow named Sampson" absconded with "his wife, named Marian." The subscriber noted that both were "of the Coromantee country" and spoke English "well enough to be understood." Therefore, the two may have been able to blend in to

60 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 129.
61 Ibid., p. 132.
62 Ibid., p. 136.
enslaved masses. Had that been their intent their goals would have been more difficult because "they took with them their child, about two years old."  

In some cases in which Africans fled together their motives may have been inspired more by shared experiences in the lowcountry than a common African background. For example runaways named "JACOB, ISHMAEL, and ISAAC, all of the Angola country" fled with "POMPEY and CHLOE, of the Guiney country" and "NANCY, born in town." The subscriber noted that "all of the above negroes" were "well know in Savannah and the country adjacent." Thus, they may have been more motivated to run away together because they were all knowledgeable of the environs in and around Savannah than by the fact that they may have shared a common port of origin from Africa.

For instance, five runaways took flight in unison, but only one, May who had "his country marks on his stomach" was described as African. Female Africans likewise fled with creoles. In March of 1785, "TWO NEGRO WENCHES, named CANDIS and JENNY" ran away together and remained away for three weeks before the advertisement for their escape was posted. Jenny had "her country marks on different parts of her body" and the subscriber "imagined they went off with a fellow named Isle of Wight" who belonged to another slaveholder.

The enslaved who engaged in autonomous and clandestine trade experienced increased power to sell and trade their goods. Like the free white traders, enslaved

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63 Ibid., p. 154.
65 Ibid., p. 120.
66 Ibid., pp. 124-125.
traders also expanded their networks of exchange after the Revolution, gaining more knowledge of the backcountry as a result of the increased physical mobility they experienced during the Revolution. Some groups even took on the added risk of stealing and carrying extra paraphernalia. Timothy Lockley indicated that ‘Negro- Traffickers’ inspired some of the thefts committed by slaves. The term referred to poor and rural white citizens who were more likely to accept stolen goods from slaves or runaways. In 1784, for instance, a slave owner named John McCarty accused another white resident of engaging in clandestine trade with his slaves and illicit trade with slaves so prolific that by 1788 ninety residents of Savannah Chatham Country lobbied the Grand Jury to take action against the ‘traffick’. One such group consisted of “two fellows” who had come “from Maryland,” and a well-traveled “Negro woman, named Betty,” who understood “two or three different African languages,” and had “lived in the Indian nation.” The first male runaway was fully dressed when he fled, but also “carried with him several other different suits.” The second fugitive, JERY, was also fully clothed. Yet, between the two, “they carried off with them some money, turkies and other provisions.” Considering Betty’s experience with Native Americans, it possible that the group might have sought refuge among local groups. Whatever their destination, the turkey and other edibles could have provided sustenance or been used for barter.

Slaves with skills and experience utilized the Revolution to exercise great liberty even as they remained in the burgeoning state. Thomas Hutson posted a

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quintessential example in January 1784 of a skilled slave who was caught in the tide of Revolution, yet managed to stake a place for himself amidst the turmoil. Hutson notified the public of “A NEGRO MAN, named CHARLES” who was “well known in Savannah, being employed there as a jobbing carpenter for upwards of four years, during which time he has endeavoured to pass for a free person.” Charles had escaped before and had been “captured about December, 1778, in a schooner on her way to Charleston, and carried to St. Augustine, from whence he immediately made his escape to Savannah, where in its vicinity, he has been harboured ever since.” The subscriber further noted that he had been informed that Charles was allegedly "at Col. Deveaux's plantation on Savannah river, where he has, or has had, a wife." Acting on the said information about the location of Charles, "Some attempts" were "made to apprehend him at the last mentioned place." Those efforts, however, failed and Charles reportedly "removed his quarters from thence to Mrs. Bulloch's plantation on Skidaway." 70 Not all slaves experienced as much movement as Charles but many others did manage to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Revolution and use them to extend their freedom into the post-war years.

In February of 1784, an ad featured “A NEGRO FELLOW, named CATO.” The fugitive was “well known in Georgia, as he kept ferry at Skidaway about two years” and had “been seen in Savannah since he went away.” Besides his ferreying skills, Cato was also “by trade a shoemaker.” The subscriber assumed that Cato would “make for Skidaway or Newport,”71 other urban settings in which he could possibly gain

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70 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 111.

71 Ibid., p. 112.
employment and apply his skills. “A NEGRO FELLOW, named JACOB” fled in April of the same year and was described Jacob as “exceedingly sensible" and as being “generally well known throughout the state, having been for many years waiting man to the late Co. Harris.” In August of the same year, Geo. Troupe posted a notification for “A NEGRO MAN, named Matt,” who had “RUN away from the subscriber March last.” So Matt had been away for six months and his ability to do so may have been predicated on the fact that he was “a good squarer and jobbing carpenter, and compleat waitingman.”

Skills and experience also influenced some slaves to flee in groups. One such group consisted of “Two Negro Men, named Wilkes* and Bristol,” and “A Wench, named Peg” who fled in April 1784. The ad did not attribute any skills or trades to Wilkes but did note that he was “well known in and about town.” Peg, on the other hand, “formerly was known as Mrs. Delegall’s” and “used to sell cakes and wash and iron in town.” The subscriber did state his suspicion that “As Wilkes and Peg” were “both very artful they may endeavor to pass as negroes permitted to work out; therefore all persons” were “forewarned not to harbour, hire, or employ either.”

May of 1785, “Primus, a stout fellow about 45 years of age; Scipio a likely well set fellow, about 22 years of age; also” a “waiting boy Paris, about 16 years of age.” The subscriber noted that the three had “been much used about the plantation of Mr. Jonathan Fox on Little Ogechee, and may be in that neighborhood.”

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72 Ibid., p. 113.
73 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 118.
74 Ibid., pp. 113 – 114.
75 Ibid., p. 128.
Some slaves used their experience to continue the tradition of fugitives and fled across the Carolina-Georgia border. In January of 1785, a subscriber named John Gibbs posted an ad for “a short YELLOW WENCH, named SALL,” and “a NEGRO FELLOW, named WILL.” The two were married and well-known in Charleston. Will “took with him the remainder of her cloathes, and several suits of his own.” Moreover, they had a history of long-term flight, whereas they had been “absent once before for three years, a great time of which they were in the employment of Samuel Stirk, Esq. in Georgia.” Gibbs further noted that “during their stay there they altered their names to WILLIAM and SARAH,” and thought it “very probable they may again change them, and attempt to pass for free Negroes, having so many cloaths.”

In June of 1785, an ad was posted for “TWO FELLOWS that attended the flat” and had “RAN WAY from Ogechee Ferry” the preceding May.” “TONEY” had “formerly belonged to Mr. Murray, who kept the tavern on the Bay in Savannah,” and was therefore, “well known in town.” The other runaway, “JEMMY” was also well-known in Savannah and along the Ogechee. Though the subscriber suspected that they were “still about the neighbourhood and town,” he also thought it possible that “Toney may attempt to proceed to Carolina, where he formerly belonged to.”

A few weeks later, a notice was posted for “A NEGRO MAN, named Jack” who was “Creole born,” and spoke but “indifferent English.” Despite his limited ability to speak English, Jack had skills and experiences that facilitated his escape. Foremost, he was “a carpenter by trade” and was “well known in Savannah, where he” had “worked all last year.” Furthermore, he

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76 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p. 122.

77 Ibid., p. 128.
was also a “tolerable good seaman.” Hence, the subscriber suspected that he would “probably endeavor, by some means or other, to enter himself on ship-board, in order to get to Charleston, where he has connexions.”

The opportunities for enslaved artisans in Savannah mirrored those provided for them in Charleston. Self-hire underscored the social independence that skilled slaves experienced as many collected their own wages, established autonomous dwellings and even governed their own families in the absence of their owners. Overall skilled slaves expanded their participation as draymen, boatmen, porters, and craftsmen in the urban economy of Savannah.

Self-hire became so widespread by 1785 that white artisans organized and lobbied for legislation to protect their livelihood. The government responded. In order to control the hiring of slaves and to raise the cost of hiring for the owners, the legislature instituted a registration-badge system. The laws required slaveholders to register their slaves and to pay one shilling and six pence for each slave. If the slaves were to be hired-out legally, the slave owners had to purchase a badge costing twenty shillings for each hired slave.

The flight of several runaways was linked to their activity and mobility in the labor market. “A Negro Fellow, named Polydore” was “well known about town” when he fled his owner, Levi Sheftall, in January of 1785. Polydore “had his porter’s ticket, No. 16 or 17, when he went away.” Though the fugitive had been away for three weeks, Sheftall

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78 Ibid., p. 129.

79 Berlin, Generations of Captivity, p. 135.

stated that if he returned "home in ten days he shall be forgiven." In May of 1786, Merchant WM. Deveaux posted an ad for two more runaways who used their knowledge and experiences to facilitate their escape. The first was “a young NEGRO FELLOW, country born, named JOE*” who had “RUN AWAY from the subscriber on the 28th of April last.” Joe was “well known about Savannah and at different plantations up the river and on Skidaway Island.” Joe was “supposed to be frequently up the river and about town,” with his ability to move accentuated because he had “a small boat.” The second runaway mentioned was a “NEGRO WENCH, country born, named ZARRA” who fled “with a young Mulatto” and was likewise “well known at the above-mentioned places,” whereas she had “had been for these six months past hired by Mr. William Lyons living near Mr. Tattnall’s, and was seen at his place a few days before she went missing.” In December of 1786, Edward Lowndes posted an ad for “A Negro Fellow,” who was “by trade a carpenter, named Harry.” However, Harry had been known to use “the name of James Galmore,” and also to pretend “to be free.” When questioned, Harry also concocted the story that “his master died at Charleston.” Not all slaves, however, looked to assimilate into the new republic.

Over the course of the Revolutionary era, many slaves took advantage of the chaos and either established or joined maroon encampments. Though maroon settlements were founded in secrecy and runaways joined them secretly, the advertisements reflected trends indicative of the types of slaves who would benefit from an outlandish society, one in which they could both avoid detection and find assistance.

81 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, pp. 121-122.
82 Windley, Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4, p.141.
83 Ibid., p.147.
There was an increased proportion of slaves who would require harboring or assistance to avoid detection and recapture. Such slaves were those who fled in groups too large to avoid suspicion, groups that fled with children or who stole an excessive amount of goods in flight. Once the settlements were discovered they reveal the myriad types of runaways that fled and established residence within them. The presence of well-built houses indicated the presence of skilled artisans and access to building materials. The crops had to be maintained by maroons with agrarian knowledge, likewise the livestock required knowledge of animal husbandry. Boats and canoes indicated skills and also raised questions about the advertisements in which runaways who took such items. Boats indicated the skills of boatmen and some knowledge of local waterways. The maroons used firearms in several encounters with state militias. Moreover, significant numbers of women and children; were also discovered in the camps. As such, the presence of maroons might explain the motives of slaves who had fled during the post-Revolution years with children, in large groups, or who stole guns, boats and animals.

While harboring women and children posed a unique set of problems, the hiding and assisting of a large number of male fugitives posed another challenge. Yet, as early as 1780, the percentage of slaves who fled in large groups increased. In 1785, James Gunn posted an ad for “the following NEGROES”: Peter who was “about 35 years of age”, Morroe, also “about 35 years of age”, Tom, “about 21 years of age”, Adjar, “about 40 years of age”, Will, “about 38 years if age”, Jack, “about 25 years of age”, Emanuel, “about 25 years of age”; and “Phillis, a stout strong made wench” who was “about 28 years of age,” and “took with her a male child about 12 months of old.”

In conjunction to that group, Gunn listed another group that had absconded “Also from the plantation of Mr. Thomas Johnston.” The group included Robin, who was “about 45 years of age” and was “a cooper and carpenter by trade.” Robin was accompanied by “Nanny, a sensible house wench” who was “about 43 years of age.” Both were “well known in and about Savannah” but also “had their country marks on their faces.” They “went off in February of 1783, and carried with them a foolish child of eight years of age.” The last fugitive to be named was “BUCK” who was described as “sensible . . . about 45 years of age” and had “went off in February 1784” but had “since been seen at St. John’s.” The final two runaways were female. One was “Nelly, a low but stout made wench” who had “been used to wait in a house,” and was “about 18 years of age.” The other was “Sarah, her sister” who had “also been used to wait in the house” and was “about sixteen years of age.” Gunn stated that “most of the above negroes” had “been absent 18 months, or two years” and were “often seen in Savannah and at Lady Campbell opposite the town of Savannah.” For such a diverse group to flee simultaneously suggests a degree of planning, especially for the teenagers who spent their time waiting houses of slaveholders, for they would have lacked the experiences of slaves who worked or hired out in the lowcountry.

The same lack of experience was noteworthy for other groups of runaways as well. A subscriber named Godin Guerard, for example, posted an ad for slaves who had fled from South Carolina but because they “formerly belonged to John Graham, Esq,” Guerard suspected that the group would “attempt to conceal themselves on or near the Savannah River.” The runaways were a heterogeneous group that included

“Will, Kitty; Liddy, about eight years old, Chance, Sabina; and Tom, about 18 months old; Pope, (a carpenter) and his daughter, three years old; John, Lucy, Venus, Granville, Monteith, Mahomed*, Philip, and Henny.”\textsuperscript{86} It seems that the size of the group and the presence of children would have made it difficult for the group to go unnoticed had they chosen to remain together.

In April 1785, a notice was posted for “TWO NEGRO WENCHES, named CANDIS and JENNY” had run “away about three weeks” prior. Jenny had “her country marks on different parts of her body.”\textsuperscript{87} Some runaways were so determined and prolific that they managed to escape even after being recaptured and confined. For instance, the merchant James posted an ad for a group Monday, a male of “about 35 years of age”; Joe who was “about 20 years of age”; “Daniel, a country born fellow, between 18 and 19 old”; Tom “about 20 years old”; Cudjoe, who was “about 37 years of age”; and Cuffee who was “between 30 and 40 years old.” The other slaves in the group were apparently imported. May had “a scar on the right side of his neck, and his country marks on his stomach, about 37 years of age.” The group also included Anthony who spoke “very bad English,” and was “about 28 years old,” and Hercules, Good Luck, and Sylvia for whom no description was given. Habersham also noted that “Five of the foregoing Negroes” had been “lately apprehended, and put into confinement at Ebenezer, from which they had their escape a few days ago.”\textsuperscript{88}

Some groups even took on the added risk of stealing and carrying extra paraphernalia. One such group consisted of “two fellows” who had come “from

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 126.
\textsuperscript{87} Windley, \textit{Runaway Slave Advertisements Vol. 4}, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 127.
Maryland,” and a well-traveled “Negro woman, named Betty,” who understood “two or three different African languages,” and had “lived in the Indian nation.” The first male runaway was fully dressed when he fled, but also “carried with him several other different suits.” The second fugitive, JERY, was also fully clothed. Yet, between the two, “they carried off with them some money, turkies and other provisions.”89 Considering Betty’s experience with Native Americans, it possible that the group might have sought refuge among local groups. Whatever their destination, the turkey and other edibles could have provided sustenance or been used for barter. Events in 1786 revealed that they were indeed large groups of autonomous blacks with whom runaways could trade stolen goods. However, those same events also showed the societal aim to destroy all collective acts of black autonomy.

The militias of South Carolina and Georgia joined forces in 1786 and attacked a maroon settlement discovered near Patton’s Swamp on Bear Creek. The ex-slaves settled along the banks of the Savannah River, from whence they plundered by night, and to which they disappeared by day. They remained at a fortified location at Bear Creek until they were discovered. May 6, approximately fifteen Catawaba Indians led a combined force of forty South Carolina and Georgia militia who were commanded by Colonel James Gunn. The maroons had established their encampment on a tract that was approximately one-half mile and one-hundred yards wide. The fortress consisted of rectangular breastwork of logs and cane. The militias reportedly destroyed twenty-one homes and took seven boats. They also captured many women and children but the leader Sharper escaped and led a group of eighteen into Indian Territory. The

89 Ibid., pp. 134-135.
militia pursued them and captured nine females who were members of the group, but Sharper and his wife reached St. Augustine and petitioned for sanctuary. To deter any remaining maroons, the troops destroyed twenty dwellings, and took away seven of the fugitives' boats. South Carolina offered a bounty of £10 per head to anyone who could prove that they killed or captured a maroon.90

In October of 1786, citizens discovered that another settlement that consisted of “a number of runaway Negroes (supposed upwards of 100)” who had “sheltered themselves on Belleisle Island, about 17 or 18 miles up the Savannah river.” However, these runaways were not content with isolation because they had “for some time past committed robberies on the neighboring plantations.” In fact, it was because of the plundering that “it was found necessary to attempt to dislodge them.” On October 11, “a small party of militia landed and attacked them, and killed three or four, but were at last obliged to retreat for want of ammunitions, having four of their number wounded.” Though the maroons, repulsed one assault, the militia continued to underestimate their resolve. On the “same evening, about sunset, 15 of the Savannah light infantry and three or four others drove in one their outguards, but the Negroes came down in such numbers that it was judged advisable” for the light infantry “to return to their boats, from which the Negroes attempted to cut them off.” The maroons’ attempt to stop the retreat of the light infantry was “prevented by Lieutenant Else of the artillery, who commanded a boat with 11 of the company, and had a piece on board.” The state militia fired grapeshot from the boat. On October 13, General James Jackson led a reinforced

group of militia, drove the maroons from their settlement and remained there three days during which time they “destroyed as much rough rice as would have made 25 barrels,” and “brought off about 60 bushels of corn, and 14 or 15 boats and canoes from the landing.” The troops also wrecked houses, huts and four acres of green rice with the belief that the lack of provisions would disperse or weaken the maroons they were unable to kill or capture.  

These tactics deterred maroons from resettling that area but not their resilience to found another camp. As the states of Georgia and South Carolina closed in on them, maroons trekked deeper into the inhospitable swamps to avoid detection. By March of 1787, the black pioneers had established other settlements near their previous camp at Bear Creek, this time at Harleston swamp. They also used Patton's swamp on the Savannah nearer to Purysburgh. Later that year, Georgia and South Carolina joined their militias once again in order to search and destroy the encampments of fugitives. By “the orders of the Executives of the two states,” Georgia and South Carolina united in “a co-operation against the banditti of runaway slaves.” One group of fugitives had established a “place at the old camp in the fork of Abercorn, and Collins’s Creek.” The campaign also discovered “a negro camp at Patton’s Swamp [which was successfully defeated].” The victories were heralded because the runaways “had got seated and strongly fortified in the midst of an almost impenetrable swamp, and opening a general asylum which no doubt would have been embraced by many on the approach of hot weather.” The suppression of the maroon settlements, however, did not stem the

tide of slave runaways. The recorder of the incidents noted that “running away had already become more prevalent than usual.”\textsuperscript{92} Groups of fugitives persisted but on a smaller scale.

The maroons revealed much about black resistance to slavery and opened many possible insights to the advertisements for runaways. The size of the settlements and the number of maroons suggested that the societies developed over a period of years. The presence of so many women and children reported at every camp suggests that they may have been families, such as those mentioned in the advertisements. The supplies and watercraft found by the militia may have been the same items that runaway slaves took as they fled. The fortifications, homes, and huts indicated the artisans were among their ranks, just as the presence of livestock and large caches of food show that some of them were skilled in farming and animal husbandry. Furthermore, the fugitives resolve to defend the encampment represented unified defiance to slavery that was unprecedented in both scope and scale in the history of Georgia. In many ways, the black women, men and children of Georgia not only experienced the essence of the American Revolution, but managed to embody it and live it for years after the British withdrew, for even as the founding of the republic meant a clarification of what the Revolution meant and a honing for whom the principles applied, those black men and women would become pioneers of freedom throughout the Atlantic world.

When Thomas Jefferson penned opposition to slavery into the Declaration of Independence, white Georgians and South Carolinians led the charge to have such

\textsuperscript{92} Ward, \textit{Between the Lines}, p. 178; Gomez, \textit{Exchanging Our Country Marks}, p. 184.
verbiage removed. Delegates from the lowcountry also ensured the continuation of the slave trade as both refused to rarify any version of the Constitution that subjected the importation of slaves to congressional control.\(^93\) The former antislavery colony, the last to legalize slavery not only became a leading proslavery state, but would also be one of the last to stop importing Africans. The options for runaways shifted in accordance with the changed geopolitics of the southeast.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

The United States changed greatly during the early national period. The liberty that runaway slaves enjoyed during and after the American Revolution would be replaced with much different options. The new state and republican governments systematically moved to restrict their choices. By 1790, slaves constituted 12.5 percent of the nation's wealth. Among the slaveholders were the first president, Secretary of State and Attorney General of the United States. One-third of all southerners were slaves and one-third of all white households owned at least one slave. As slavery contracted in the North, it expanded in the South. Georgia, which continued to import slaves until 1798, experienced the largest increase in black population of any original state as the total population of black people in the state almost doubled in size during the decade.¹ In 1790, Georgia recorded 29,264 slaves and 52,886 white residents. By 1800, those numbers had increased to 59,404 enslaved and 101,678 white citizens. The national average increase of slaves during that time was twenty eight percent, while Georgia's was 103 percent.² The free black population also increased dramatically. Georgia registered 398 free blacks in 1790 and 1,109 by 1800 but that was only twelfth among the original thirteen states.³

Relations with Native Americans changed as they became collectively more hostile to all forms of westward of expansion. Hundreds of Georgians migrated


westward from 1787 to 1789, when Creeks killed at least seventy two white migrants and took another thirty prisoners. During the same time the Creek killed ten black interlopers and took one-hundred and ten captive. Alexander McGillivray tried to negotiate a peaceful agreement between the Creek, Cherokee and United States in the summer of 1790 but failed and more violence ensued.

Three major changes within the Creek society altered the way they dealt with slaves and subsequently changed how they treated runaway slaves as well. One was the rise of mixed-bloods who attained legal title of slaves and, unlike in previous generations, segregated them from the rest of the Creek and used slave labor to gain profits. A second change was the use of client-patron continuum which function much like the hiring out process used by white slaveholders. In such an arrangement, the Creek held slaves responsible for their own well-being and required the slaves to give part of their earnings or production to their owner. The third shift was the rise of slave traders who specialized in the capture, sale and trade of slaves for profit. In either regard, runaways could no longer expect to be assimilated into Creek society as in generations past.

The government also took measures to restrict runaways from engaging in the illicit trade in goods and services. In 1788 ninety residents of Savannah Chatham Country lobbied the Grand Jury to take action against the ‘traffick.’ By 1790 white artisans formed the Savannah Association of Mechanics and pressed for further

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restrictions, such as forcing slaveholders to pay twenty shillings per badge for cabinetmakers, carpenters, caulkers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, tailors, barbers, bakers, butchers. Ten shillings per badge was required for mechanics, and handicraft tradesmen. Porters or day laborers cost seven shillings and sixpence.\(^7\) As in times past, there were still some customers who would deal with unregistered slaves.

White Georgians grew angry about the ease with which runaway slaves continued to flee across the Oconee River into Indian Country or into St. Augustine and Pensacola where the Spanish authorities treated them as free blacks and either let them find work or employed them on public works. The officials of East and West Florida, did not take measures to return the runaways.\(^8\) Their response may been predicated on the fact that the largest employer of free people of color in East Florida was the government. Black laborers worked as auctioneers, town criers, and messengers. Some were employed worked in hospitals or barracks and others unloaded ships. They served in the military, as soldiers, hewers of firewood, maintainers of weapons, or musicians. Others worked on public construction projects, built fortification projects, in stone quarries and lime kilns. In the country side, they farmed or ranches government lands. They supplied wood as lumberjacks, or food as hunters, trappers, fishers. Black laborers and the government paid them a standard daily wages. Some even secured permanent positions as craftsmen. For the enslaved the Spanish practiced \textit{coartacion} through which slaves could have their valued determined by the Spanish court and fixed so that they might purchase their freedom, or the freedom of


their spouses, children, parents in installments. The Spanish government still offered sanctuary, work, and even upward mobility to slaves who fled from the former colonies. However, the restrictive mercantilist occasionally brought slaves into conflict with Georgians and led to altercations.

The Spanish regime in East Florida failed to provide its residents with either adequate stores or legal options to supply their needs. Despite restrictions on their travel, some Spanish subjects traveled to Cumberland Island and Amelia Island to purchase items. When slaves who had fled from Georgia traveled to Amelia Island from Florida, however, violence often erupted from Georgians who were upset with the Spanish fugitive slave policy and tried to reclaim slaves that they saw on sight. Meanwhile the Spanish government of East Florida took the official position of employing runaways.

Governor Zespedes of East Florida required unattached blacks to present themselves to be recorded for the census and contracted for work. At least two hundred and fifty slaves who had fled their Anglo-masters presented themselves. The fugitives were required to register, obtain a license, and hire themselves out. Other than those mandates, former slaves were to be treated as free. By 1789 Governor Zespedes reported that almost all of the fugitives were hired out in the countryside or in the Plaza. United States Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, realized the threat

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that runaways posed to the political stability of the United States' southern border and
took action to remedy the situation.

Governor Zespedes was replaced by Juan Nepomecenó de Quesada in 1790.
James Seagrove, Commissioner to the Creeks, had a home in St. Marys area.
Seagrove was about to take an expedition among the Creek but Jefferson considered
the problem of runaway slaves a more pressing issue and redirected him to East Florida
to present the new governor with an official request to discuss the problem of returning
runaways hiding in Spanish territory. During Seagrove's meeting with the governor
they discussed runaway slaves at great length. Eventually the governor accepted the
position that the runaways would be returned to their masters in the United States but
Seagrove had to accept the governor's position that the new propositions did not apply
to runaways that had reached East Florida between the date of the original order, or the
date of the official promulgation of the order in St. Augustine. Essentially the order
could not be extended backwards. Through the agreement, however, Seagrove was
required to obtain the services of an English speaking Spanish subject who lived in or
near St. Augustine to act as agent for the Americans who claimed to be the owners of
the blacks apprehended by the government. The governor's letter regarding the
agreement reached Cuba and he was thereafter officially ordered to begin
apprehending and returning fugitive slaves.

Runaways from Georgia were identified in the combined efforts of the Spanish
government and citizens from the United States to recapture and return fugitive slaves

13 Ibid., pp. 103-105.
from East Florida to owners. In May of 1789, Peter Henry Morel posted an advertisement for three runaways. He described “Patty” as being “about 19 years old” who also “carried her child ABRAM with her, about 9 months old.” Patty was accompanied by “Daniel, a young lad, about 15 years old.” Morel stated that “the said negroes were enticed away from Bewlie by a negro fellow named Titus,” who belonged to John Morel, Esq,” brother of the subscriber, and supposed that they had gone towards either Florida or Kilkenny.14 John Morel had posted an ad for a runaway named Titus in 1785 who was “about the age of 16”when he fled.15 Brian Morel, brother of John and Peter Morel, traveled to Florida and found that the slaves had indeed fled there and applied for sanctuary. Moreover, Titus had fled with a larger group that included five other men, three women, and three children. When Morel protested, the slaves’ request for sanctuary was revoked.16 ‘That Spanish Jordan’ had officially closed. Florida would no longer grant religious sanctuary to runaways and any subsequent fugitives would be returned to their masters. Runaways would have to adapt to that dramatic shift going forward.17

The world of black sailors changed as well. As many were drawn into Atlantic trade routes, they developed a closer association with the black Atlantic community. They became what historian Jeffrey Bolster called “roving ambassadors.” Thousands of black seamen voyaged to the Caribbean and by the turn of the century they no longer

15 Ibid., p. 130.
17 Ibid., p. 39.
identified with the black community ashore.\textsuperscript{18} The distinction between black sailors and
the black population of the lowcountry was also enhanced by the growth of the cotton
culture that drew large numbers of enslaved peoples further inland and imposed
significant changes in the institution of slavery.

For the majority of slaves who were engaged in agrarian work, the culture of
labor, subsistence, and exchange changed with the introduction of short-staple cotton.
Marked change began in the 1780s. The imposition of cotton production left far less
time for slaves to provide their own subsistence; even the free time they were granted
on the Sabbath was restricted. Slaveholders emphasized slaves' rigor and physical
strength over their skills or diversity of talents. Slaves were no longer valued for their
ability to work unsupervised. Instead many endured demands under constant
supervision of captains who set the pace for everyone.\textsuperscript{19} The expansion of cotton
culture moved slaves further inland away from urban areas and maritime areas. It
reduced their experiences of hiring that provided many with the knowledge of urban
environments.

Population growth was fueled by the influx of Africans. The United States rapidly
increased their share of trade with Africa from two percent in the 1780s to nine percent
in the 1790s.\textsuperscript{20} The results, however, were skewed. While slavery contracted in the

\textsuperscript{18} Jeffrey Bolster, \textit{Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail} (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard

\textsuperscript{19} Joseph P. Reidy, “Obligation and Right: Patterns of Labor, Subsistence, and Exchange in the Cotton
Belt of Georgia, 1790-1860” in \textit{Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the

\textsuperscript{20} Don E. Fehrenbacher, \textit{The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's
Relations to Slavery} (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 141.
North and Upper South, the black population of Georgia more than doubled over the same time frame; it was the largest such increase of any of the original states.\textsuperscript{21}

Although the years after the American Revolution brought not liberty but new obstacles for the enslaved, the runaways who practiced religious freedom in the lowcountry became pioneers of black evangelicalism throughout the Atlantic world. Historian Alex Byrd compared the transatlantic influence of Savannah, Charleston, and New York during the post-Revolutionary to that of Old Calabar, Kalabari, and Bonny in the slave trade.\textsuperscript{22} Before George Liele evacuated with the British he baptized Andrew Bryan and ordained him. Bryan led large congregations of slaves in worship on the Brampton plantation of the late Jonathan Bryan as late as 1788. The gatherings grew so large that the Grand Jury tried to stop the meetings. Andrew Bryan purchased his freedom in 1789. William Bryan, son of the late Jonathan Bryan, helped Andrew purchase a lot on Mill Street in Savannah and there Andrew founded the First African Baptist Church. The lessons of freedom were best shown outside the lowcountry and in the broader Atlantic world. George Liele migrated to Kingston, Jamaica, where he continued his ministry and became a leading Baptist missionary. David George sailed for Nova Scotia where he and his converts founded Birchwood, the largest settlement of black loyalists in 1783. The freedmen built a church. Due to hardships, however, they


embarked on another pioneering quest to Sierra Leone in 1787, where they eventually founded Granville Town.\textsuperscript{23}

In the Caribbean, Nova Scotia, and West Africa the lessons of resistance and autonomy came to fruition. Freedmen and freedwomen of the lowcountry were still informed by the drive to preserve family.

The closing of the transatlantic slave trade in 1808 ended the influx of Africans. Through the efforts of Thomas Jefferson, the Spanish ended their policy of granting runaway slaves religious sanctuary. Westward expansion altered relations with Native Americans as they were forced to accept the spread of the United States and its commitment to runaway slaves. The rise of cash crops, in particular cotton, placed new demands on the slave community, labor, time, and skills. As the planter class increased their power over the state, they constructed a proslavery wall that increased the role of the legal system, judicial system, and non-slaveholders in constricting runaways.

From the colonial era to the founding of Republic, the act of running away was always a complex act that impacted society far beyond the plantations. Runaway slaves did more than deprive their master of their labor. They shaped the labor pool as they met the needs of a fledgling colony. They impacted the market as they supplied goods to ready consumers. They helped to shape the direction of evangelical religion and were the cause of mass military mobilizations over several generations. The group collectively called runaways may have started as fugitives, but as sailors, preachers, hucksters and homesteaders, they became much more to the broader Atlantic world.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Anthony Moffett earned his associates degree from Jones Country Junior College in 1994. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Southern Mississippi in 1997. In 1998 he earned his Master of Arts from Southern Mississippi in 2000. In the same year, he joined the doctoral program at the University of Florida.

Anthony Moffett has received numerous honors and awards including a graduate minority fellowship and an assistantship from University of Florida/Santa Fe Faculty Development Project.

Prior to pursuing his doctoral degree, Anthony Moffett taught high school, and taught at Santa Fe College while attending graduate school at the University of Florida. Additionally, Anthony Moffett has participated in Studies Abroad Programs to both Cuba and Jamaica.

Anthony Moffett’s dissertation, Runaway Slaves and the Making of Georgia, was supervised by Dr. Jon Sensbach.