SILENT DEFIANCE:
PRACTICING IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE IN THE YARDS OF THE ENSLAVED

By

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In memory of Lakeshia Thompson
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As I labored over this thesis, I was subject to the same frustrations and roadblocks that I imagine everyone experiences while moving through this process. In the best of those moments, I remembered that this space of exploration, deliberation, and intense pressure is itself a privilege, an opportunity not afforded to everyone. Nevertheless, that struggle is real, and I owe thanks to so many people who have supported me along the way.

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This thesis analyzes and interprets archaeological research conducted to 
investigate yard usage around a slave cabin located at the Kingsley Plantation on Fort 
George Island, off the coast of Jacksonville, Florida, which was occupied between 1814 
and 1839. It uses artifact distribution-based analysis of material culture that was 
recovered from excavation units placed in the yard surrounding Cabin West 15. By 
documenting artifact locations and concentrations around the cabin, it considers the 
way that cultural practice was influenced by the public nature of yard spaces, 
particularly from a discursive point of view informed by resistance. This study also 
considers the ways that practices associated with the material culture recovered from 
the West 15 yard may reflect vulnerabilities and responses by the enslaved women who 
were residents of the cabin. Finally, it explores resistance that takes the perhaps 
underappreciated form not of pushing back, but of finding rest and recovery from the 
totalizing oppressions and constant vulnerabilities inherent to being enslaved.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

African diaspora archaeology has, in the past twenty years, begun to explore an expanded realm of enslaved occupation on plantation sites in order to broaden our perspective on the uses and dynamics of plantation space. Though cabins and their associated features continue to offer a lens through which to view the private and domestic lives of enslaved people, archaeologists have recently taken a broader view, considering slave cabins and their yards as part of the larger plantation landscape. This new direction complicates our view of spirituality and identity, integrating the potential for discourses of resistance. It also pivots from seeing cabin exteriors as simply areas where significant features might be found, integrating the notion that these personal-but-public spaces can tell us something about the way that enslaved residents ordered their own worlds, whether in the presence or absence of discernible features (Heath and Bennett 2000, Battle 2004, Boroughs 2013, Barton 2014).

This thesis examines the yard of a single slave cabin to understand the use of space, particularly with respect to African identity and spirituality, and resistance against the slaveholder and conditions of enslavement. The site from which this information derives is Kingsley Plantation, a roughly 1,000-acre historic site located on Fort George Island, a barrier island in Jacksonville, Florida. The northern portion of the island, some 58 acres, is owned and managed by the National Park Service, and this acreage includes the bulk of the plantation’s infrastructure. Among the structures in the plantation compound are the ruins of 32 slave cabins constructed of tabby (a lime-based concrete composed of shells, lime, and water) situated in a semi-circular arc.
This study pertains specifically to the yard surrounding a cabin near the western end of that arc, known as Cabin West 15.

Operated between 1814 and 1839, Kingsley Plantation was home to dozens of enslaved Africans. As individuals born and raised in various communities likely located in West or Central Africa, or the children of Africans, they brought a diverse and dynamic range of spiritual beliefs, traditions, and practices into their new and difficult conditions (Schafer 2013:111-113). Their experiences on Fort George Island, including interactions with one another, likely led to development of new ideas and practices that blended with the old. Archaeology reveals an intriguing assemblage of mundane objects including beads, iron tools, and faunal bones believed to have been employed in the service of spiritual practice; applications of spiritual meaning to these everyday items may also reflect resistance to a new, harsh reality (Davidson 2007:14-15, 21-25).

**Research Questions and Goals**

Yards make for a complex site of study; they combine personal domestic space with exposure to the public eye. Activities that take place in the yard can potentially be witnessed by one’s neighbors—other members of the enslaved community, as well as the slaveholder. Thus, they are sites not only for cultural production and day-to-day activity, but also spaces in which any and all of the goings-on might hold additional meaning—including resistance, covert communication of ideas to one’s neighbors, and assertion of self (Heath and Bennett 2000:38, Battle-Baptiste 2010:92).

This thesis examines the material culture retrieved archaeologically from the yard surrounding Cabin West 15 to answer questions associated with resistance and identity, with special consideration of domestic spaces as domains primarily associated with women. I explore the ways that spatial organization reflects cabin occupants’ concern
with resisting surveillance by the slaveholder’s family. I also consider some artifacts of potential spiritual significance, including a sherd with an “X” etched into its reverse side, a chandelier prism, several beads, and a buried iron hatchet, to assess whether each had a religious purpose, and what those purposes may have been.

Finally, I determine whether artifact distributions suggest that sweeping took place in the Cabin West 15 yard. Yard sweeping offers potential insight, because it can be interpreted through a lens of continued and adapted spirituality. Heath and Bennett (2000:43) note that sweeping continues to be a spiritually potent practice in Africa and the African diaspora, and specify its historical importance to Bakongo people, who swept yards as part of a spiritual practice to navigate “a landscape populated by day with the ghosts of witches and others who have not been accepted into the villages of the dead, and by night with the ancestors.” Elsewhere, the widespread practice of yard sweeping among West and Central African cultures was documented historically (e.g. Clapperton and Lander 1829:142). Sweeping also may act in a multivalent way the plantation landscape, serving practical purposes and offering spiritual protection while also “…reflect[ing] messages sent by the African Americans to the plantation’s white occupants. Yard spaces placed limits on the intrusions of outsiders into the quarter…they signaled a point of mediation across which black and white could meet, often through economic exchange, to define and maintain the delicate balance which was the plantation system” (Heath and Bennett 2000:51). In other words, by creating a clean-swept space around the cabin, enslaved people established a visible boundary between the planter’s domain and their own. Sweeping thus can be seen as intrinsically associated with spiritual identity and resistance; moreover, it should be considered
through a feminist lens. Battle-Baptiste (2010:89-90) emphasizes that sweeping was often carried out by women and children, "creat[ing] spaces for black cultural production to survive."

**Synopsis of Chapters**

Chapter 2 provides a historical context for this study, broadly exploring the history of slavery as a lived experience, the historical record for Fort George Island, and the history of African diaspora archaeology as a discipline. In addition to historical context, it also provides a brief environmental overview.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical foundations that guide this work. It establishes a perspective grounded in yards as part of a landscape, but moreover, as part of plantation landscapes that are sites of distinct and explicit power that impose a Foucauldian discipline through spatial organization. It also explores yards as sites of resistance to that power and discipline—especially resistances carried out by women.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods used for excavating and processing artifacts, as well as those used to carry out quantitative analyses to determine activity areas and glean whether yard sweeping was taking place.

Chapter 5 interprets and discusses the results of excavation and analysis. Activity areas determined by examining the spatial distributions for specific classes of artifacts are explored in the context of designating space in a purposeful way; interpretation specifically considers selection of spaces that would allow the cabin’s occupants to eschew surveillance. A few specific artifacts, such as a sherd with an “X” inscribed in its obverse face and a chandelier crystal are considered in terms of the magico-religious significance they may have held. Finally, this section explores the evidence for an interpretation of limited yard sweeping, determined by an analysis of
artifact distributions of glass and ceramic fragments. This discovery allows for some deliberation regarding the potential religious significance of sweeping, and its role in delineating the extent of domestic space around the cabin, creating a visual barrier for the cabin’s non-residents.

Chapter 6 concludes the study, considering the implications of each of these areas of investigation of enslaved life on Kingsley Plantation in terms of religious and community practice, identity, and resistance of enslavement. It also discusses possible directions for future research.
A Brief History of Slavery as a Lived Experience

As this investigation revolves around archaeology of a plantation-era occupation of Fort George Island, deliberation must be framed within the context of chattel slavery; this was, after all, the institution that governed the lives of the individuals who occupied the 32 tabby slave cabins at Kingsley Plantation. As such, a brief explication of the character of North American slavery is necessary; though much of this may be common knowledge, it nevertheless constitutes the essential backdrop against which these people carried out their daily lives. Moreover, as the institution of slavery existed in one iteration in Spanish Florida and adapted to a more rigid framework when Florida became an American territory and state, we must explore the similarities and variations between the ways that slavery was practiced in the two separate polities. Finally, an examination of the character of slavery under Zephaniah Kingsley provides an understanding of some of the specific conditions that these individuals experienced.

Zephaniah Kingsley was a marine merchant and slave trader whose unorthodox manner has made him a larger-than-life figure in Florida’s history (Schafer 2013:17). His openness to, even affinity for, African culture likely influenced his approach to slavery, which could be characterized in part by a disinterest in “enculturating” or otherwise Anglicizing enslaved Africans (Kingsley 1970:14-15).

Though the purposes of this work preclude a full accounting of European and Euroamerican institutions of slavery—and as many exhaustive works on the topic have yet to fully account for the phenomenon—we do require a brief outline of features that characterized it. First, slavery differs from other forms of control of individuals in that it
Productivity was coerced overtly and reinforced by structural subterfuge, rather than relying solely on “discipline” fashioned from spatial, temporal, and legal nuance (Foucault 1977). As such, many or all of the components of life that we may take for granted as being malleable or negotiable—location of residence; with whom one lives; what labor one performs, when, and for how long; whether, how often, and with whom one has children; even in many cases what religion one may subscribe to—these things that shape and govern an individual's life were dictated through a series of financial transactions in which enslaved human beings were nothing more than a commodity (hooks 1982, Rivers 2000, Camp 2004, Jennison 2012, Johnson 2013).

Moreover, these transactions involved forced relocation. In the simplest sense, the buying and selling of slaves may have merely resulted in movement from one plantation to another one nearby. However, even these minor moves inherently followed prior, much more dramatic compulsory relocation. An enslaved African or individual of African descent could only be moved from one plantation to another because, before the day of that sale, they (or their ancestors) were first stolen away from their home and family in (typically West or Central) Africa. A brutal journey in a slave ship designed to maximize the capacity for (human) cargo followed; these voyages, which transported enslaved Africans to North America from 1501 to 1808, claimed approximately 1.8 million lives (Singleton and Bograd 1995:5, Martinez 2011:40, Rediker 2007:5). After the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was officially halted in 1807 in the British Empire and the United States, relocation was more often typified by slave trafficking from states in the Upper South to those in the Lower South, where agricultural production, and in
particular the cultivation of cotton, were much more labor intensive. Like the Middle Passage, this iteration of slave transport was physically perilous and permanently severed familial bonds between those forced to walk hundreds of miles toward the unknown and the loved ones forced to stay behind (e.g.s Ball 1859:11-12, 28-29; Yetman 2000:19, 26, 133, 135, 237).

Control of bodies did not end with financial transaction, however. Because in buying and claiming ownership of human beings, slaveholders “appropriated” others’ bodies, Foucault excludes slavery from his deliberation on discipline; however, this distinction fails to account for the reality that those bodies were driven by minds, influenced by culture, conditions, and free will (if not freedom of corpus, freedom of mind). Thus, control of enslaved persons on the plantation needed to be systemic and structural, mastering minds as well as bodies to maximize profit. As Walter Johnson (2013:153) aptly described control of the enslaved on delta cotton plantations, “Plant was to be shaped to hand, and hand to plant; natural complexity was simplified into a single strain; human capacity was rendered increasingly productive, even as it was reduced to the capillary repetition of a single motion.” The totalizing control that could transform individuals’ bodies into machines for productivity was achieved through explicit and implicit physical threats.

Explicit threats included violence, which could be disturbingly creative. Evidence for various types of normalized and exceptional violence can be found across the thousands of ex-slave narratives compiled by the Works Progress Administration between 1936 and 1938. It should be noted that these narratives are deeply problematic in some respects: white interviewers often displayed bias in their writing, made more
evident by compiling research in note form, then “reconstituting” a version of the stories that they were told. Those iterations often reflected condescension and judgment; where this is visible, the reader must consider that bias was not limited to those attitudes, but may have significantly influenced the content of their accounts, or what their interviewees were comfortable sharing with them (Yetman 1970:363). A second problem concerns the time frame in which these accounts were documented; by 1936, any survivors of American slavery were advanced in age, and slavery was a distant (and childhood) memory (Yetman 1984:181-182).

From a selection of 115 WPA narratives (including all of those published in a single tome edited by Norman Yetman), the two most prevalent forms of violence are whipping and sexual violence against women. Whipping was a ubiquitous practice, used as a corrective and preventative measure. It constituted a mainstay on plantations to such a great degree that, it would appear from these accounts, even variations intended to intensify the victim’s pain became rote. Many former slaves, for example, recalled salt and pepper being applied to lash wounds after whipping (Yetman 1970). Though some former slaves recall that their owners did not prefer to whip, very few of the 115 accounts considered herein claimed that whipping did not occur at all on the plantations on which they lived. Those slaveholders who abhorred whipping mitigated the violence by carrying it out themselves to control the physical harm, or alternatively by bestowing the “mercy” of selling an individual to another slaveholder, which often had the consequence of separating that slave from his or her family (Johnson 2013:14). Among the various types of plantation violence, whipping stands out as the most pervasive from
one plantation to the next and, indeed, across the plantation South (Genovese 1974:64-67; Berlin 1998: 115, 150; Rivers 2000:140; Camp 2004:24-25).

These physical consequences on the bodies of the enslaved were typical—not exceptions, but the rule. Whether by rote use of the lash or horrifyingly creative torture, violence was the norm—and was used to keep others in line as well. Johnson (2013:171) suggests the direct use of violence against one enslaved individual also served to discipline others indirectly, “attempting to control their slaves through the spectacle of violence—by conscripting their eyes into witness.” He suggests that this agony was difficult to escape, even if out of sight: “slaves’ senses turned against them, their hearing tortured with the sounds of others’ suffering: lamentations, pleas for mercy, shrieks, groans” (Johnson 2013:173). These claims are corroborated by some of the WPA ex-slave narratives. A woman named Esther Easter recounted, “A runaway slave from the Henkin’s plantation was brought back, and there was a public whipping, so’s the slaves could see what happens when they tries to get away. The runaway was chained to the whipping post, and I was full of misery when I see the lash cutting deep into that boy's skin” (Yetman 2000:107). By creating a spectacle of physical violence, many individuals could be controlled via brutality against one.

The type of plantation violence that appears second most frequently in Yetman’s (2000) selection of WPA narratives constitutes a distinctly gendered threat. Despite its prevalence, sexual violence against women sometimes takes on an obscured expression in ex-slave narratives. This may have resulted from individuals feeling uncomfortable relaying these events to the white stranger conducting the interview, or
general reticence regarding this category of trauma (Thomas 1995:150). Descriptions range from vague allusion (or total silence) to pointed discussion.

Sexual violence perpetrated against enslaved women sometimes resulted from a power dynamic that simply allowed white males to take ownership of enslaved bodies as they pleased. bell hooks (1982:24) argues that, in fact, the institution of slavery “legitimized sexual exploitation of black females. The female slave lived in constant awareness of her sexual vulnerability and in perpetual fear that any male, white or black, might single her out to assault and victimize.” However, rape of enslaved women in some cases comprised part of an economic strategy, increasing or sustaining the labor force with no additional expense. The offspring produced through such violence often, “went unacknowledged or were sold away” to maintain appearances of marital fidelity and propriety (Johnson 2013:197). In other cases, planters attempted to play matchmaker for their slaves; by some accounts, women were even “assigned” to enslaved men, forced into “marriage” for the purpose of procreating. One woman named Sylvia King recounted,

After while, Marse Jones say to me, 'Silvia, am you married?' I tells him I got a man and three chillen back in de old country, but he don't understand my talk and I has a man give to me. I don't bother with dat nigger's name much, he just Bob to me. But I fit him good and plenty till de overseer shakes a blacksnake whip over me. (Yetman 1970:199)

Control of women’s reproductive bodies was sometimes achieved by coercion of enslaved men as well.

This normalized sexual violence was compounded by systematizing exploitation of specific women repeatedly over the course of many years, so the slaveholder could increase personal profit through sale of resulting offspring. Women who successfully
bore many children were prized as “breeders.” They often were sold at a higher price than other individuals garnered, or had to watch helplessly as the children they bore were sold away from them. Fannie Moore’s ex-slave narrative offers a chilling account of this phenomenon:

De 'breed woman' always bring more money den de rest, even de men. When dey put her on de block dey put all her chillen around her to show folks how fast she can have chillen. When she sold, her family never see her again. She never know how many chillen she have. Sometime she have colored chillen and sometimes white. 'Tain't no use to say anything, 'cause if she do she just get whipped. (Yetman 1970:228)

Sexual victimization of women thus could involve white men or enslaved black men, and produced emotional anguish and suffering to mothers and the children from whom they were forcefully separated.

Though many people therefore suffered because of a single woman’s sexual victimization, the consequences of pregnancy were the burden of those women alone. Compounded by typical violence, environmental threats, and illness, pregnant women continued to carry on strenuous work. Freedwomen reported that owners had a strategy for beating pregnant women without threatening fetal survival (Yetman 1970), and on particularly harsh plantations, work barely stopped for labor: "Master Ab had hundreds acres wheat and made the woman stack hay in the field. Sometimes they got sick and wanted to go to the house, but he made them lay down on a straw pile in de field. Lots of chillen was borned on a straw pile in the field. After the chile was borned he sent them to the house" (Yetman 1970:288). As troublingly, pregnancies plagued by the strain of daily living and rampant malnutrition often resulted in miscarriage and high infant mortality. This has been documented by various historians, both in a general sense (Genovese 1974:497) and with respect to particular regions, including the
Mississippi Valley (Johnson 2013:192-193), the Chesapeake (Berlin 1998:111), and in the slaveholding North (Berlin 1998:186). The march toward profit was relentless, and enslaved mothers and children bore the consequences of the bodily control exerted in the interest of reproducing the labor force.

A less explicit form of control, the determination and manipulation of food rations nevertheless exerted great influence over the lives of enslaved individuals. Slaveholders often centered a profit motive as they calculated how much food they needed to provide to keep the enslaved population alive (so long as they supplemented their rations on their own). Johnson (2013:179) notes that more robust rations were often provided at the holidays, fostering a sense of the planter’s benevolence among the enslaved population. Moreover, this iteration of control often hinged on profit margins: “In good times, the slaves might fare better and get a little meat; in bad times, they might starve” (Johnson 2013:178). Both withholding and providing abundantly could serve as forms of control, and certainly the practice of mitigating financial hardship by altering rations of enslaved workers could both mitigate a planter’s economic woes and foster a desperation in the enslaved population to force a rebound.

Other discipline tactics were in place across plantations as well. Some viewed themselves as benevolent masters; rather than inflict physical punishment through violence or starvation, they simply sold any slave whom they found to be persistently problematic. Freedwoman Sarah Debro recounted, “Marse Cain was good to his niggers. He didn’t whip dem like some owners did, but if dey done mean he sold ‘em. Dey knew dis, so dey minded him” (Yetman 1970:98). Unfortunately, this “kinder,
“gentler” way ultimately resulted in the dismantling of families and communities, dividing siblings, spouses, and parents and children.

In addition to overt physical consequences enacted on enslaved bodies, plantation landscapes were carefully designed to exert a sort of passive control over enslaved individuals. The plantation landscape often maximized the potential for surveillance, placing slave quarters and activity areas within a line of sight from locations typically occupied by planters or overseers (Brock 2014:19). Visual management of bodies thus could act as a disciplinary force. Unless they were inside their cabins, enslaved people were often likely to occupy space that a slaveholder or his proxy could view.

Another critical feature of North American slavery is that it was designed and executed for the primary purpose of maximizing profit for the slaveholders. A debate persists among historians as to whether the institution of slavery constitutes an early iteration of capitalism or the death throes of pre-capitalistic paternalism (Genovese and Fox-Genovese 2008:5, Gaido 2000:62, Johnson 2004:307-308). Without attempting to resolve that dispute in these pages, we can acknowledge that free labor—or labor you pay for only once, provides a model by which planters can compel high levels of production with low overhead.

In addition to providing a minimum of food rations to keep the enslaved population alive (promoting both undernutrition and chronic malnutrition), various sources reflect the frequency with which enslaved individuals endured a dearth of clothing including shoes, even during the winter; lived in housing insufficient to protect them from the elements; and were subject to relocation, division, and sale as it suited

no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees...I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

First and foremost, inherent in the economic model of slavery itself, was the focus on profit. Plantation owners may have inferred diminishing return on supplying generous food rations or ample clothing, so they considered these essentials frivolous. Moreover, given that these material necessities could double as agents of control, there was in fact gain to be had from keeping the enslaved population on the brink of unbearable conditions.

Given the abhorrence of this state of existence—in addition to the odious facts of human bondage, the horrors exerted upon the bodies and minds of enslaved individuals—it should come as no surprise that expressions of resistance were varied and rampant. Defined as actions “intended to mitigate or deny claims made by superordinate classes or to advance claims vis-à-vis those superordinate classes,” resistance is also characterized by “its implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals” (Scott 1985:32-33). Resistance took many forms, and could be multivalent. It could be used to influence one’s conditions, for instance work slowdowns intended to protest ill treatment by a slaveholder or overseer or to protest the fact of enslavement itself. In other cases, it simply allowed for an outlet—much-needed relief from oppressive
conditions, when one could take it no more (Camp 2004:2). These resistances could take the form of petit or grand maronnage, in which an enslaved individual ran away for a limited time, or in a permanent escape from bondage. It could also take forms such as theft of food stores, to alleviate a state of constant near-starvation. In some cases, women used home-remedy birth control, induced miscarriage, or committed infanticide, rather than bring a child into a world of enslavement (Perrin 2001:259-264). It is worth noting that every form of resistance is shaped by what Bourdieu (1990:53-54) called habitus, or “systems of durable, transposable dispositions...a product of history [that] produces individual and collective practices, [and which] guarantee[s] the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.” Those components of life that were normal or resistance to the norm, in other words, were always already shaped by the conditions and common understandings in place, reinforced by the power of white society over black bodies, and white planters over enslaved individuals. The starving stole food. Those abused took refuge in the woods, or in some cases struck back in violence. They were relational to the conditions of enslavement, and ultimately those individual actions could do little to destabilize the institution itself.

However, a dramatic iteration of resistance did destabilize the institution, leading to reforms and deliberation on laws and rules to impose a new stability. The Haitian Revolution of 1795 saw enslaved individuals overthrow slaveholders and the government, taking control of the island. After that time, slaveholders in the continental US became anxious about “the possibility that the Haitian contagion could ‘infect’ native slaves and incite them to bloodshed” (Jennison 2012:69), and sought to further restrict
the movement and education of enslaved individuals to quash any potential to execute a mass revolt that would undermine an economy based wholly on slave labor.

Though generally applicable across the board, practices of slavery varied somewhat for a few key reasons. The first of these is regional variation. Slave states and territories varied broadly in terms of environment and transportation infrastructure; these differences made some regions more apt for production of cotton, others sugar, others rice, and so on. With environmental variability and concomitant differences in preferred crop production, different practices emerged around treatment and labor structure imposed on the enslaved (Berlin 1998:5-7, Rivers 2000:xii). For instance, production of upland cotton around the Mississippi River often relied on the gang system of labor, which required enslaved persons to labor from the time the slaveholder or overseer determined that the workday began—often before daybreak—to the time the same individual decided the workday ended, often as darkness fell (Jennison 2012:30). Rice production along the southeast coast, on the other hand, relied on technology held by enslaved workers; command of this knowledge set afforded them some leverage, by which many could campaign for, and ultimately win, permission to work under the task system. Jennison (2012:30) aptly describes the character and benefits of the task system:

> Under the task system, by contrast, slaves had to perform a set amount of labor each day. The quantity of work that constituted a completed task changed depending on the type of labor. After they finished their task, slaves could use their remaining time to pursue other activities. For most slaves, that meant supplementing their families’ diets through gardening, hunting, or fishing. What their families did not consume from these activities, they sold for a profit, enabling some slaves to accumulate modest amounts of cash and property…
Two points of information are particularly relevant to this discussion. First, it is worth noting that, beyond crops produced, regional variation itself seems to have been significant to the prevalence of the task system (Jennison 2012:228). Rivers (2000:21,68-69) notes that plantations located on coastal Florida—East and West—typically preferred the task system, as opposed to the gang system often used in central Florida. Second, it is important to distinguish between time unallocated to assigned duties and the erroneous notion of “free” time. Completing one’s tasks for the day did not render the enslaved individual “free” until the next morning. Rather, it simply meant that the individual could occupy themselves as they chose, *within a range of possibilities*, while remaining within designated components of the landscape on the plantation where they lived. After completing their assigned activities for the day, enslaved persons may occupy their time with mundane activities (assisting relatives in completing their day’s work, for instance). Importantly, slave narratives also reflect that much of that “free” time was spent tending to the basic needs that were not adequately provided for by slaveholders, for whom the primary concern was maximizing profit (Rawick 1972:2; Yetman 2000:263, 299).

Common life- and health-preserving activities included repair of clothing, tending to the sick, and supplementing rations by hunting, fishing, or tending gardens (Schafer 2003:47). In some cases, that “free” time itself could be deemed a misnomer, even as the phrase is entertained here. Often, women on plantations were tasked not only with cooking and tending to their children in the evenings, but also with completing sewing, mending, or knitting tasks for their mistresses. To be sure, their male counterparts often
worked into the evenings too, as they were often responsible for the maintenance and repair of tools used for plantation production (Camp 2004:81).

Many of these “free time” activities benefited the slaveholder and his family, either explicitly (domestic crafts for mistresses, tool mending) or implicitly (supplementing food rations). However, Berlin (1998:153) discusses another important benefit of the task system, particularly for planters whose primary residence was far from the plantation: “Under the task system, a slave’s daily routine was sharply defined: so many rows of rice to be sowed, so much grain to be threshed, or so many lines of canal to be cleared…[planters] conceded control over worktime in return for a generally accepted unit of output, especially when it could be measured from afar.” The task constituted a measure of mercy to the enslaved, and a convenience to the slaveholder.

Though these caveats give one pause when we consider the nature of the time individuals under the task system found after completing their assigned work for the day, it can certainly be argued that the task system would be preferable to the gang system. Like their counterparts, those slaves laboring under the gang system were occupied with the same activities after the day’s work was done. In some cases, the need to generate enough food caused individuals laboring under the gang system to choose between starvation or exhaustion, as they spent precious nighttime hours trying to supplement their food rations, rather than getting adequate sleep (Johnson 2013:173).

In addition to regional variation, and those factors related to it, conditions of enslavement varied by polity. In the United States, approaches to governing slaves—including the details like work they were allowed to do and consequences for a white
person who killed another’s slave, varied from state to state. In his book *Cultivating Race*, for instance, Jennison (2012:235) writes extensively about the generation of laws in Georgia that emerged as a response to economic competition between white skilled laborers and enslaved workers with the same skills. The generation of this avenue of legal code began in Savannah, eventually expanding across the state and being augmented with additional laws that ultimately restricted ways that enslaved persons could work and behave within the state.

More pertinent to this study, it is worth noting that the character of slavery under Spanish rule differed from other iterations of European slavery, and so operated within a slave society that did not mirror American slave society (Rivers 2000:2-4). Rather during the Second Spanish Period (1763-1821), Florida maintained a three-tier society, comprised of free whites at the top, free blacks who converted to Catholicism and (the men of which) pledged military service to the Crown, and enslaved Africans and Afro-Spanish persons (Deagan and Landers 1999:265-266). This iteration of slave society not only behaved differently as a whole than the free white-enslaved black binary that was the general rule in the US, but also produced tension with those states that bordered the Spanish territory.

Slavery also varied over time; in particular, two major phenomena impacted approaches to slavery. First, attitudes among whites regarding the potential threat inherent in their slaves became more hostile and suspicious following the Haitian Revolution of 1795. These concerns were well-founded, as the revolution did inspire a number of insurrections, including a foiled plot to take Richmond orchestrated by an enslaved blacksmith named Gabriel; and the insurrection, also thwarted, designed by
Denmark Vesey (Pearson 1999:93-103). Second, as the institution of slavery persisted and expanded in the 19th century, some called for reform in the practices that governed the slave economy, including (for some) “overly” harsh conditions of enslavement and the practice of monocropping, which left plantations across the South dependent on food imports from the North (Johnson 2013:192, 181). For Floridians, the institution changed further after it became an American territory in 1821, and became even more stringent after the Nat Turner rebellion and the start of the Second Seminole War in 1835. In response to perceived or real threats, white society restricted property rights and other considerations previously enjoyed by both free and enslaved black Floridians. Stringent American laws and slave codes became the norm, pushing out Spanish custom (Schafer 2013:206-209).

Finally, and least predictably, conditions of slavery varied from one plantation to the next, one slaveholder to the next. In ex-slave narratives, stories abound of particularly cruel masters, as well as those who treated their human chattel with more compassion and generosity (though, it should be noted, there were obvious limits to these traits). In some cases, rations were sufficient or nearly so, and slaves well-clothed. On the other hand, many lived on the brink of starvation, and were exposed to the elements due to insufficient clothes and housing. Though variation could be expected, social norms existed regarding slave “discipline,” as well as the necessities of life (Berlin 1998:111-113, Rivers 2000:140).

We can speak generally about variations in structures and experiences of slavery in North America, but we are also able to speak specifically to how slavery functioned across Spanish Florida, and more particularly on plantations owned by Zephaniah
Kingsley. In Spanish Florida, the institution of slavery afforded some privileges to enslaved persons unavailable within the United States; they could own property, bring suit in a court of law, and the potential existed for them to earn their freedom (Rivers 2000:66). In East Florida, the task system of labor prevailed over the gang system. While preferable to a gang system, affording the enslaved people of East Florida some degree of agency with regards to time management, this system did not spare slaves long and arduous days; often, one began his or her tasks at 5:30 in the morning and finished around 5:00pm (Rivers 2000:69). Then, after nearly 12 hours of farm labor of varying degrees of intensity, and in the sometimes-harsh climate of East Florida, the enslaved turned to work for their own benefit—fishing and hunting to allay under-nutrition, preparing meals, mending clothing or tools, laboring in pursuit of personal profit, and other activities.

These commonplace events were essential to survival and self-preservation, but even as individuals carried out their own tasks, that work occurred within the context of a community. At Kingsley Plantation, that community was most likely comprised of people from disparate cultures and language groups. In his review of the losses Kingsley claimed because of the Patriot War in 1812, Davidson (2007:22) determined that 19 adults were named and identified by region or language, and of those:

> the majority of identified cultures or language groups from 1812 come from a somewhat restricted space within West Africa. Specifically, 61.9%...were from the Bight of Biafra...while a minority was from Upper Guinea (15.8%)...or from the East African coast, identified as Zanzibar (15.8%). The Zanzibar slaves were almost certainly not native to that region, but were brought in from the interior of Africa by slave traders.

Although we know that these individuals were not present at Kingsley Plantation, one can infer that Kingsley’s experience as a ship captain, involved in the Atlantic Slave
Trade, likely exposed him to a variety of people and cultures, from which he may have developed a preference (Schafer 2013:17). Historians have documented that such particularity was often accommodated. Berlin (1998:102) notes broad general trends:

Some three-quarters of the slaves transported from west central Africa went to Brazil; two-thirds of slaves shipped from the Bight of Biafra landed in the British Caribbean; half of those leaving Senegambia alighted in the French Caribbean. Such linkages allowed European sea captains, who frequently came armed with requests for specific peoples, to satisfy planter preferences for particular “nations.”

Table 2-1. Cultures and language groups of the enslaved individuals Kingsley claimed as lost assets after the Patriot War. Out of 41 total individuals lost, the listings for 32 individuals are included this cultural information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of Africa</th>
<th>Culture/ Language Group</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bight of Biafra</td>
<td>Calaban/ New Calaban</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Guinea</td>
<td>Rio Pongo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susu</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East African Coast</td>
<td>Zanzibar</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Davidson (2007:24)

Jennison (2012:21) supplements this record with motive, noting that Georgian rice planters preferred slaves derived from Senegambia and Sierra Leone, “because of their familiarity with this crop.” For Kingsley to act on such a preference would in no way have been extraordinary.

In other ways, Kingsley and his philosophy as a slaveholder could only be seen as unusual. Not only was he likely familiar with various African cultures and peoples, he was uninterested in assimilating enslaved persons into Euro-Spanish (later Euroamerican) culture, including religion. In his treatise on slavery, Kingsley suggests that conversion to Christianity breeds unrest and discontent among the enslaved
population, and proposes that abstention from what we recognize as cultural hegemony produces the best outcomes, in regard to stability among the enslaved residents of a plantation (Kingsley 1970:14-15).

Beyond his hands-off approach to Anglicizing and converting the enslaved, Kingsley may have been inclined toward some elements of African cultures. Indeed, two of his three wives were themselves African—Anna Madgigine Jai derived from Senegambia, and Sarah Murphy from an unknown area of Africa (Schafer 2003:4; Schafer 2013:206). His third wife, Flora Hanahan, was the daughter of two of Kingsley’s slaves (Schafer 2013:197). If not a propensity for African cultures themselves, Kingsley appears to at least have been drawn to those influenced by them. His description of his wedding to Anna includes a claim that their marriage was “celebrated and solemnized by her native African custom, altho' never celebrated according to the forms of Christian usage.” While he did not subscribe to a particular religious belief, and so may have lacked a conventional “manner” of his own in which to wed, he certainly would have had the wherewithal to impose a wedding style of his preference, and did not apparently choose to do so, satisfied with Anna’s tradition (in Schafer 2013:96). A final characteristic of Zephaniah Kingsley that would have influenced the experiences of enslaved residents of Kingsley Plantation is the slaveholder’s preference for positive reinforcement over negative. In his writings, Kingsley emphasized choices slaveholders could make that would render their slaves more likely to be satisfied with their condition—or rather, less likely to flee or rebel against it. He suggests that families should be kept together, that slaves should be rewarded for good acts, rather than punished for bad acts, and suggests some privileges that should be afforded them.
Among these, Kingsley (1970:14), “…encouraged as much as possible dancing, merriment, and dress, for which Saturday afternoon and night, and Sunday morning were dedicated…” With these protections of stability and modest creature comforts in place, he claims, slaves will recognize that their lot at home on the plantation is superior to other potential fates—being sold away, or fleeing and facing capture, for instance, and will make them grateful enough not to entertain fantasies of revolt (Kingsley 1970:16). Indeed, there appears to be some evidence that other planters felt he was too lenient with his slaves (Rivers 2000:167). If Johnson’s characterization can be said to hold in this instance, it would indicate that, while some punishing violence likely occurred on the plantation, Kingsley’s use of violence was less frequent and/or less severe than his counterparts in the rest of East Florida.

Given these qualities of the man, it is easy to get lost in his story—and, for that matter, lost in the story of his wife Anna, a Senegambian slave turned Floridian plantation mistress, slaveholder, and landowner. However, Kingsley’s apparent benevolence must be tempered with other realities that complicate our image of the man. For instance, it is worth noting that, though married “in the custom of her people,” Zephaniah wedded Anna on the voyage from Cuba to Florida, after purchasing her. She was 13 years of age, matched with his 41 years, and was pregnant by the time they arrived in Jacksonville (Schafer 2003:24). Though issues of consent certainly did not then appear as they do in modern society, it is worth noting that his proclivity for marrying women whom he owned liberated him from having to pursue even the assent of her father, as was customary in Western cultures. As his property, and confined to a ship, Anna could not well have denied him her hand. The only consent she was “free” to
give was whether to take advantage of the circumstances in which she found herself, or
whether to potentially make herself vulnerable to violent recourse from a man she
barely knew, who now owned her. And while it is true that, in the years that followed,
Kingsley spoke with admiration for his wife and took strategic measures to protect the
financial interests of Anna and their children, their union did not emerge under
circumstances in which both parties could openly and willingly give consent (hooks

Moreover, a certain convenience existed in observing the marital rites of African
wives; in Spanish Florida, Kingsley’s practice of polygyny was exceptional (though not
unique) (Rivers 2000:10). The Catholic Church certainly would not have entertained his
being married to three women at once. He was an exception in a society for which
monogamy was the norm, and his having multiple wives was undoubtedly facilitated by
openness to African cultures, like Anna’s, in which polygyny was a possibility.

Indeed, Kingsley may best be viewed through a lens of expediency. Western
marital practices did not suit him, so he married African women or descendants and
observed African marital rites. Likewise, his concern with family cohesion among slaves
and lenience in terms of physical violence created an atmosphere in which the enslaved
may likely prefer the devil they knew to the one they did not. Further, the three-tier
society for which he advocated reinforced that same principle, encouraging slaves to
work extra and earn money to seek freedom safely, rather than gambling with their lives
with a chance at maronnage (Kingsley 1970:6-7).

Kingsley employed this variety of structures to create a misery just pleasant
enough for his slaves to tolerate, rather than fleeing or fighting back. Perhaps he even
was that benevolent slave owner of legend. But that “benevolent” slave owner nevertheless extracted compulsory labor from human beings whose bodies he claimed to own, manipulating with incentives and the threat of violence or the unknown to exert discipline. He still demanded labor to generate a profit for his own benefit, not passed on to the enslaved, and he still calculated how much rations struck a balance between allaying starvation when supplemented with foods procured by the slaves themselves, and becoming a burden in terms of cost. Though he sought to preserve families as stable structures within his plantation, it is worth noting that those families may themselves not have emerged organically; his restrictions prevented them from traveling to other plantations for recreation and community, and so dramatically reduced the pool of prospective partners (Kingsley 1970:14). On other plantations, women were often assigned husbands for the purposes of procreating and thus enhancing one’s enslaved labor force. If his benevolence was too great for these atrocities, we can at a bare minimum say confidently that those husbands and wives on Fort George Island were thrown together through bondage; their unions were forged as a result of the enslavement that assembled various disparate peoples under duress, in terror, some lacking a common language, and with little to nothing to call their own. Many enslaved couples found love and refuge in one another, but we must remember that the stability they enjoyed together was the product of lifelong personal tragedy.

When we are able to set aside the unique, perhaps singular figures of Zephaniah and Anna Kingsley and consider what we know of their roles as slaveholders, these conditions of enslavement at Kingsley become clearer, and allow us a historical foundation from which to understand the material culture recovered from excavations.
History of Fort George Island

Fort George Island has been a site of human occupation for 4,000 to 5,000 years. In that time, people have occupied the island with varying degrees of intensity. The depth of the island’s human history, particularly under the stewardship afforded parts of the island by State and National Park Services, has inspired extensive historical documentation of the site (see, for instance, Stowell 1996 and Worth 1995). Specifically, with respect to Fort George Island’s tenure as a plantation, the unique and compelling figures cut by Anna and Zephaniah Kingsley have captured the imaginations not only of historians, but of the lay public as well, resulting in a proliferation of historical and fictional works dedicated to their time in North Florida (including biographies penned by Daniel Schafer in 2003 and 2013). The presence of historical documentation and archaeology investigating the island’s human occupation provide a useful foundation for interpreting the plantation landscape of the early 19th century in terms of material culture.

A brief history of Fort George Island contextualizes the archaeology of Kingsley Plantation and illuminates what we can understand from its material culture. For these purposes, a brief timeline of the island’s history of human habitation follows, from prehistory to the present. As this study focuses on the landscape and homes of the enslaved Africans who inhabited Kingsley Plantation during the Kingsley era (1814-1839), the historical framework herein will consider the landscape as it existed when Zephaniah Kingsley and his enslaved population arrived, and the construction that occurred during Kingsley’s tenure on the island, focusing on the arc of cabins that constituted personal and community spaces for the enslaved Africans who lived and worked there in bondage. Given the continued occupation of many of the slave cabins
in the arc constructed during the Kingsley era, we will also consider the occupation of Fort George Island in the decades after Kingsley’s departure, to provide context for later impacts on the site as a place of archaeological investigation.

Though little attention has been paid to the earliest prehistoric activity on Fort George Island, at least some evidence of occupation by indigenous people during the Orange period does exist. Though no archaeological features have been explicitly tied to this period, we have evidence for indigenous presence between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago in the form of Orange Fiber-Tempered pottery. In his excavation of the mission site on Fort George Island (8DU53), William Jones (1985:25) documented the presence of Orange Fiber-Tempered, the earliest type of pottery found in Florida, when he excavated Mission San Juan del Puerto in 1961. Excavations in the areas of the slave cabins at Kingsley Plantation have yielded Orange Fiber-Tempered pottery as well, along with a variety of other types of prehistoric and historic indigenous wares. The simple presence of pottery sherds unfortunately has yielded little in the way of specific understanding of land use by Orange Period occupants of Fort George Island.

Conversely, archaeologists and historians have extensively documented indigenous activity, along with Spanish presence, dating to the Mission period on Fort George Island. Established in 1587, Mission San Juan del Puerto “was one of the longest-surviving of the Florida missions” (Stowell 1996:13). Indeed, its resilience in the face of English attacks and plunder by pirates resulted in an extensive archaeological footprint, which has seen thorough excavation in recent years (Worth 1995:198-199). In the end, however, the frequent onslaught that catalyzed the collapse of the Spanish mission system throughout the southeast claimed San Juan del Puerto, as well; it was
ultimately abandoned in late November 1702 in the face of a siege by Carolina Governor James Moore (Worth 1995:199).

In the decades that followed, the island appears to have experienced sparse habitation at best, and was likely disputed territory between the British and Spanish. Its next intensive occupation occurred in 1732, when, according to George R. Fairbanks (1881:75), “Oglethorpe planted his colony in Georgia, and extended his settlements along the coast towards Florida, claiming and occupying the country up to the margin of the St. Johns, and established a post at St. [sic] George Island.” It was this post, called Fort George, that gives the island its name (Anonymous A 2004:13).

Ultimately, the territorial dispute between the British and Spanish in the region would end peacefully, through the Treaty of Paris, which marked an end to the Seven Years’ War (Stowell 1996:27). The terms of this treaty ceded Florida to Great Britain, which in turn returned Havana and Manila to Spanish control (Gilje 2010:620). In addition to the war’s end, this exchange also resulted in the beginning of Florida’s plantation era (Stowell 1996:27). Many planters took advantage of land grants offered by East Florida’s Governor, James Grant; among these was Richard Hazard, Sr., who would take advantage of slave labor to plant indigo on Fort George Island (Stowell 1996:28). Before the end of Florida’s British Period, Hazard died, leaving his son Richard Hazard, Jr. as his successor on the island (Stowell 1996:28).

At the end of the American Revolution, a second Treaty of Paris returned Florida to the Spanish; the plantation era, however, endured (Gilje 2010a:621). In 1791, Fort George Island was gifted to John McQueen, a reward for his attempt, albeit failed, to best pirate Billy Bowles (Stowell 1996:34). It was during McQueen’s tenure, a time in
which timber was being produced and processed by the enslaved Africans on Fort George Island, that the main house, which still stands, was constructed (Stowell 1996:34, 67-68). Ultimately, though he arrived in Florida to flee his debt incurred in neighboring Georgia, economic struggles on Fort George Island left him desperate; McQueen ultimately returned to Savannah to try and settle his debts (Stowell 1996:34,37).

As a step toward allaying that debt, McQueen sold Fort George Island to John Houston Mcintosh in 1804; under McIntosh, the enslaved on Fort George Island produced sea island cotton for nearly ten years (Stowell 1996:38). Turmoil in East Florida, however, would soon catalyze his exodus from the island, as well as Zephaniah Kingsley’s arrival.

In March of 1812, “instigated and financed covertly by the President of the United States,” a coalition of Georgian and East Floridian planters attempted to wrest the region from Spanish control; they hoped to turn it over to the US in exchange for land grants (Schafer 2003:38-39). According to historian Adam Wasserman (2009:89), various motivations prompted this attack: “Slaveholder interests hoped to expand slavery as an institution into Florida to continue the rapid economic growth of the Cotton Kingdom.” In addition, American slaveholders also sought to allay fears of “slave insurrection perpetrated by free black militias” (Wasserman 2009:89). John Houston
Figure 2-1. Main house at Kingsley Plantation, built in 1798 by John McQueen, with later additions by John Rollins.

Photo credit: James M. Davidson.
McIntosh was among the leaders of the Patriot War; though he already owned Floridian land, he appears to have been moved to arms, at least in part, by his disdain for the militia of free black Floridians in St. Augustine (Wasserman 2009: 138).

The war ended in May 1814, the insurrection having lost support from the American government in the year prior (Stowell 1996:39-40). McIntosh fled Spanish Florida, rather than facing punishment for treason (Schafer 2003:45). The consequences of the war on the residents of Kingsley’s Laurel Grove Plantation were more dire. In addition to the loss and destruction of home and assets at Laurel Grove, the Patriot War had brought human tragedy; among assets listed when Kingsley petitioned for compensation from the United States government in 1835, 41 enslaved Africans, lost as a result of the war, are named and described: “a driver, and blacksmith, were killed, another wounded, and forty-one slaves captured and carried off by the Indians…” (Anonymous B n.d.:3). Kingsley’s family and enslaved population would rebuild their lives—and Kingsley’s personal economy—on Fort George Island. Unable to return to Florida, McIntosh initially rented out (in 1814), then in 1817 sold the plantation to Kingsley (Stowell 1996:42).

When Kingsley, his family, and the remaining enslaved population of Laurel Grove arrived on Fort George Island, they found it decimated; of the various structures and landscape components associated with plantation life, only one (or possibly two) structures had survived. The main house had been plundered, but was structurally intact (Stowell 1996:42). A second possible structure may have endured, as well; archaeological investigations of a sugar mill located to the southeast of the main house suggest that it was constructed under McQueen or McIntosh, and survived into the
Kingsley era (Davidson 2013:34-35). Rebuilding began in short order, relying primarily on poured tabby construction. Ultimately, several structures were added to the plantation landscape on the north end of Fort George Island: a home referred to as the “Ma’am Anna House,” which was the primary residence of Kingsley’s wife Anna (Schafer 2003:45); a tabby barn constructed in two episodes (Davidson 2013:38), and a semi-circular arc of 32 tabby slave cabins, bisecting the main road leading to the residential compound (Schafer 2003:54).

Figure 2-2. The Ma’am Anna House, alternately called the Kitchen House.

Photo credit: Mary Lou Norwood.
According to Daniel Schafer (2003:46-47), the enslaved population at Kingsley Plantation primarily cultivated cotton, also producing subsistence crops; eventually, they planted orange groves and sugar cane as well. Kingsley’s tenure on Fort George constitutes the longest occupation by any single owner during the plantation era. Despite apparent prosperity afforded him by cultivating cash crops via slave labor on Fort George Island, Kingsley ultimately abandoned Florida in favor of Haiti. The exodus from Kingsley Plantation began in 1837, “in response to the increasing racism evident in territorial Florida,” which broadly restricted the rights of free people of color (such as his wives) to hold property (Stowell 1996:45).

In 1839, Kingsley sold the island and forty slaves to two nephews, Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and Ralph King, removing his family and many other enslaved individuals to Haiti. In 1842, Gibbs bought out King’s share of the island, and Zephaniah Kingsley retrieved 28 of the enslaved people that he had initially left behind, to settle the mortgage for Fort George Island (Stowell 1996:46, 52). During Gibbs’ tenure, the enslaved workers principally cultivated sea island cotton and corn, as well as sugar cane and provisional crops (Stowell 1996: 53).

Ultimately, Gibbs’s various economic investments appear to have gotten the best of him. After repeatedly mortgaging Fort George Island in the interest of other ventures, Gibbs sold the plantation and other property to John Lewis in 1853, in a deal that also had Lewis assume his latest mortgage on the island (Stowell 1996:54).

Kingsley Beatty Gibbs controlled Fort George Island for approximately 13 years—a shorter tenure than his uncle, but much longer than some of the landholders that would succeed him. Lewis, for instance, owned the island for less than six months,
selling it to Charles Thomson in June of 1854 (Stowell 1996:54). Thomson died a little over a year later, leaving the island tied up in probate court and under the management of his son John until 1858 (Stowell 1996: 54-58).

Figure 2-3. Stereoview image of the East Arc of slave cabins, Kingsley Plantation, 1875.

Image courtesy of the National Park Service.
After the younger Thomson dispersed his father’s slave holdings from Fort George Island in 1858, it was essentially unoccupied for approximately two years. In 1860, Charles H. Barnwell purchased the land, along with several other nearby islands (Stowell 1996:58). Shortly thereafter, Florida joined other Southern states in seceding from the Union; because of the Civil War, the impact of Barnwell’s tenure on the island is not well-known and appears to have been minimal. After he joined the Confederate force late in 1863, it is likely that Barnwell’s family and slave population were removed from the Jacksonville area, a Union stronghold (Stowell 1996:59).

At the war’s end, Barnwell and his brother Bower (who had obtained part ownership of Fort George and other islands) sold the island to George W. Beach, who shortly thereafter arranged to partner in ownership of the island to Abner C. Keeney (Stowell 1996:60). The partnership ultimately failed at whatever enterprise they had envisioned for Fort George Island; between the war’s end and spring of 1869, only freedpeople are believed to have lived and worked on the island, occupying the remaining tabby slave cabins and cultivating crops in small plots. With Beach’s and Keeney’s venture having faltered, ownership of the island was returned to the Barnwell brothers, who promptly sold it to John Rollins and Richard Ayers, in March 1869 (Stowell 1996:61).

Under Rollins’s ownership, dramatic changes took place on the island. He expanded the plantation’s main house, which had been constructed by McQueen some 70 years prior. According to his daughter, Gertrude Rollins Wilson (1952:2), Rollins planted orange groves on Fort George Island, which “in time supported the plantation,” along with sugar cane and other crops. He relied on the labor of freedmen and—women,
though evidently found them difficult to “manage.” During the winter of 1894 and 1895, the Fort George orange groves fell victim to a series of hard freezes, bringing that enterprise to an end (Stowell 1996:63).

However, in addition to agricultural endeavors, Rollins diversified his means to draw profit from Fort George Island. This turn of events marked the end of Fort George Island’s time as a primarily agricultural landscape, and the beginning of an era of recreation and tourism. Between the years of 1874 and 1877, Rollins sold parcels of the island to nine separate buyers (Stowell 1996: 88). On the property that remained in his possession, he supplemented income from citrus production by constructing a hotel (Wilson 1952:3). Additionally, “In 1875 Rollins and his partners constructed the two-and-one-half-story Fort George Hotel with accommodations for sixty guests on the east side of the island (Stowell 1996:89). Rollins struggled financially nonetheless, and ultimately sold his property on the north end of the island to his brother Edward, who went on to purchase other parts of Fort George Island as well (Stowell 1996:91). In 1885, an organization emerged that took over the Rollins property, as well as other plots on the island; the Fort George Island Company ultimately built additions onto the Fort George Hotel, and updated its amenities (Stowell 1996:91-92). A few short years later, in 1888, the hotel burned down, and was not rebuilt (Stowell 1996:94).

The central infrastructure of what had been Kingsley Plantation had been returned to the Rollins family in 1884, and in the early 20th century it was taken over entirely by Gertrude Rollins Wilson, who endeavored at some agricultural pursuits, but later abandoned those efforts (Stowell 1996:94).
Use of Fort George Island as a site of recreation did not re-emerge until 1923, when the Army and Navy Club was founded. The Club occupied a portion of the island that included the structures associated with the Kingsley occupation; in 1927, a two-story tabby structure was built directly west of the historic plantation house to accommodate guests. In addition, several smaller single-residence structures were built (Stowell 1996: 110, 97).

On the east end of the island, another resort was constructed on the site where the ill-fated Fort George Hotel once stood; the Ribault Club opened in December of 1928, and was augmented with an additional structure a year later (Stowell 1996:98-99).

Both facilities ultimately suffered from the economic downturn that swept the country in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1947, the Fort George Club attempted to counter the loss of sufficient membership by opening its doors to the public; however, apparently enough members found that prospect distasteful that, within the year, members voted to shutter the club altogether (Stowell 1996:104). Sale of the property was unsuccessful, however, until the state of Florida purchased it in the mid-20th century, recognizing its historic significance. The initial purchase in 1955 included only eight acres; the state acquired the remainder of the property now associated with Kingsley Plantation in 1966 (Stowell 1996:103-105). In 1991, this property was transferred from state to federal care. The “60 acres bordering the Fort George River and surrounding the oldest principal slave-plantation structure still standing in Florida, as well as the remains of 23 slave cabins” were folded into the Timucuan Ecological and
Historic Preserve, under the control of the National Park Service (Anonymous C 2006: 10).

The Ribault Club experienced a similar fate. Between 1954 and 1989, various interests took turns at developing the club and surrounding lands, before it too was purchased by the state (Stowell 1996:107). Much of the rest of the island has been developed for private residential use.

**History of African Diaspora Archaeology**

African Diaspora archaeology emerged from a burgeoning interest to pursue evidence supporting the claim that African culture persisted in enslaved contexts in the New World. Over time, the field has diversified, encompassing various areas of investigation, methods and theoretical approaches. Beginning with the investigation of “Africanisms” via excavation of cabin interiors, African diaspora archaeology progressed to broaden the scope of questions regarding lifeways of the enslaved (Fairbanks 1984:2). At the same time, the field expanded to other areas of interest and investigation altogether. Archaeologists studying the diaspora began to explore urban contexts (e.g.s Blakely and Beck 1982; McCarthy 1997; Leone and Fry 2001). They also started to examine later periods, into the 20th century (e.g.s Stine 1990; McCarthy 1997; Mullins 2002; Davidson 2004).

As the scope of possible work expanded, so did the search for evidence. Archaeologists investigating the lives of enslaved individuals who lived on plantations adopted a more comprehensive framework for understanding that evidence. Over time, the field has embraced the ways that the plantation landscape may be relevant to understanding these lifeways. Gradually, the field has begun to move out of the seeming privacy of the slave cabin and into the open. In recent years, investigations of
the yards themselves have sought to understand the lives of the enslaved within the
discursive contexts of community and resistance, exploring ways that these common
areas may be sites of commiseration among enslaved people and communication with
their slaveholders (Heath and Bennett 2000, Battle-Baptiste 2011, Boroughs 2013,
Brock 2014).

Kingsley Plantation has the distinction of being, arguably, the birthplace of
African American archaeology. Charles Fairbanks’s excavations of two slave cabins at
Kingsley in 1968 with a University of Florida field school constitute the first formal
attempt to explore and understand the lives of enslaved Africans through archaeology.
Fairbanks (1974:90) set out with an ambitious goal, inspired by the work of Melville
Herskovits: to find evidence of Africanisms in the cultural remains that enslaved Africans
left behind. Perhaps due to methods that were somewhat less rigorous than those we
would apply today, Fairbanks (1974:91) recovered no evidence that he recognized as
referential to African cultures, or the rumored role that Kingsley Plantation played as a
training ground for the enslaved. Crestfallen at the apparent absence of African cultural
influence in the archaeological record, Fairbanks and his students turned to other
methods for interpreting the lives of the enslaved. In the treatment of an investigation of
slave quarters on Cumberland Island in 1969, Ascher and Fairbanks interspersed
documentation and interpretation of excavated materials with interludes taken from
accounts of former slaves as a “soundtrack,” in an attempt to blend lived experiences
with concomitant cultural remnants (1971:4). Though a compelling idea, the tenuous
relationship between interpreted materials and first-person accounts wove a sort of
ungainly tapestry; neither quite accentuated the other as intended.
The shortcomings in these efforts catalyzed a new approach, spearheaded by Fairbanks’s student, John Solomon Otto. Otto’s interpretive questions revolved around a complex approach to status that resulted from taking both race and class into consideration in plantation contexts. For Otto, status divided along racial and legal lines, but also social lines and finally, distinctions between elite and subordinate (1980: 9-10). This allowed for differences in relationships and individual status between planters, overseers, and enslaved people. Interpreting these differences did not require identification of elusive Africanisms; rather, it focused on mundane assemblages of glass, ceramic, and faunal remains (1980:9-10). Otto’s approach added complexity to the way archaeologists might go about interpreting culture among enslaved people, and proved a popular focus for years to come. Unfortunately, in some cases Otto’s complex view collapsed into simple comparisons of ceramic assemblages and their related monetary values (Potter 1991:98). Over time, this invited insufficiently contextualized observations that ceramic assemblages belonging to poor white families may closely resemble those of enslaved Africans or African Americans (as in Moore 1985: 143). This ill-advised direction culminated in a study by Adams and Boling (1989), in which comparative assessments of the cost and styles found in ceramic assemblages produced an interpretation that conflated the circumstances of free white people and enslaved black people. Based on ceramic comparisons that gave the appearance of relatively greater wealth among some of the enslaved, the authors asserted that, at least on some plantations, “slaves may be better understood within the context of being peasants or serfs” (Adams and Boling 1989: 94).
Contemporaneously, some studies emerged that more effectively pursued Fairbanks’s initial aims. Leland Ferguson challenged assumptions about the derivation of Colonoware found in plantation contexts (Ferguson 1992:52). Noting that many of these samples, particularly dating to the 17th and 18th centuries, took forms reminiscent of Ghanaian and Nigerian vessels, Ferguson challenged the assertion that all Colonoware must be of Native American make (1980:15). He also noted that many were inscribed on the interior or exterior base with an “X” shape, a symbol that would soon become highly recognizable among African diaspora archaeologists as holding spiritual meaning (1980:18). Shortly thereafter, Wheaton and Garrow examined changes in architectural modes and frequency of Colonoware as a means to interpret not only ethnicity but processes of acculturation (1985:240-241). Elsewhere, archaeologists like Blakely and Beck expanded the scope of the study, for the first time turning focus to sites other than plantations and exploring a later time period. In their investigation of interments in a historic Atlanta cemetery, they brought the diaspora into a post-Emancipation urban context, and conducted one of the discipline’s first bioarchaeological investigations. In addition to assessing the health & diet of freedmen interred at the cemetery, Blakely and Beck also sought markers of ethnicity in the items deposited alongside the deceased. In so doing, they documented vernacular grave materials that would later become commonly recognized: medicine bottles, cups and vases, and shell (1985:186). Also straying from plantation sites, Linda Stine conducted comparative investigation of similarly-sized farmsteads in Harmony, North Carolina, interpreting the sites along two lines of status: class strata (broadly based in economics) and status strata (which was racially-based and ascribed) (1990:38). Though this
comparison echoes the problematic approaches of others engaged in assessment of economic markers, Stine made the important observation that one cannot determine, based on the perceived wealth or poverty suggested by an assemblage, the race of its owner (1990:49).

Even as expansion to new sites and types of inquiry signaled areas of investigative growth in the discipline, many archaeologists were troubled by the questions and interpretations that had emerged from Otto’s once-promising approach. Deliberation over these issues produced a more complex approach to African Diaspora archaeology, signaling a more complex relationship between the researcher and their subject of investigation. The new path forward considered more rigorous approaches to interpreting evidence (and its change over time), and confronted the ways that an unreflexive approach to the field may obscure or erase the conditions of enslavement, rather than recognizing its centrality to the interpretation of excavated sites. Orser (1988:747) began to reframe the analysis of economic markers, foregrounding the immutability of power relations: “Planter wealth may have played a role in ceramic usage among slaves, but the major process that affected and regulated the usage and acquisition of artifacts among slaves was the power relations between the planter and his or her slaves.” With this consideration, as much as we may learn from comparative analysis of goods, that information becomes meaningless—or even harmfully misrepresentational—if not contextualized by the overarching framework of enslavement.

David Babson (1990:20) challenged archaeologists to engage a more thorough consideration of ethnic markers (like Colonoware), particularly in terms of gauging
acculturation by their decline in frequency. He pointed out that assessing ethnicity through simple presence or absence of markers is too simplistic, as it fails to account for dynamic cultural processes. Moreover, he explicitly states that we must count among these processes the implications of "arrested racism"—wherein the dominant group does not eradicate, but rather exercises extensive control over, the oppressed group (Babson 1990:21). The totalizing effects of enslavement can be expected to influence all manner of cultural expression, from access to desired materials to the degree of safety with which enslaved Africans could practice any given ritual or cultural action.

Jean Howson (1990:79) offered another useful critical approach, stating that we must consider not only African "things," but also objects that are influenced by African styles. Further, she points out that the category of "African" itself is insufficient; it fails to evoke the multiplicity of cultures from which enslaved individuals were taken (Howson 1990:79). She also acknowledges that acculturation is too simplistic and passive a model by which to interpret "the creation of a community and shared culture among slaves in the context of their struggle against an oppressive system" (Howson 1990:81). In this critique, the idea of resistance emerges as an interpretive tool for the discipline.

As the discipline embraced this critical contextualization, many of its practitioners also turned back to an explicit investigative focus on African-derived markers of religion and spirituality. Often, they focused on the potential significance of artifacts that were unusual in concentration, placement, or alteration. Stine, Cabak, and Groover (1996:49) produced a study laying out the argument for interpreting blue beads as symbolically significant for African diasporic peoples. This afforded archaeologists an avenue toward emic interpretation of the beads (as well as the color blue) and facilitated investigation
of charm use (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:59-60). Following the lead of Ferguson’s (1980) examination of Colonowares as items of African make, this work focused on a single artifact type in an attempt to establish its validity as a sacred item, and it set a precedent of applying multiple lines of evidence to support a claim of an item’s extraordinary significance. A contemporary example of no less importance can be found in James Davidson’s intensive evidencing and interpretation of a ritual chicken sacrifice and burial recovered from Kingsley Plantation (2015). Like blue beads, chicken burials had been documented on other African diasporic sites and, as with the blue beads, Davidson’s was the first argument to establish that they were imbued with supernatural meaning, and to interpret the nature of that meaning (2015:88).

A few other emergent concerns with regard to spirituality and identity can be seen in Laurie Wilkie’s (1997) exploration of the relationship between magic and religion, and the cultural transformations occurring in diasporic contexts. This article problematically glosses over cultural specificity, but does introduce ideas about who would be performing magical or healing acts, and considers syncretisms that emerge with conversions to Christianity (Wilkie 1997:83-84). A final, and very influential, avenue of concern in this category is with establishing materials reflective of BaKongo religious practices, and in particular, iterations of the BaKongo cosmogram. Though it was likely first alluded to in 1990 by Brown and Cooper, since that time Chris Fennell has produced a significant body of work dedicated to evidence of BaKongo spirituality in diasporic contexts (Fennell 2004, 2007). In addition to elucidating material culture that may indicate adaptation and application of BaKongo belief systems, Fennell notes a category of variation that may relate less to overall change in culture or spirituality, and
more to expediency and secrecy. He centers his argument on the idea of “core symbols,” which can be expressed in elaborate ways (typically in public, group settings) or in “private, personal contexts” (Fennell 2004:2). He does, however, note that simplified, private iterations are likely to have been responses to intense surveillance and conversion to Christianity (Fennell 2004:24).

The distinctions between early African diaspora archaeology and later iterations are simple but profound. Early studies, though ambitious to recover information that would shed light on communities deliberately erased from American memory, suffered from a lack of orientation—in the earliest days, they could not and did not know what to expect or how to discern culturally unique uses of everyday objects, potentially obscuring the presence of Africanisms. Their efforts to glean new information in other ways, hampered by a failure to self-reflect, produced damaging and dangerous, not to mention overly simplistic results. However, the shortcomings of these early efforts spurred a methodological and theoretical rigor necessary to a field that is, as Terence Epperson (1999:102-103) claims, inherently political.

Another critical development in the field, and one particularly relevant to this study, was the broadening of ideas regarding the scope of domestic space and its relationship to the landscape. Early studies often focused primarily on cabin interiors or, barring that, explored exteriors of cabins only in terms of the artifacts they produced (Ascher and Fairbanks 1971; Fairbanks 1974; Otto 1976; Ehrenhard and Bullard 1981; Adams and Boling 1989; Brown and Cooper 1990). Recently, some have begun treating yards around slave cabins as sites of investigation in their own right. With this
shift comes an ongoing attempt to glean spatial orientation and ephemeral activity from changes in the soil and artifact distribution. (Brock 2014:230, Barton 2013:124).

A sense that exteriors of cabins could hold important information has long been present; even in the days in which Fairbanks (1976) spearheaded the move toward investigations of the African diaspora, he acknowledged the potential inherent to “backyard archaeology.” Exhorting archaeologists to go beyond the structural archaeology that constituted much of the common approach to historical sites at the time, Fairbanks noted that “…midden or backyard archaeology can contribute so much. While a contemporary writer might ignore or color his observations of many aspects of daily life, the debris of those activities offers many clues to what actually did go on” (1976:137). For Fairbanks, discovery and excavation of middens bore the potential to generate a much more robust artifact assemblage, producing a more complete vision of the consumption and discard practices of the enslaved individuals living nearby.

John Solomon Otto applied this method at Cannon’s Point Plantation on St. Simon’s Island, Georgia (1794-1861). In addition to excavating the interior of a cabin, Otto also placed units in the area of a nearby midden (1976:68-69). As expected, this approach produced a concentration of artifacts that enriched understanding of enslaved people’s daily lives. According to Karen Jo Walker (1988:82), this theory also likely influenced John Bostwick’s approach to the excavation of the areas around Cabins W-3 and W-6 at Kingsley Plantation carried out in 1981. In that project, Bostwick excavated almost solely in the front- and backyard spaces of the cabins (Walker 1988:85).

Although inclusion of “backyard archaeology” in the scope of site investigation was indeed significant, and Fairbanks’s claim regarding its potential to yield a wealth of
artifacts was demonstrably accurate, a focus on yards as little more than locations of middens neglects the potential for the yard itself to constitute a space for the production and performance of culture and resistance.

Few studies have sought to address the yard as a subject of study in its own right. Prior to 2000, most plantation reports and studies fail to even consider the significance of what may be found in yards besides specific features; as a result, a review of numerous site reports dating up to the year 2000 have yielded no comparable data. Archaeological studies of plantations including the King’s Bay locality (~1787-1850s) and Stafford (~1820-1865) in Georgia, Anson Jones in Texas (1845-1857), and Fountainhead (late 18th-early 19th centuries) and Tranquil Hill (1780-1820s) in South Carolina, have all included excavations of middens and other yard features, where detected. However, nothing in the reports and articles resulting from them speaks to yard organization or use itself, including any attempt to observe sweeping (Adams 1987, Ehrenhard and Bullard 1981, Carlson 1995, Drucker and Anthony 1979, Trinkley 2004). In fact, my review of available reports turned up only one mention of sweeping; in 1987, Jurney and Moir’s (Moir 1987:231) report on Richland Creek in Texas (1860-1960) briefly discusses sheet refuse patterning at some locations (and not others) that indicate an artifact distribution pattern expected in swept yards.

Barbara Heath and Amber Bennett (2000) produced the earliest focused work aimed at yard usage, including a discussion on the social significance of sweeping, roots of the practice derived from West African cultures, and modern ethnographic iterations of yard treatment. Rather than simply constituting the locations of concentrated artifact discard or areas where people carried out utilitarian activity, Heath
and Bennett recognize yards as sites of active engagement, community, and cultural discourse (Heath and Bennett 2000:39-43). Looking at the slave quarters at Poplar Forest in Virginia (ca. 1790-1812), they attempt to assess whether yard sweeping was taking place—a common practice in various Central and West African communities, sometimes associated with spirit management, but their results are inconclusive (Heath and Bennett 2000:48). However, Heath and Bennett provide a rich cultural framework and useful theoretical standpoint from which to begin an interpretation of yards at Kingsley Plantation.

Whitney Battle-Baptiste (2010:89) builds on this line of inquiry, in her study of Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage Plantation (1804-1880) near Nashville, Tennessee, claiming that yards can be interpreted as gendered spaces on the landscape, as extensions of the female-headed domicile. Moreover, she interprets sweeping as not only a spiritual activity, but a practice grounded in resistance, delineating personal space and providing spiritual protection. In his dissertation focused on Chesapeake plantations, Jason Boroughs echoes this interpretation, also situating yards as components of the broader plantation landscape, which he treats as almost self-supporting towns (2013:5). Boroughs (2014:161) also foregrounds a Foucauldian sense of discipline that proves useful in foregrounding the relevance of racial oppression: “Planters incorporated structures of power and authority into plantation landscape that were intended to reinforce the legal dominion upon which the system of slavery depended” (2014:161). Finally, Christopher Barton’s (2014:127) dissertation interpreting yards and identity at Timbuctoo, New Jersey continues the consistent urge to pursue sweeping as a significant practice that “projected a collective identity onto the
landscapes of Timbuctoo.” Of greater importance in practical terms, he applies and explains a mathematically sophisticated approach to assessing whether sweeping has occurred, and is confident that the formula yielded a discernible pattern (Barton 2014:124).

My investigation of the yard surrounding Cabin West 15 at Kingsley Plantation is grounded in a view that yards constitute a multivalent component of the plantation landscape, in which utilitarian, sacred, and mundane activities were carried out by individuals, families and communities. This study considers the relationship between the yard and the broader plantation for the way it facilitates discourse and resistance, examining first the selective placement of activity areas and their relationships to neighbors and the main house. I also explore the disposition of a yard with regards to its quarter, so that we can explicitly understand the relationship to each as component parts of a domestic space. I compare not only artifact distributions between the cabin’s interior and exterior, but also those materials that indicate magical or religious activity, applying Fennell’s (2004:2) conception of “core symbols” to explore differences in expression.

Environmental Context

A 2004 State Park management plan for Fort George Island characterizes the barrier island’s topography and geology, citing the prevalence of “highly varied maritime hammock” throughout the island (Anonymous A 2004:22-23), shell mound, and xeric hammock; this terrain is largely bounded by estuarine tidal marsh (Anonymous A 2004:25). Less represented on the island, several other topographic zones include depression marsh, hydric hammock, and ruderal areas (Anonymous A 2004: 26).
Soils on the island can generally be characterized as sandy. A survey conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service approximates that sand comprises roughly 95% of the soil matrix throughout the island, to a depth of up to 80 centimeters (NRCS 2015). This sandy matrix prevails throughout the part of the island now owned by the National Park Service, and in particular excavation areas associated with slave yards. The predominant soil type consists of a combination of Ridgewood and Hurricane; according to the NRCS, they consist largely (95%) of sand. Perhaps unsurprisingly given that proportion of sand, these soils belong to Wind Erodibility Group 1, indicating that they are most susceptible to wind erosion (group 8 being least susceptible) (NRCS 2015). While the soil survey could not anticipate and rate every type of erosion, the high susceptibility of these soils to wind erosion suggests that they are also likely to erode under light or moderate friction, particularly when dry. Efforts to clean sweep units during archaeological excavation supports this hypothesis, if only anecdotally.
Figure 2-4. Estimated soil map, Kingsley Plantation main compound area, and associated key.

Image and data courtesy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Landscape archaeology, or “the science of material traces of past peoples within the context of their interactions with the wider natural and social environment they inhabited,” has grown over the course of decades into a diverse, interdisciplinary field (Kluiving and Guttman-Bond 2012:15). African diaspora archaeologists who engage in landscape archaeology have come to understand plantations as cultural landscapes, and more specifically as “powered cultural landscapes” (Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2010a:464). They can also be seen as dynamic—a process, rather than static terrain (Boroughs 2014:16). Viewing a cabin and its surrounding yard as components of a shifting and powered landscape provides insight to a universe of sorts, which both engulfs the lives of the enslaved and orders their world. This approach allows for a richer exploration of the discipline inherent to plantations and the discursive resistance practiced in yards, which acted as a visible, liminal space between domiciles of the enslaved and the explicit domain of the planter.

The cohesive nature of the plantation landscape has also been explored in a variety of ways. Brown and Harpole (2012) characterize the plantation as a nearly closed circuit, offering an inventory of its functional component parts: “plantations essentially operated as small towns, complete with systems of roads, quarters, agricultural buildings, fields, docks, and manor houses, and often complemented with mills, manufacturing enterprises, and formal gardens.” Each element of the plantation landscape served a purpose, and each purpose informed the functions of the others, often with the enslaved residents as conduits or catalysts. Offering another perspective,
Kerri Barile (2004:123) applies a model that interprets the landscape in terms of its inhabitants, proffering a “household” characterization:

Within the boundaries of a plantation, the household is defined here as all those living on one parcel of land and involved in the same overall economic enterprise, or what has often been termed a 'socioeconomic unit' (see, e.g., Allison 1999a). A plantation household, therefore, includes those living in the Big House (Vlach 1993), as well as all others living in support of the plantation functions. These functions can include, but are not limited to, enslaved and indentured workers and those paid for daily labor, such as overseers, business managers, housekeepers, and agricultural specialists. (For clarity, the term household herewith refers to the plantation occupants themselves, whereas the 'built environment of the household' involves the structures and landscapes used and altered by the plantation occupants.)

She distinguishes such a landscape from a “community,” noting that communities are not typically arranged around the land of a single “group or entity” (Barile 2004:123). Both methods portray plantation landscapes as sites comprised of multiple functional parts—structures and human beings—who attend to disparate interests, but with shared experiences and outcomes. Rather than attempting to create a new model, this study will rely on these characterizations to inform its interpretation of the activities evidenced through archaeological investigation of the yard around Cabin West 15. Boroughs’s (2014:5) “town” concept aptly emphasizes the great degree to which plantations operated with independence and isolation from the outside world—particularly for enslaved residents. Barile’s model situates people, rather than structures, as central to the life of a plantation, foregrounding the roles performed by individuals and the relationships between them.

Importantly, each of these models addresses plantation landscapes as spaces imbued with oppressive power. To benefit from this perspective, it is important to consider what it means for a landscape to be imbued with power—and for that matter,
what “power” signifies in the first place. Foucault’s approach is instructive here, though in some need of modification and distinction. Most simply, he defines power as “means by which individuals try to conduct, to determine the behavior of others” (1988:18), and situates the imposition of power within notions of discipline and docile bodies. For Foucault (1977:138), discipline represents a key component of unequal power relations. It is the very mechanism by which individuals are put to work for the benefit of a more powerful entity:

Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an ‘aptitude,’ a ‘capacity,’ which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection.

In other words, it separates the individual from control over their own labor for the purpose of production controlled by someone else, who then reaps disproportional benefit. It reduces a person’s power to make decisions about that labor on their own. Discipline can be imposed on individuals, but also can (eventually) become self-sustaining within the individual. It emerges from surveillance, habitus, and “enclosure” (Foucault 1977:137-143).

As landscapes imbued with power, plantations often have design elements that act as extensions of the plantation owner’s power, and facilitate exercise thereof. Charles Orser (1988:741) offers a laundry list of the ways that power played out on the plantation:

By any account, the plantation was the planter’s ‘power domain.’ The planter's power included making decisions about plantation operations, empowering the overseers and drivers to act in their behalf, buying and selling humans and using their labor, and controlling the introduction, maintenance, and use of material objects on the plantation. Assigning work to a plantation slave was a manifestation of the planter’s power. He
or she decided who would work, where they would work, and how long they would work. The overseers or drivers were responsible for the actual completion of the work on large plantations, but the overall plan came from the planter. The quality and even the quantity of the work, however, was decided by the slaves.

Plantation owners exerted both active and passive iterations of power. Active forms of power included hiring or compelling men (overseers or drivers) to direct the labor of enslaved individuals, ordering or carrying out physical punishment, determining which persons would perform particular tasks, and exercising control over the quantity and composition of food rations (Berlin 1998:97-100, Johnson 2013: 179, 207). In these ways, planters had a direct influence on the activities, movements, and living conditions of the enslaved.

Slaveholders also relied on passive power inherent in the structure of the plantation landscapes. The design of spaces through which enslaved people moved, in which they worked, and within which they took refuge all promoted the control of bodies. Foucault’s notion of discipline speaks well to this—rather than overt and violent punishment, which certainly also constituted a mechanism by which planters and their families controlled the enslaved, plantation structures and their relationship to one another in space established a layer of order and control, particularly through surveillance, which were potent in transforming displaced Africans (and their descendants) into docile bodies. In regard to Kingsley Plantation in particular, some have argued that the arrangement of 32 slave cabins in an arc allowed for ready surveillance from the planter’s house; each cabin and associated yard was visible in a panoramic sweep of the cleared space to the south of Kingsley’s home (Schafer 2003:54-56; Stowell 1996:73).
In addition to being component parts of a plantation landscape, under a blanket of surveillance-based power issued forth by the planter, the yards surrounding slave cabins took on additional significance, distinct both from the landscape as a whole and also the cabins themselves. Yards act as an extension of the home, expanding the domestic space in which the enslaved could go about the business of their own lives. In contrast to the cabin, though, the yard did not facilitate inherent privacy. Yard space was therefore apt for a variety of practical, social, or even ritual events and activities, and any or all of those events and activities may themselves possess multiple layers of meaning.

Consideration of this great potential for meaning, and attempts to recognize and interpret it, first requires a practical grasp of what constitutes a yard. To this aim, Barbara Heath and Amber Bennett offer a helpful definition of a yard: “…the area of land, bounded and usually enclosed, which immediately surrounds a domestic structure and is considered an extension of that dwelling” (2000:38). Further, they concur with Randall Moir’s distinction between the immediate active yard that extends about six meters from the house, and the outer active yard, which starts at six meters and extends roughly 18 meters away (Moir 1987: 229-237). They note the broad varieties of individual and group activities that took place in these yards “including, but not limited to, food production and preparation, care and maintenance of animals, domestic chores, storage, recreation, and aesthetic enjoyment” (Heath and Bennett 2000:38). This list supports the notion that these spaces represent sites of production. In addition, however, they also constitute places for public interpersonal engagement among members of a family or community, which may have been as critical to self-preservation
as the yards’ utilitarian functions. Whitney Battle-Baptiste (Battle 2004:128) evokes bell hooks’s notion of “homespace” in reference not only to the living quarters of enslaved people, but also the yards around them, characterizing them as collective spaces of rest, solace, and survival in the face of daily, lifelong oppression violence, and hardship.

Though they certainly contributed to that solace and commiseration, many of the activities and interactions that occurred in yards were multivalent, perhaps whether or not the enslaved intended them to be. Yards constituted the public face of personal space; the things that people did there, whether sacred or mundane, whether individual or with family or neighbors, could be viewed by others within the community—i.e. other enslaved Africans, or by those outside of the community—planters, their families, and guests to the plantation. Uses and dispositions of yards, and the simple fact and nature of their occupation by enslaved inhabitants, bridged the personal “homespace” and the public—susceptible to surveillance and observation by others. That bridging, which coincides with the link between individual, domestic spaces and the plantation landscape as a single unit, produces two divergent impacts. First, it suggests that what enslaved individuals chose to do in this space might subject them to repercussions; second, it allows for those individuals to deliberately act in a discursive way, reproducing cultural values and practices and resisting conditions of enslavement.

That discursive element facilitates examination of yard usage within the context of identity, including considerations of resistance and gender. However, it is important to recognize that not all discourse was necessarily resistive; some retention and adaptation of cultural practices likely occurred by default—people using the methods they knew to accomplish familiar tasks. Applying those familiar technologies in a new
geographic context certainly supports a dynamic view of culture, as people adapted and innovated given new circumstances, relationships, and needs. Dramatic change in conditions and resources impacted traditional practices as enslaved Africans combined unfamiliar resources with their own native technologies and customs. This confluence applied even to their use of personal space on the plantation. According to Heath and Bennett (2000:41), “These new plants, work patterns, and tools became incorporated into and transformed traditional African uses of yards.” Moreover, yards themselves played an important role in cultural creation; Battle-Baptiste (Battle 2004:133) emphasizes the iterative processes unique to these personal-public spaces, where enslaved people “form[ed] semi-autonomous, secure spaces, where various forms of Black cultural production were taking place.” Technologies, customs, and people came together and underwent change in these common spaces.

While some yard uses and activities certainly fell into this category, wherein practitioners did not intend to convey any particular idea to outsiders, yards did provide apt spaces for everyday resistance (as opposed to unusual forms of resistance, including maroonage or violent rebellion). Scott (1985:32-33) defines everyday resistance as actions “intended to mitigate or deny claims made by superordinate classes or to advance claims vis-à-vis those superordinate classes,” also characterized by “its implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals.” With respect to the institution of slavery, Singleton and Bograd (1995:9) list several ways that people may have resisted their conditions, including “lying, stealing, breaking tools, feigning illness, refusal to work, rebellion, or taking one’s freedom by running away…” also noting that, “Enslaved people’s efforts to maintain a separate cultural identity also constituted a form of
resistance.” Historian Stephanie Camp (2004:3) emphasizes the “day-to-day” quality of most resistance by enslaved persons, which “was, of necessity, masked and short lived.” Acts of sustained or flagrant rebellion were certain to incur extreme punishment, so some forms of everyday resistance were likely made to appear incidental, or operated outside the planter’s perception. Yards constituted personal, public spaces that imbued any number of choices with multivalence; mundane activities could fall within the normal spectrum of responsibility and necessity, while also contributing to creation of culture and pushing back against one’s condition of enslavement.

That multivalence can be seen in the ways that enslaved people practiced, preserved, and transformed customs associated with their native identities. Asserting identity, in and of itself, is not inherently a form of resistance, but its complex nature allows it the possibility of doubling as resistance. Ward Goodenough (1965:3-4) casts identity itself as a multilayered phenomenon; his approach informs a discussion about discipline and resistance by distinguishing between the social identity and the personal identity. For Goodenough, social identity is “an aspect of self that makes a difference in how one’s rights and duties distribute to specific others,” and personal identity as “self whose alteration entails no change in how people’s rights and duties are mutually distributed, although it affects their emotional orientations to one another and the way they choose to exercise their privileges.” In other words, in addition to the way an individual constructs their sense of self, they have different roles and relationships with respect to various other individuals, and to different segments of society. For enslaved persons, one can conceive of social identities associated with slaveholders and their families as a class, as well as individualized social identities for each member of the
slaveholding family, outsiders visiting the plantation, overseers, and drivers. Each of these social identities is directly informed by one’s place within the institution of slavery. In addition, however, enslaved people had social identities associated with one another—including roles as relatives, friends, community members, and even as displaced members of their native societies.

The constructions of rights and duties of the enslaved individual (or individuals) with regards to the slaveholder established a totalizing oppression. In every moment and in every other relationship and iteration of a social identity, enslaved individuals were subject to the will of the planter. It is likely for this reason that Foucault (1977:136) specifically excludes slavery from his exploration of discipline, noting that “in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulas of domination. They were different from slavery because they were not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies.” However, this perspective fails to consider that, while individuals at all times lived and embodied the condition of their enslavement, “appropriation of bodies” nevertheless could not inherently impose mastery over individuals’ personal identities, and indeed over some of the social identities through which they experienced bonds of community and camaraderie. It was incapable of stripping away one’s personhood. Further, the simple fact of enslavement—even with consideration for the brutal conditions it imposed—did not have the inherent power to strip away an individual’s self-perception, values, and will. In addition to violent punishment, and the threat of such punishment that imposed a dramatic form of discipline, the plantation landscape asserted a subtler discipline, suggesting boundaries
to individual identity and the will that accompanied it. Or, as Jean Howson (1990:82) more elegantly put it, “behavior can be coerced, not culture.”

Johnson (2013:66) goes further, linking that personhood, its associated culture and various identities with resistance:

It was the human capacities of enslaved people that made them valuable: the fact that they could think and act and create. Indeed—and this was the heart of the contradiction—the human capacities of enslaved people made them uniquely valuable repositories of capital. Unlike real estate, they could be moved from place to place as the economy demanded; unlike other forms of personal property, they could be repurposed to meet novel challenges. But along with the labor and the capital that made them so valuable to their owners, enslaved people were inhabited by their own slippery, sometimes subversive will. They possessed the ability to conspire...to play the part of property, cloaking their own aspirations...until...they had a chance to slip out from under it entirely.

Through this “subversive will,” enslaved people would have been able to establish and maintain social identities within a community of bondspeople and, where it was needed or desired, to exert identity—even spiritual identity—for the purpose of resistance. The types of resistance associated with spiritual identity, particularly in the yards at Kingsley Plantation, given its owner’s laissez-faire approach to cultural practices, would likely be best characterized by Scott (1985:32-33) as “mitigating claims by superordinate classes...” rather than challenging enslavement in a confrontational way that would be legible to Kingsley himself. The rituals carried out and charms put to use would not have likely, in and of themselves, produced outcomes damaging to the slaveholder or his profit margin; as such, it may have contributed to a discourse that was interpreted differently by the slaveholder and enslaved practitioners who carried out the ritual acts. Moreover, they may not have been intended to create a consequence for the planter or his family at all; rather, resistance associated with spirituality, particularly given Kingsley’s disinterest in suppressing African cultural and
religious practices, may have simply been the struggle to keep faith in dramatically different conditions. The condition of enslavement would have been compounded by drastic geographic displacement, violent removal from family and community, and development of a new ad hoc community comprised of individuals from disparate places.

This new community, no doubt, featured a variety of cultural practices and values, languages, and religious practices and beliefs. The challenge of adapting faith in the face of this immense culture shock—not to mention physical and psychological trauma—very likely necessitated shifts in practice and, perhaps, even relationships to one’s gods. Finding a path forward in those conditions would have required an investment of energy and ingenuity that quite easily could be seen as resistance; finding new appropriate materials and means for performing rituals was by itself pushing back against the difficulty to maintain a practice of faith.

Spiritual practice produced additional benefits that could be seen as resisting enslavement, by offering hope and comfort to the religious. In part, this may be due to the ability of cultural beliefs and practices as “ethnic identifiers,” which could help individuals maintain community identity (Brown 1994:108). Further, ritual could sustain a sense of connection to home. Orser (1994:35) observes modern practices among African American communities and concurs with other scholars that, “slaves were conservative in their belief systems, and…ideas of cosmology, eschatology, curing, and sorcery inexorably link African Americans to Africa.” Certainly, if a link survived hundreds of years and significant change in African American status and conditions in the United States, a stronger claim could be made regarding the connection of enslaved
Africans using religion to maintain symbolic connection with their families and communities of origin. In these ways, though broadly under control by external forces in the form of the institution of slavery, the planter’s authority and disciplined landscapes, enslaved Africans could employ religious practice to assert internal control, and establish some order through shared (or perhaps mutually recognized) spiritual values or beliefs.

Despite the fact that spirituality likely featured prominently in the lives of enslaved Africans, it often is ephemeral or difficult to detect. Magic and ritual were often improvisational, meaning the items used and the particular ways they were employed were heavily influenced by the materials and opportunities that were available (Davidson 2015:111-112). Moreover, many of the materials used for these purposes were organic, like body hair or fluid, clothing, or roots; as such, they typically do not survive taphonomic processes (Wilkie 1997:88).

However, African diaspora archaeologists have begun to hone recognition of materials associated with magic and religion. Fennell (2003:2) offers the idea of “core cultural symbols…used in a broad spectrum of expressive modes” for guidance. For those cases in which we can discern something about an expressive mode, we may be able to speak to personal or community identity in addition to religious or spiritual identity. He suggests, “a core symbol is typically expressed in its most fully complex and embellished form in the emblematic expressions of public and group rituals. When a core symbol of a religious belief system is used for more private and personal ends, it is typically expressed as an instrumental symbol which uses only selected and abbreviated components…” (Fennell 2003:2). That perfunctory practice may serve
more than “personal and private” ends; religious practice carried out by enslaved persons may have taken more subtle forms not for privacy, but for protection from interference or repercussions from outsiders, especially a slaveholder who might wish to intercede or otherwise influence religious practice and belief.

Nevertheless, both elaborate and simple applications of core cultural symbols derived from African cultures can be found in plantation contexts. Among religious symbols at Kingsley Plantation, one in particular stands out as highly elaborate. This ritual assemblage includes the deliberate placement of a sacrificed chicken atop a laterite (or iron concretion) and the possible inclusion of an amber-colored glass bead (Davidson 2015:85-87), all of which was placed in the northeast corner of the bedroom of Cabin West 15 (Davidson 2015:88). It indicates a dramatic event featuring the culmination of religious, familial, and perhaps even community identities. Preserving and adapting these religious practices not only served to bring people together, but likely provided some sort of comfort through community and continuity of faith; in this way, it may have exerted resistive “force” against the alienating, bewildering oppression of upheaval and enslavement.

Each of these interpretive lenses—landscapes imbued with power, resistance, identity and spirituality—constitute vast areas of investigation, which overlap, interact, and inform one another. Examination of yards, as public and domestic spaces, allows us to look not only at each of these, but the ways that they intermingle. Though a single yard, as in this study, represents a small subsection of a landscape, that singularity affords us the opportunity to look more closely at the ways that occupants of a single cabin choose to employ the space at their disposal. Examination of the nature and
distribution of artifacts around the cabin may reflect different choices than those
associated with artifacts recovered from the cabin’s interior. Those details, both in
comparison and in their own right, may begin to tell a story about the ways that the
cabin’s inhabitants conceptualized their yard, and the degree to which they resisted or
otherwise responded to their proximity to neighbors and vulnerability to surveillance.

It is possible that a study of the yards will provide insight into a final area of
investigation: gendered uses of space. Moir (1987:234-235) suggests that yard usage
among enslaved people was influenced by gender; in particular, women’s activities
frequently occurred in the “inner active yard,” with men’s tasks and activities occurring in
the “outer active yard.” Excavation for this study occurred almost solely within the inner
active yard, barring comparison between these two areas. However, if the evidence
reflects activities typically performed by women, then these spaces can provide insight
into the ways that women grappled with conditions of enslavement and a landscape
imbued with oppressive power.

Though this will be tentative interpretation, particularly in the case of a single
yard, we have significant historical documentation and foundations in feminist
anthropology to guide investigations into enslaved women’s experiences on the
plantation. Feminist anthropology acknowledges that ideas around biological sex and
gender roles can produce powerfully different experiences across cultures (Mascia-Lees
and Black 2000; Franklin 2001; Spencer-Wood 2011).

Sex and gender hold particular significance to investigations of enslaved Africans
in a plantation setting, particularly when identity is emphasized. To build on Ward
Goodenough’s (1965:3-4) notion that each individual has a composite social identity
comprised of various relationships to other individuals or groups, we can say that each of those identities, and so the larger social identity, is distinctly influenced by one’s gender. For instance, even though enslaved men and women were often tasked with the same type and similar quantities of work, that sameness produced a gendered difference. hooks (1982:48) explains how that differential experience emerged over time, noting “originally displaced African women attached no stigma to female labor in the fields but as they assimilated white American values they accepted the notion that it was debasing and degrading for women to work in the fields.” The imposition of white ideals around womanhood, paired with the explicit exclusion of black women from the feminine, created an intersectionally oppressive experience. The embodied experience of enslavement was based in sexual difference as well, whether through labor or violence. Camp (2004: 32-33) notes the distinctions between men’s and women’s household responsibilities; at the end of a workday, women were responsible for a “second shift” of cooking, cleaning their cabins, producing soap and candles, washing and mending the family’s clothing, sewing necessary garments and linens, and more. Men “hunted, fished, gathered firewood, and contributed craft work to their households,” but the division of labor typically placed a greater and more normalized burden on women. Along with many other historians, she also acknowledges that violence at the hands of slaveholders frequently had gendered overtones, with female victims often required to strip bare prior to whipping (Camp 2004:33). Additionally, women were considerably more vulnerable to sexual assault. Rape was prevalent on plantations, not simply a byproduct of slaveholder will, but often constitutive of a deliberate strategy to increase one’s labor force (Johnson 2013:195-196).
Perhaps because of the difficulty in parsing the significance of sex and gender in the archaeological record, gender-centered approaches to African diaspora archaeology are somewhat uncommon. In her deliberation on the need for Black feminist-inspired archaeology, Maria Franklin (2001:112) states, “the archaeological study of African Americans has largely omitted gendered research questions, effectively homogenizing their experiences.” She laments a failure to acknowledge evidence of activities related to “foodways…cottage industries involving sewing, carpentry and possibly pottery production, and the maintenance of refuse-free areas for household-related activities,” noting that, “Although it was not my intention, I nonetheless managed to erase Black women and children from this past” (Franklin 2001:113-114).

In recent years, a growing number of archaeologists have pursued explicitly feminist archaeologies, which are not concerned with the simple presence of gender-prescribed relationships and activities; rather, as Spencer-Wood and Baugher (2010b:3-4) claim, “Feminist research focuses on gender power dynamics and draws on feminist theories of causes and remedies for patriarchal inequalities.” This approach offers a particularly relevant angle; enslaved women’s labor and bodies were controlled not only by the slaveholder, but also in some respects by the enslaved men with whom they lived and worked. hooks notes, “As regards hierarchies based solely on race, the social status of black women and men was the same, but sexist differentiation caused the lot of the male to be distinguished from that of the female” (1982:45). Differential experience was not simply interpersonal; it was structural.

The tightly controlled structure of the plantation, paired with an extensive documentary record regarding gendered spaces and roles, allows the African diaspora
archaeologist a way forward. Though labor tended to collapse sex roles, the historical record has shown that various other rights, duties and activities carried out by enslaved people were divided along these lines. In the same way that Babson (1990:25) would have us assume that racism shapes and structures experiences of the enslaved, Black feminist-inspired archaeology suggests that gender-based oppression is present at a structural level, governing an array of responsibilities. Combining these lines of reasoning, we can infer that very little room existed for the subversion of ascribed roles. Therefore, material culture associated with tasks that have been described as typically delineated by sex in plantation contexts can be treated as such. We need not question whether the notions can be attributed to an extraordinary case of a male conducting “women’s work.”

Studies focusing explicitly on yards (particularly areas designated as “inner yards”) as extensions of the slave cabin and, as such, the feminine domain, provide an essential framework for understanding these spaces (Heath and Bennett 2000:44, Battle-Baptiste 2014:89). Heath and Bennett offer a rare academic article on this subject matter, providing a much-needed foundation. They focus on the “parent cultures” that establish precedent for yard sweeping and the potential spiritual meaning of such activity (2000:43). In her writings, Battle-Baptiste (2014:89) explores the iterative power of yard sweeping. She cites archaeological evidence that suggest yards were places where women carried out a variety of tasks, including care for children. By virtue of this responsibility, “Enslaved women therefore played a major role in social reproduction, where boys and girls learned cultural practices, survival strategies and to negotiate their gendered and racialized identities (Franklin 2001:114). An explicit examination of
activities that took place in women’s spaces and were performed by women facilitates discussion of the ways that women transmitted culture, engaged in discourse, and fostered cultural change.

The spatial order imposed on a yard through the establishment of activity areas and practice of sweeping take on increased meaning when we apply a feminist approach. These practices no longer simply speak to composite social identities, but also explore the ways that identities can be dynamic. Spencer-Wood and Baugher (2010b:22) address this potential: “A person constructs situationally changing multiple identities to affiliate with different social groups by foregrounding one or a combination of identities and backgrounding others.” The ways that enslaved women ordered exterior domestic spaces allowed them the ability to “foreground” and “background” social identities, and the choices they made were likely influenced by a complex oppression formulated from racism and sexism. The selection of activity areas out of sight of the slaveholder afforded some protective cover—it allowed them to stay out of sight and out of mind, and so perhaps out of the path of sexual violence. Yard sweeping may also be interpreted as a means of deterring sexual violence at the hands of the slaveholder, but in a converse manner. Rather than obscuring an enslaved woman from view, it delineated her domain—both from her neighbors and from the landscape beyond, where compulsory labor and violence were the norm. In describing this phenomenon, Battle-Baptiste (Battle 2004:133) aptly evokes hooks’s idea of “homespace,” which in this case can be seen as “semi-autonomous, secure spaces, where various forms of Black cultural production were taking place.” Whether intended
as such or not, women’s sweeping of a yard can thus potentially be seen as a resistive response to the otherwise all-encompassing oppressions of slavery.

Viewed through the lens of feminist archaeology, this interpretation also produces a curious distinction between the “rights and duties” of women and men (Goodenough 1965:2). Camp notes that women were confined to the plantation to a greater extent than men. If materials or messages needed to be transported, men carried out those tasks and, in the cases of abroad marriages, men typically visited their wives (Camp 2004:28). Thus, the world was literally smaller for enslaved women than their male counterparts. However, feminist archaeology encourages us to consider that, in taking domain over one’s home and the yard immediately surrounding it, women were able to create spaces that allowed a sense of control, a sense of self-imposed order, a sense of respite.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODS

Excavation History

In addition to being arguably the birthplace of African American archaeology (Davidson 2006:5), Kingsley Plantation has also been the site of numerous excavations over the years. Together, this research provides a wealth of data with which life among the enslaved can be interpreted and better understood. What follows is a brief summary of the excavations that have taken place at Kingsley across six decades, and the information they have yielded.

In 1968, Charles Fairbanks (1974:90) conducted a University of Florida field school at Kingsley Plantation, with the aim of investigating the lives of enslaved people. This focus was novel in itself, but was also refined by a particular goal: to discover Africanisms, or inherently and recognizably African artifacts or practices, in the archaeological record.

In the interest of these efforts, Fairbanks and his students investigated areas within and around the two cabins located at the center of the arc. They excavated Cabin West 1 (W-1), placing a 10-foot square trench directly behind the cabin, which narrowed to five feet wide as it extended into the cabin itself. As the grid was not square to the cabin, the trench stretched from roughly the center of the back wall to the northwest area of the front wall. A second series of “cross-trenches” intersected with it, one from the northwest area of the westernmost wall, another from the center of the easternmost wall. Fairbanks excavated Cabin East 1 (E-1) less extensively, placing a single 5-by-7-foot trench that “spann[ed] the doorway between the east and west rooms.” In addition to the cabins, a five foot by 10-foot-long trench was placed to the northwest of Cabin W-
1, for the purpose of investigating a circular depression. Excavations determined that
the depression was a water well, but Fairbanks did not explore it further. Though it is not
explicit in his publication, Fairbanks’s description suggests that artifacts were collected
in two ways. First, they may have been collected opportunistically, as students picked
individual items out of the soil matrix while hand troweling. A second method, applied to
“all dirt not troweled out” (presumably produced by shovel skimming), involved
processing soil through a power sifter with ¾" by 3/8" mesh (1974:66-75).

Unfortunately, Fairbanks (1974:90-91) recovered no evidence that he recognized
as referential to African cultures, or the rumored role that Kingsley Plantation played as
a training ground for the enslaved. However, this work established an important new
focus in historical archaeology and, specifically to this site, yielded some new
information about day-to-day life among enslaved residents, as well as information
about cabin construction that would aid in restoration.

In 1981, John Bostwick, a University of Florida graduate student, undertook
excavations at Kingsley, apparently establishing a second grid system. Also contrary to
Fairbanks’s approach, Bostwick primarily focused his excavation on areas outside slave
cabins, rather than excavating their interiors. Though documentary records of his work
are spotty, Karen Jo Walker notes that he placed units to the north and south of Cabins
W-3 and W-6. For cabin W-3, this meant placing one 3-by-3-meter unit such that it was
intruded upon by the corner of the cabin itself; a second 3-by-3-meter unit was placed in
front of the eastern end of the cabin, separated from the first by an apparent three meter
gap. A 1.5-meter unit extends southward, contiguous with the eastern half of that unit. A
third three-meter-squared unit was placed six meters south of the westernmost front
yard unit, and offset to the west by about 1.5 meters. Three meters to its south, a final unit, apparently 1.5 by 3 meters (oriented with the long axis east to west) was placed in the tree line behind the cabin’s yard (Walker 1988:82-86).

Cabin W-6 had some similarities in unit placement, with a 3x3 meter unit placed on the corresponding front corner of the cabin. Another unit of equal size was placed in the area of the other front corner, again encroached upon by the cabin’s wall itself. A third 3-by-3-meter unit was placed in the front yard area, approximately one meter east of the north corner unit; the south wall of this yard unit aligns with the north wall of that corner unit. This yard unit’s placement suggests that it would have occupied border space or shared space between Cabins W-6 and W-7. As with W-3, a 1.5-by-3-meter unit was placed in the backyard; this unit extends only slightly into the tree line (Walker 1988:83-84). Karen Jo Walker’s (1988:159-161) thesis uses this material to interpret some elements of everyday life in the cabins, including foodways, sewing, and leisure (and children’s) activities.

In 1980, Carl McMurray and Darcie MacMahon undertook excavation to mitigate disturbance associated with planned reconstruction of a portion of the plantation’s main house. Excavations at this time were limited to a single 1-by-2-meter unit abutting the southwest corner of the main house, extending lengthwise along its wall. Artifacts were screened through ¼-inch wire mesh. Ultimately, this exploration allowed some interpretation about the construction process for the main house (McMurray 1983:1-11).

A year later, McMurray returned for further excavation, to mitigate the planned placement of a garden south of the Anna Kingsley house. While there, they were also asked to explore the barn (then called the Carriage House), as the modern concrete
floor was to be removed. Given the difference in scope, McMurray altered his excavation approach somewhat. The planned garden area was investigated through placement of five trenches, oriented along a north-south axis, initially cut in via front-end loader. Thereafter, trenches were excavated by shovel skimming. A short time later, ten test units were excavated in the proposed garden area—three 1x2 meter units running north to south, arranged as a six-meter trench southwest of the Anna Kingsley house. Three more 1-by-2-meter units were dispersed throughout the southern end of the area, and a 2-by-2-meter unit was placed in the north-central portion of the garden area, augmented by a contiguous 1x2 meter unit along its west wall and another extending northward from the western half of its north wall. These excavations yielded some interesting results, including the apparently articulated remains of six birds (three long-necked, three “smaller birds”) and three whole egg shells (McMurray1983a: 7-8).

Barn excavations consisted of two units: one “just inside the doorway of the north half of the building along the west wall,” measuring one by three meters in length (McMurray 1983a/b:2). The other, located at the juncture of the two phases of construction and near the east wall, measured 60 centimeters by one meter (McMurray 1983a:7). These investigations allowed him to surmise the construction phases of the barn.

Finally, McMurray removed concrete fill and documented the stratigraphy of a circular feature located in the basement of the main house. Though he had believed it was a well, investigation suggested that it had been the location of a stove or boiler (1983a:9).
Recent Excavations

The most recent, and by far most extensive and systematic, excavations at Kingsley Plantation have been carried out through the University of Florida’s field school, under the direction of Dr. James Davidson. For six weeks each summer from 2006 through 2013, Davidson led a crew of undergraduates, graduate students, and volunteers in excavating various components of the plantation in order to expand the questions posed by archaeologists, and generate additional data with which to answer them. Because of the extent and breadth of his research, Davidson’s excavations are better understood through area of investigation than chronological order. Also, due to the breadth of work, I focus primarily on those areas that offer the most relevance to this study.

Generally speaking, units placed in the interiors of cabins were one meter squared and were excavated by hand troweling, typically in 10-centimeter arbitrary levels. Units measuring 1-by-2 meters were excavated by a combination of shovel skimming and hand troweling, often with 20-centimeter levels. In some cases, where natural soil horizons were readily observable, a combination of arbitrary and natural levels were used. In 2006, soil was screened through ¼-inch mesh wire screen; in each subsequent field season, 1/8-inch wire mesh was used for screening. In some highly sensitive areas, soil samples were collected for processing through flotation, to collect light fraction materials that may otherwise be missed. Units were laid out on a grid oriented to true north, guided by the use of a Spectra Precision Optical Model TS415 Total Station (Davidson 2007:29-32).

Beginning in 2006, Davidson directed excavation of the interiors of four slave cabins. He initially selected cabins that had minimal or no occupation after Kingsley’s
departure from Fort George Island (Davidson 2006:18). Cabins most likely to fit this profile were determined by consulting historic maps and photographs, which revealed that a portion of the west arc of cabins had been obliterated by 1853. As such, between 2006 and 2009, he directed excavation of three of these structures. Students excavated the interior and some of the perimeter of W-12 between 2006 and 2008, as well as the interior of W-13. Investigation of W-15 began in limited fashion in 2006. Because none of the walls of cabins W-12 and W-13 remained at the surface, excavations faced a challenge in determining the nature and precise location of their structural signatures. In pursuit of such markers, a single unit was opened in the doorway of W-15 in 2006, adjacent to a standing tabby wall. While documenting a wall trench for the structure, this effort uncovered the buried remains of an articulated chicken, along with some associated artifacts. The following season, four units were placed adjacent to the feature in order to better understand it, and ultimately by the end of the 2009 field season the interior of the cabin was excavated fully.

That same year, 2009, brought an opportunity to excavate a fourth cabin. Investigation of this cabin, E-10, facilitated questions about variability of occupation, and in particular whether subsistence and other components of day-to-day living differed depending on one’s location on the arc. The hypothesis about locational variation hinged on two potential factors; first, that the occupants of the west arc lived closer to the marsh, so may have had more ready access to its resources. Second, as some of the materials recovered from the west cabins suggested participation in maritime endeavors—presumably alongside Kingsley, who was himself a maritime merchant, excavation of E-10 might reveal a difference in intensity of occupation. In other words, if
some of the west cabins’ occupants were at sea for months at a time, they were not likely to produce a quantity and breadth of artifacts that one might see from a cabin occupied by individuals who were bound to the island.

In addition to the cabin excavations, shovel testing occurred in the area directly in the interior of the east arc of cabins, chasing a “mystery road” seen on an 1853 map; sixteen shovel tests were also placed outside the east arc, in the space stretching behind the cabins between E-8 and E-16. The latter series of shovel tests suggested the presence of two yard features that will inform future study. In particular, a water well located behind Cabin E-11 was excavated to its full depth, 2.4 meters, in 2011. A midden located behind Cabin E-16 was excavated in 2010 and 2011 (Davidson 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011).

Efforts were also made to excavate part of the open space south of the Anna Kingsley house, aimed at serving two purposes. First, it allowed for excavation that might corroborate or otherwise inform McMurray’s report suggesting the presence of buried fowl—a claim made ever more relevant by the discovery of the buried chicken in West 15. Second, it would potentially create a comparative sample for yards associated with slave cabins. Several 1-by-2-meter units were placed in 2012 and 2013 in the interest of these goals; unfortunately, they revealed disturbances, and ultimately yielded little beyond locating portions of the trenches previously excavated by McMurray himself.

Over the course of those eight field seasons, Davidson and his students also explored a number of areas that were not particularly associated with dwelling spaces of the enslaved. In 2007, students investigated an area to the east of the main house and
the Anna Kingsley house, attempting to locate the remnants of possible guest housing indicated on a historic map. Between 2008 and 2011, they excavated a sugar mill to the east of the tabby barn, revealing the remains of the structure’s octagonal wall, two pig burials, and a central feature possibly associated with the sugar mill’s earliest machinery. Efforts centered on determining the era in which the mill had been constructed. In 2012, limited excavations around the barn sought to illuminate which phase of construction had occurred first. Finally, in 2009 and 2010 Davidson led the process of locating and documenting a portion of the burial ground for the enslaved Africans, which was located centrally within the assemblage of structures. That work yielded an important detail about where and how the enslaved buried and memorialized their kin and neighbors, through the chronicling of six interred individuals and the dispositions of their burials (Davidson 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012).

As indicated through the discovery of a buried chicken near the doorway of Cabin W-15, evidence of religiously-inspired or –directed activity was present in the cabins, as well as in other areas. The chicken burial was accompanied by other objects suggesting deliberate placement as part of a ritual. Inside the body of the hen was an intact egg. The chicken was placed atop a large laterite, and a single amber glass bead (though the bead may not be a part of the intended deposit) (Davidson 2006:29). A deer tibia was located in the front doorway of cabin W-12 (Davidson 2007:33), suggesting faunal bone or sacrifice as a dedication near the entrances of homes. Iron objects were recovered from rear doorways, including an iron hoe blade at the base of the wall trench in Cabin W-13 (Davidson 2006:35). Cabin E-10 yielded a carefully placed greenstone celt near the back door and an iron hoe blade at the base of a wall trench in the corner.
of a bedroom (Davidson 2011:32-36). The water well had been filled with very little in the way of detritus; near its base, however, excavations recovered a single water-worn basalt cobble sourced to the Caribbean (David Foster, personal communication, 2013). In the sugar mill, the pig burials represent a puzzling record, though their remains were certainly deliberate; not only were they located in different parts of the mill, they were recovered from different fill episodes. Finally, the burial ground revealed that some human remains were marked or treated with the presence of whelk shells. Each of these suggests the presence and/or adaptation of religious practice that could likely be tied to West African belief systems (Davidson 2009, 2010, 2011).

As the yard excavations for this study occurred as a part of the final two years of Davidson’s field schools at Kingsley, many of the methods remained consistent with previous practice. Units excavated in yards were 1-by-2 meters in size, and were dug in arbitrary 20-centimeter levels. Excavation was carried out primarily via shovel skimming, with some use of trowels and brushes as necessary. All materials, excepting special collections, were screened through 1/8-inch wire mesh.

Yard excavations differed from procedures in cabin interiors out of necessity; whereas cabins were bounded and discrete, relatively small spaces, the yards around them—even the active inner yards—covered much more ground, so to speak. Exhaustive, complete excavation of the inner yard, even for just a single cabin, was not remotely possible over the course of the combined 12 weeks of fieldwork available for this research. As such, we had to choose which areas to investigate and which to leave unexplored. Further, we made choices about how intensively we could explore any particular area. Finally, we encountered limitations resulting from the cabin’s proximity
to the tree line; in some cases, we did not open units in otherwise attractive areas because other areas offered less inclusion of large tree roots, which made excavation more practicable and reduced the risk of context disturbance. We excavated yards around two cabins: West 15 and East 10. Both are discussed here, though only West 15 is examined for this particular project.

**Cabin West 15**

Over the course of two summer field schools, 18 test units were excavated to explore the perimeter and yard surrounding Cabin W-15 (see Appendix, Fig. 4-1). Some of these units focused on the cabin’s perimeter: four 1-by-2-meter units were laid adjacent to the cabin’s north wall, essentially creating a 1-by-8-meter trench of excavation (though they were not all open in the same year). Along the west wall, which was the back of the cabin itself, four total units were placed. Three of these, placed north of the cabin’s back doorway, were contiguous, constituting a 2-by-3-meter trench, extending two meters into the backyard. The final 1-by-2, oriented in the same direction, was located three meters to the south and ½ meter further east. In front of the cabin, an extended trench was laid in, again divided over the course of two field seasons (so the entire trench was not open at once). A ½-meter by 1 meter unit at the front doorway, with five 1-by-2 meter units extending to the east. This ultimately produced 1-by-10.5 meters of excavated trench that stretched into the front yard.

The remaining four units were not contiguous, nor flush to the cabin’s perimeter. One of these 1-by-2 meter units, oriented lengthwise east-to-west, was laid in the space between Cabins W-14 and W-15. Two more were both north and west of the cabin, in backyard space that may have been shared between Cabins W-15 and W-16. They were oriented with their length north-to-south. A final unit was near the cabin’s
It ran north to south along the cabin’s front wall, to the north of the front doorway. It was offset slightly from the cabin wall itself, as well as the units that were set in to the north (along the side wall) and the south (the trench from the front door).

**Cabin East 10**

In order to broaden our data set and allow for both comparison and the possibility to see and interpret variation, we also opened several units in the yard surrounding Cabin East 10. These excavations, all carried out in 2013, were designed to allow for comparability with the West 15 units, though differential terrain, cabin orientation, and opportunity promoted some variability in coverage. One critical difference between the cabins themselves derived from their locations on the arc. While Cabin W-15 was near the end of the arc, and so oriented with its front doorway opening nearly due east, Cabin E-10 falls in the middle of the east arc. As a result of its position on the arc, E-10 is oriented with its front doorway opening to the northwest. As such, excavations within the cabin that had taken place in previous years adhered to the site’s overall excavation grid, which was aligned with true north. Interior test units thus did not align at all with the natural orientation of the cabin, and sometimes extended beyond the cabin’s natural boundaries, stretching into the yard for those units where the walls were missing.

Given these circumstances, we decided to excavate exterior units aligned with the cabin rather than the site’s overall grid, and to avoid those areas that may have already seen some excavation incidental to work in the cabin. These choices deterred possible excavation along the cabin’s southwest wall, and necessitated placement of a single unit that was aligned with the grid, so that we could more confidently tie the 2013 units into the extant grid points established by the transit.
We also faced limitations in terms of available time, compounded by the need to have some students excavate some of the Anna Kingsley garden area, as well as an area in front of Cabin East 11 that had been brought to our attention by park staff. As a result, we ultimately excavated thirteen 1-by-2 meter units around Cabin East 10, as well as one behind East 11 (between the well and the back wall of the cabin); finally, we placed two 1-by-2-meter units in the front yard of E-11.

As planned, placement of the E-10 units will eventually allow for some comparison to the W-15 yard, while offering some variability in data that may broaden what we can suggest about usage of various areas of these yards. Like West 15, 1-by-2 units were laid in extending from the front door area, creating a trench. Due to prior excavation, the meter in front of the doorway itself was not excavated; and, given time constraints, only two units were placed to create a comparative trench. One unit, in the center of three contiguous 1-by-2s that created a 2-by-3 excavation area, began a meter in front of the cabin. A two-meter gap was followed to the northwest by a second 1-by-2-meter unit; this established four excavated meters, covering seven total meters’ distance from the front door (along with the front door unit that was placed in 2010). Two 1-by-2 meter units were placed along the front wall of the cabin, on either side of the front door, with their length following the wall.

The backyard offered a new possibility for yard excavation that was not possible on the West Arc; given its greater distance from the treeline, we were able to establish an extensive backyard trench, just to the north of the back doorway. As in the front, a 1-by-2-meter unit was placed, with its length parallel to the cabin’s wall. From the southwestern side of that unit, the first of three 1-by-2-meter units extended into the
backyard, establishing a seven-meter-long trench. Between Cabins E-10 and E-11, we placed two 1-by-2 units; unlike the units at W-15, however, these created a 2-by-2-meter excavation area, rather than a 1-by-4-meter trench. The final unit, to the southwest of the back doorway of E-10 and with its northwestern-most corner a half meter from the cabin’s back wall, was the single unit oriented along the true north grid.

**Cabin West 15 Yard: Disposition of Artifacts**

During excavation, all artifacts were processed through 1/8-inch wire mesh screens and bagged for removal to the lab, with two exceptions. First, for those units that produced a large quantity of oyster shell (typically in the East Arc), the shell was “weighed from each separate provenience in kilograms using a hand-held spring scale…and then subsequently discarded” (Davidson 2007:29). The other exception derives from the two units placed in front of Cabin E-11. The abundance of material produced from those two units precluded screening and picking out artifacts, as it would have been too time-consuming. Instead, buckets of material were dumped into a screen to remove any loose soil, then all of the remaining materials were bagged for removal to the lab, without separating out shell or non-archaeological objects.

In the lab, materials were washed with clean water and soft brushes and laid out to air-dry before being sorted into categories by material and re-bagged. All materials retained separation by specific provenience and field specimen number. Thereafter, all artifacts from the Cabin W-15 yard were counted, weighed, and described in a catalogue. Those ceramics selected for attempted refitting were labeled using clear lacquer and ink, per the National Park Service standard.

I also applied a few different methods in the interest of interpretation. In an effort to quantify evidence associated with the presence or absence of sweeping activity, I
recorded measurements for all ceramics and glass, in keeping with similar investigations. My method for this diverged a bit from that used by Heath and Bennett (2000:48). Whereas they documented measurements by the diameter of each specimen, I took length and width on longest side. I applied this method because, as most of these fragments were quite angular and often quadrilateral, they precluded determination of a diameter per se. Likewise, for those specimens that were triangular in shape, I measured the base and height of each fragment. For calculations associated with sweeping, I retained Heath and Bennett’s size categories—more than ½ inch and less than ½ inch.

In order to pinpoint any activity areas in the yard, I examined the relative distributions of various categories of artifacts. While it is true that artifact density in all units was fairly low in comparison with cabin interiors, some areas held a higher density of materials, and particular categories of material, than others. To determine artifact density for a variety of classes as well as cumulatively, I adjusted artifact frequencies for each unit to reflect density per 1 square meter. In other words, if a 1x2 unit had 2 fragments of Pearlware, I interpreted its density as if it were 1 fragment per 1 square meter. Though this is not a perfect measure, it allows some general reflection on artifact frequency in the absence of precise locations for each object.

Finally, a portion of this study is concerned not only with attempting to discern whether the Cabin West 15 yard was being swept, but also with developing a method that might be applied to that effort. Heath and Bennett note the need for a means to determine sweeping and, referring to a prior study that used sherd weights to assess density, suggested that sherd size, for both glass and ceramic, be examined.
Unfortunately, their examination of size frequencies produced inconclusive results, which they attribute to post-occupational disturbance of the site (2000:48). However, the effort to test a method on a hypothetical problem creates a troubling tautology: was their result inconclusive because of the nature of the site, or because their test fell short of the question it was testing?

The interest in exploration of yard sweeping in the archaeological record begs for a way to measure and confirm it; otherwise, we find ourselves assuming it occurred and exploring its importance all in one breath. On the contrary, the possibility that sweeping was minimal, opportunistic, or generally absent may suggest something just as interesting. Moreover, the assumption that every slave yard was swept regularly and extensively assumes a cultural homogeneity that counters good anthropological sense. Discovery of a method that can look at artifact sizes and distributions and correlate them with a probability of sweeping will allow landscape archaeologists in the African diaspora to engage sweeping as more than just a novel assumption; it will allow us to explore that activity in a meaningful, responsible way.

To date, it appears that three different approaches have been employed to explore the probability of yard sweeping around slave quarters. The most recent of these relies not on artifacts, but on the soil itself. Christopher Barton’s (2014:124) dissertation on the African American community at Timbuctoo gleaned the practice of yard sweeping through observation of soil compaction. Unfortunately, given the loose sandy composition of the soil matrix on Fort George Island, soil compaction is not a metric available to this study. In addition to anecdotal evidence from excavation, experts in other fields have noted and documented problems arising from the highly erosive
nature of Florida’s sandy soils. Since observation affirms that soil removal by trowel and brush in the course of fieldwork often results in removal of unintended layers, and evidence by those who account for heavy traffic on these soils suggest that friction on the ground surface produces erosion rather than compaction, we cannot apply Barton’s metric for Kingsley Plantation.

The second and third approaches rely not on observation of soil compaction, but on artifact distribution. The first of these, applied by William Adams at Kings Bay Plantation, used artifact distribution, gleaned through the mean weights of ceramics and glass in each unit (1987:47). Using this method, Adams felt confident that sweeping had occurred there.

Heath and Bennett (2000:48) attempted a similar approach, but favored use of sherd size as a metric, rather than mean weight. Their results were inconclusive; they speculated that later site disturbance via plowing may have compromised the condition of the artifacts in question. Terry Brock applied Geographic Information Systems to this method in his study of St. Mary’s City, Maryland, and was able to discern significant swept yard spaces (2014:230).

My investigation, for the sake of consistency, considers distribution by total weight for ceramic sherds and glass fragments—a slight adaptation of Adams’s method (1987:47)—and also examines distributions through the lens of size, in keeping with Heath’s and Bennett’s approach (2000:48). For this portion of the study, I map distributions of ceramics and glass that measure ½ inch in size or larger. For the sake of thoroughness, I have analyzed this data using two sets of requirements: for the first, I include any glass or ceramic fragments that measure at least ½ inch in length on at
least one side. In the second data set, I require that the fragments be at least \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch in length on at least two sides. In the first set, I can look at distributions with consideration to artifacts that may be very long on one side but very narrow on another; the second set allows me to narrow the data set to ensure a minimum area for each fragment, indicating a minimum overall size requirement.

I viewed this endeavor as a relational analysis; in other words, it was less important that I compare the yard to other areas of known intensive occupation, like a cabin interior. Rather, I wanted to compare artifact density in some areas of the yard in relationship to other areas in the same yard. If swept, some of these should have a sparser artifact density, and others (particularly the further we get from the cabin itself) should have a measurably higher artifact density. To understand how each yard unit compares to the others, I took a mean of the number of “large” ceramic and glass fragments per unit for each data set. I then demarcated any units having artifact densities in excess of the mean. For a more detailed look, I also calculated the standard deviation, and demarcated those units having an artifact density one standard deviation below the mean. This method produced a series of maps by which we can start to interpret and understand whether sweeping was taking place at Cabin West 15 and how it manifested.
Figure 4-1. Cabin West 15 diagram, showing Unit numbers.
CHAPTER 5
RESULTS

Data recovered through excavation of the Cabin West 15 yards allow for two approaches to resistance: selective use of space (activity areas) to elude surveillance and activity associated with ritual and identity.

Selective Use of Space

Areas that enslaved residents of cabin West 15 selected may reflect relationships to the slaveholders on Fort George Island. We can infer ideas and attitudes towards slaveholders based on locations that cabin occupants selected when they sought to carry out everyday tasks and chores. Selection of areas in front of the cabin, and on some sides (depending on which cabin one occupied) would leave the enslaved exposed to surveillance from the main house, and from the Ma’am Anna house. Conversely, spaces behind the arc of cabins would generally be obscured from view from those vantage points. The same is true for some areas on the sides of cabins, particularly in the extreme ends of the arc where the cabins on each distal end (e.g., Cabin West 16) might block a portion of the side yard shared with the neighboring structure (e.g., Cabin West 15). In order to determine which spaces might have been selected as activity areas, I have examined the distribution of artifacts that may be associated with common activities that could take place in and around the cabins. My categories for this analysis are comprised of artifacts associated with leisure or other unstructured activity (tobacco pipes); artifacts of uncertain use (brass nails and beads); and last, artifacts suggesting maintenance and repair (clothing items and armaments).
Figure 5-1. Distribution of all artifacts in Cabin West 15 yard that may be associated with domestic or maintenance activities. Includes armaments, beads, brass nails, and clothing items. Each X represents one artifact.
An initial examination of all categories together produces a somewhat unclear picture, though it does show some areas that have slightly higher deposition. Figure 5-1 shows the artifact distribution of all categories combined, with each “X” representing a single artifact (though they do not represent the precise locations of artifacts within units). The distribution illustrated by this figure suggests relatively even occupation, with 11 of 20 units having at least five artifacts, and only one unit with none at all. This broad view suggests that activities done around the house, for the benefit of family or in advance of the next day’s work, took place essentially anywhere and everywhere. This distribution misleadingly suggests the area directly in front of the front door would have been the site of nearly as much of this type of work as almost any other area.

One way to reduce noise and clarify a picture of how spaces were actually used is to sort these categories more carefully, and interrogate how appropriate they are to answer the question at hand. Three categories are impeachable for our purposes, for two different reasons.

The category associated with leisure is tied concretely to only one type of artifact: smoking pipes (pipe bowls and pipe stems), which are problematic due to their broad distribution. The pattern for tobacco pipe fragments suggests their ubiquity, but does not appear to indicate much in the way of concentrated areas of occupation in the yard. Slightly higher frequencies do occur along the north wall of the cabin’s exterior, as well as in the yard near the back doorway. Generally speaking though, the presence of tobacco pipes throughout the yard reflects a ready availability of pipes and proclivity for smoking around the cabin.
Figure 5-2. Distribution of pipe fragments in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one pipe stem.
Two other artifact categories can be removed for consideration for a single reason: their ambiguous uses or purposes. Brass nails and beads, though sparsely distributed throughout the excavated units, cannot be tied to activities (like mending of clothing) per se, so they are apt for consideration and removal from this interpretation.

Brass nails are often associated with shipbuilding or repair. In his 2007 report on excavations, while detailing artifacts recovered from the interior of Cabin West 15, Davidson noted the presence of a curved brass nail. He interpreted it as likely associated with those activities. (2007:55). He also noted two other investigations that identified brass nails “in marine contexts...as evidence for construction and repair of small water craft. Of these sites, North End Plantation (documented by Daniel T. Elliott) was located on Ossabaw Island—a sea island like Kingsley Plantation. The other, recorded by Lucy Wayne and Martin Dickinson, was located in a slave context in Putnam County, Florida—also in northeast Florida (as cited in Davidson 2007:55).

Given their broad usefulness, it is also likely that these brass nails could belong to other objects, or have been in re-use. Discovery of a cluster of brass nails near Cabin East 10 in 2013 led to a different hypothesis, for instance. The presence of 36 brass nails in approximately four varieties of clinching from a single level of a test unit behind that cabin, along with the fact that the cabin was located relatively far from the nearest body of water, allowed for speculation that the nails may have been part of a trunk. It must be noted, however, that only two of the brass nails recovered from the Cabin West 15 yard are bent at all. While the close provenience of the East 10 nails suggests that interpretation in the way that a somewhat more diffused distribution of brass nails
Figure 5-3. Distribution of brass nails in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one brass nail.
around Cabin West 15 might not, room exists that some or all of the nails around the western cabin may have been associated with a trunk or similarly constructed object. Another possibility is that some of the brass nails could have been used as part of a charm worn on the body, for magical purposes. Precedent for this interpretation can be found in the stories of ex-slaves themselves. For instance, Richard Carruthers of Texas recalled, “I never tried the conjure, but they would take hair and brass nails and thimbles and mix them up in a conjure bag” (Yetman 1970:53). While it is unlikely that many or all of these nails were used (or reused) for this purpose, it is nevertheless possible that charms or conjure resulted in the deposition of one or more of the nails around the cabin.

The multivalence of beads also poses problems with discerning their true significance. Beads could be used to adorn clothing or worn around the neck, wrists, waist, ankles, and hair; some archaeologists and historians have also noted that some may have held particular meaning (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:53). Edwards-Ingram (2005:106), for instance, suggests that beads worn around the waist may also have been used to promote fertility and healthy childbirth. In further discussion, however, she does explore possible color significances, citing Robert Farris Thompson’s interpretation of African diasporic art and religious belief. Thompson noted the significance of every color represented in this assemblage, and detailed their various meanings. According to his research, the color white in Yoruba societies represents “good character” and purity (Thompson 1983:11). Blue and green are associated with “mystic coolness…[a] sovereign concept, which cuts across virtually the
Figure 5-4. Distribution of beads in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one bead.
whole of Yoruba figuration” (Thompson 1983:12). This coolness, associated with good character, can take two forms: “(1) direct sacrifice (ebo), the cooling of the gods by the giving of cherished objects—such as the proffering of a ram to the thunder god; and (2) propitiation (irele), the utterance of conciliatory words or acts to hardened or angered deities, entreating them to become generous and concerned at times of crisis…” (Thompson 1983:15, emphasis his).

Green takes on another meaning, along with white, yellow, and other colors, in association with Osanyin, the Yoruba god of herbalistic medicine. Moreover, Thompson evokes the importance of beads specifically: “beads are important to Osanyin because he associates their colors with the hues and qualities of the forest herbs. Thus some of the sylvan fronds are said to be bright green, while other herbs are yellow, black, red, or even white, and each hue denotes a special kind of curing power” (Thompson 1983:42-43). If applied to archaeological recovery of beads on African diasporic sites across the board, this suggests that beads of many different colors may have been more than adornment, and that such potential should be considered.

Table 5-1. Bead colors and quantities in Cabin West 15 yard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stine, Cabak, and Groover (1996) offer an initial analysis of bead use in African American archaeological contexts, using as reference West African ethnographic practice, WPA narratives, and archaeological excavations. Their salient observations and interpretations clarify the significance of beads in their own right, and the potential
power of blue beads in particular. They connect bead use with conjure for the purposes of good luck, illness prevention, and warding off the evil eye: “given their significance in West Africa, beads were probably a typical item used for charms in the South. African-American slaves, like their African predecessors, wore beads in jewelry or affixed to clothing” (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:60-62). Enhancing potential significance of bead use as charms, they note the meaning imbued in a variety of hues, much as Thompson did, suggesting “Color choice is important in African-American aesthetics, and certain colors used in specific contexts carry specific symbolic meaning” (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:63). Moreover, in mortuary contexts these deliberately selected beads have frequently been associated with women and children (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:62).

Ultimately, the authors sought to parse the ritual significance that might lead to the disproportional presence of blue beads on sites occupied by enslaved Africans or African Americans. Based on the preponderance of evidence, they find that “From a multitude of cultural traditions and possibilities, African Americans along the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia apparently selected blue as a socially meaningful cultural element” (Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:65). It is not unlikely that the same beliefs and associations that produced that practice could be present on Fort George Island as well. In fact, during the University of Florida’s 2007 archaeological field school at Kingsley Plantation, four blue glass beads were located in the interior of Cabin West 12. Davidson (2007:99) interprets these beads as having exceptional meaning; three were clustered together in the front doorway of Cabin West 12 in association with a deer tibia and a red brick. A fourth bead was located in the doorway between the two rooms.
of the cabin. Moreover, Cabin West 15 itself held two more beads, one of which was blue, and was also located in a doorway (Davidson 2007:101). The potential deliberateness of placement suggests an inherent meaning or power to these objects.

In the Cabin West 15 yard, a total of five beads were recovered, of which only one was blue. While this may suggest that most or all of these items were not associated with conjure or other significance, we nevertheless cannot rule it out for any of them. As with the brass nails, the possibility that these were not ordinary, everyday objects renders them unsuited for a study that benefits from clarity of item use.

Excluding these artifact groups, then, we are left with utilitarian, common items associated with daily living. These generally fall into two categories that we can expect would require some repair and upkeep: clothing and armaments. Through isolation and examination of these two categories separately and together, the activity areas suggested in Figure 5-1 become more pronounced.

Clothing items found in the yard around the house include buttons, pins, hooks and eyes, and buckles. Particularly given the rudimentary clothing that was typically provided to enslaved populations, the need to repair or make new garments could be expected. Some plantations provided clothing using a budget of seven to ten dollars per year for each slave, while others purchased cloth and other materials and required clothing manufacture to be carried out on site. Regardless, “the field women had to do extra work to provide some of their family’s clothing, as well as to wash it and keep it in good repair” (Genovese 1974:550-551).
Figure 5-5. Distribution of artifacts associated with clothing in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one artifact.
The highest concentration of clothing items, illustrated in Figure 5-5, is the area directly behind the cabin. A small area to the north of the front corner of the cabin also has a relatively high density of artifacts in this category.

Like clothing, armaments could be seen as critically important to enslaved people, who relied on them to supplement food rations by hunting. Rivers notes that in Florida, “Although the 1828 slave code prohibited possession of firearms by bond servants, planters occasionally allowed trusted slaves to have guns for such hunting” (2000:131).

It is highly likely that just such arms and activities were permitted at Kingsley Plantation, if past can be seen as precedent. In 1811, eleven guns were seized from slave quarters at Kingsley’s Laurel Grove Plantation, located on the St. Johns River next to Doctor's Lake. Two of the plantation’s enslaved managers pressed the Spanish government in St. Augustine to return the weapons, at times forcefully (Schafer 2013:101-103). One can surmise that if Kingsley took issue with his enslaved population holding arms, there likely would be no remnants of them on Fort George Island. Archaeological excavations there have demonstrated that, to the contrary, they were prevalent.

Artifacts associated with weapons that were recovered from the Cabin West 15 yard include lead shot, slightly larger lead ball, and gunflints sized for pistols. The same pattern emerges with armaments as was seen with clothing items, with relatively high density directly behind the cabin and slight representation in a few other areas.

The relative frequencies of items associated with maintenance and repair of everyday objects like clothing and armaments suggest two activity areas. Figure 5-7
Figure 5-6. Distribution of artifacts associated with armaments in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one artifact.
shows the locations of these work spaces: one directly behind the cabin and one along the cabin’s north wall. Selection of these areas reflects cabin occupants’ keen awareness of the relationship between their domestic space and the plantation landscape as a whole.

As many historians and archaeologists have noted, the plantation landscape is designed to preserve the planter’s authority and maintain his power over the enslaved. Randle explains it aptly: “The panoptic plantation reinforced the master’s control over the enslaved population through intervisibility between the big house and the slave settlement” (2011:105). Power is maintained, in other words, not only through the slaveholder’s ability to monitor the spaces and activities in which the enslaved are occupied, but also through the very possibility that the slaveholder may be watching at any moment. The slaveholder can watch and punish at will; the enslaved can, in turn, see the points from which they may be monitored.

The plantation landscape, then, played a role itself in maintaining the condition of the enslaved. It follows that some forms of resistance manipulated and subverted the “panoptic landscape” itself. Camp, (2004:7) explains that:

bondpeople created a ‘rival geography’—alternative ways of knowing and using plantation and southern space that conflicted with planters’ ideals and demands…Much of the rival geography, such as woods and swamps, was space to which planters and patrols had access, and other parts, including quarters and outbuildings, were places over which they also had a large measure of control.

Barile (2004:124) suggests that this sort of secondary landscape was part and parcel of the relationship between enslaver and enslaved: “power comes in multiple forms and on many levels and, moreover, is always characterized by a
Figure 5-7. Distribution of artifacts associated with maintenance and repair of everyday items in Cabin West 15 yard units.
careful balance between both the dominant and the resistant.” Moreover, she draws on others’ work to explore that dynamic in terms of surveillance, stating:

The relations among and between the dominant and resistant are directly tempered by surveillance (Paynter and McGuire 1991:9). It is through surveillance that the dominators repress the subordinates and ‘any weakness in surveillance and enforcement is likely to be quickly exploited; any ground left undefended is likely to be lost ground’ (Scott 1990:195).

While resistance grounded in contested landscapes may be effective to provide relief and contribute a voice of resistance to the discourse of slavery, it nevertheless remains a part of the system’s stability as a whole. Camp (2004:7) echoes this sentiment:

The rival geography did not threaten to overthrow American slavery, nor did it provide slaves with autonomous space...[it] did, however, provide space for private and public creative expression, rest and recreation, alternative communication, and importantly, resistance to planters’ domination of slaves’ every move.

Through this perspective, resistance can be subtle, nearly passive, but still provide relief and push back at a landscape of totalizing domination. This may be what we can see through the activity areas at Cabin West 15. A cursory examination of those spaces that exhibited the greatest density of artifacts associated with maintenance and repair, suggests that the cabin’s residents contested efforts of surveillance. Figure 5-8 demonstrates how this may have worked.
Figure 5-8. Estimated lines of sight from Anna Kingsley's house and yard to Cabins West 15 (green) and West 16 (yellow). Dotted blue lines represent projected lines of sight.

Image courtesy of James Davidson.
As both a broader space and one nearer Cabin West 15 than the main house, Anna Kingsley’s house and yard would offer the best vantage point from which to observe activity at the cabin. Figure 5-8 shows that the work area directly behind the cabin would be completely obscured from view by Cabin West 16, directly to its north. Moreover, the best possible vantage point from which to view the area along the north wall of the cabin is in the farthest southeast corner of Anna Kingsley’s yard. From that spot, the north wall activity area would likely be only partially visible; its partial concealment may afford individuals working there to covertly keep an eye on those who might intrude on their sense of privacy. Use of these particular spaces, then, allowed the cabin’s occupants a measure of privacy not from their community, but from their enslavers.

**Artifacts Associated with Identity**

A second tactic for investigating resistance has to do with individual and cultural identity. A small number of artifacts recovered from the yard excavations may bear spiritual meaning, maintaining a tie to the cabin occupants’ native identities. These objects were often small, and the larger ones were deposited out of view of the main house and Ma’am Anna house. As such, unlike sweeping they may have been associated with covert or private efforts. Some of these items more readily allow for inference about spirituality and identity than others, but each must be considered in its own turn to allow the fullest scope of the meaning with which they may have been imbued.

First, it is worth noting that the Cabin West 15 interior itself possessed a spectacular artifact assemblage that certainly was the product of spiritual dedication. During the University of Florida’s 2006 archaeological field school, a unique discovery
was made beneath the front wall in the cabin’s bedroom area: an “intact and fully articulated chicken (skeleton), along with an in situ egg, an iron laterite/concretion, and a single glass bead, all buried together” (Davidson 2015:80). Indisputably a deliberate deposit (excepting perhaps the glass bead), the sacrificed chicken nevertheless was difficult to identify as certainly associated with any particular culture, though given the presence of the laterite, Davidson suggested Ibo and Yoruba traditions match most naturally (2015:109). The presence of this ritual feature establishes a precedent for Cabin West 15 maintaining and adapting spiritual practices; those small and often isolated artifacts located in yard contexts, if imbued with spiritual meaning, would be consistent with the practices of the cabin’s occupants, rather than extraordinary.

It is important to note that the objects used for ritual or spiritual purposes by enslaved Africans and their descendants were often ordinary objects transformed (Howson 1990:79, Orser 1994:36, Wilkie 1995:139, Davidson 2015:78). In fact, this may have been by design. Orser suggests that “The locales selected by slaves seeking to conduct traditional rituals were hidden and unpretentious, and the artefacts used for their religious observances were undoubtedly everyday things pressed into service (1994:36). That Kingsley, as a slaveholder, was disinterested in affecting the cultures and beliefs that his enslaved population held dear may not have impacted bondpeople’s urge for secrecy. A laissez-faire approach to cultural hegemony may produce limited favor from the perspective of those people of whom he claimed ownership. One can expect that personal religious or magical practices may have become more intensely private, and those rituals and activities that were designed to be private may have even become secretive.
As a result, many of the objects that have been associated with African magico-religious practice are ordinary, everyday items rather than objects that hold an intrinsic, visible religious symbolism. That is, unlike a crucifix or Star of David, these objects may not be manufactured primarily as religious items. Orser rightly argues that any interpretation that suggests religiosity is often difficult to support, and encourages a focus on context (1994:40-42). Given that need for diligence and caution, the following discussion focuses first on those items most likely to have had a magico-religious purpose. Then it explores the varying degrees of possibility that a limited assemblage of other artifacts also had such significance.

Figure 5-9. Aerial photograph showing 2013 excavation units in front of Cabin West 15, with Unit 260 indicated.

Image credit: James M. Davidson.
Two artifacts in particular were most likely to hold spiritual or magical significance, and both were located near the front door. The first of these is a small, roughly rectangular Pearlware sherd. The sherd measures 14.7mm by 14.66mm, and is slightly convex. An “X” has been deliberately etched into the exterior (convex) face of the sherd. This artifact was recovered in 2013, from the south end of unit 260 (in its first 20-centimeter level), though its precise location was unknown. The south half of unit 260 is the portion of the unit that is nearest the cabin’s front door (Fig. 5-9).

![Pearlware sherd with inscribed “X,” recovered from Unit 260. Image credit: James M. Davidson.](image)

This sherd offers the clearest, simplest opportunity for interpretation of magico-religious practice of all artifacts found in this yard. African diaspora archaeologists studying contexts of slavery have amassed numerous examples of items deliberately imbued with such markings, and have compellingly linked them to spiritual identity and religious practice. Ferguson’s deliberation on African origins of some Colonoware pottery in the Atlantic coastal plain includes discussion of similarities between Ghanaian and Colonoware vessels that include incised “X” figures (1980:18). Fennell’s explanation of the Bakongo cosmogram and degrees of elaboration is instructive here,
as well. He explores emblematic use of symbols, engaging the fullest elaboration of a spiritual symbol often in group settings, versus instrumental use typical of personal practice and using a simplified iteration of the symbol itself (2004:4-9). The “X” sherd, then, may represent an instrumental expression of the Bakongo cosmogram, created for personal use. This notion is further supported by the nature of the sherd itself; attempts to mend it with other sherds from unit 260 and other nearby units were fruitless. It would thus appear that this Pearlware fragment, just over ½ inch squared, was itself the full expression of the symbol. It does not appear to have been part of a larger vessel with an “X” inscribed; rather, this fragment seems to have been selected for magico-religious use after its vessel had been broken.

This symbolism, often referred to as a “cross,” or representative of crossroads, is often associated with the “core symbol” that is the Bakongo cosmogram, or dikenga. This cosmogram derives from West Central Africa, which historically included the culture and language groups of “BaKongo, Kingdom of Kongo, Ngongo, and Angola” (Fennell 2007:11). The symbol is suggestive of a variety of meanings associated with the passage of time (as in a single day, or a lifetime) and association between the living and the dead, or man and the gods. The four small discs represent “the four moments of the sun and cosmos,” with the cross dividing day from night, the living from the dead, land from water (Fennell 2003:6-7). The lines thus have a potent multivalence within any particular set of meanings assigned to the dikenga; they represent not only separation between unlike entities, but also that by which they are connected.
The lack of distinct evidence supporting this interpretation of the “crossed” sherd leaves room open for an alternative explanation, as BaKongo people were not the only Africans to employ cross imagery as symbolism. Among Yoruba people, crossed lines also held important spiritual meaning, particularly associated with crossroads and the god Eshu-Elegbara. According to Yoruba religious tradition, Eshu-Elegbara is the “god of the crossroads, as well as “the messenger of the gods, not only carrying sacrifices… to the goddesses and gods, but sometimes bearing the crossroads to us in verbal form, in messages that test our wisdom and compassion” (Thompson 1984:19).

The pervasiveness of both of these religious traditions can be gleaned from folk traditions post-dating slavery, though deeply transformed. One form of conjure appears
to reflect ideas associated with the dikenga. Described in the early 20th century, it has the conjurer dust nails with the powders made from “shame-weed…dried wasp-stingers…and dirt dauber’s nests…and drive them into a locust tree in the shape of a cross (the cross ‘draws from all directions’)” (Puckett 1926:283). This evokes the notion of the “four moments of the sun and the cosmos” (Fennell 2003:6). Puckett also notes that, “Bats are sometimes used by the Yorubas for sacrifice and, with them, sacrifices to avert impending evil are always exposed in a place where several roads meet…” (1926:320). The symbolic importance of crossroads is echoed in African American examples, like this means of protecting livestock from contagious illness: “when animals are dying off rapidly from some disease, a well one sacrificed alive at the forks of a road will cure the rest. A North Carolina Negro was caught sacrificing a chicken this way…” (J.A. Haskell in Puckett 1926:319).

The symbol of the cross is often cited as an easy connection between Christianity imposed by Europeans and Euroamericans and the indigenous belief systems of enslaved Africans. Fennell notes the syncretism of Catholicism and BaKongo belief resulting from various common religious structures, concluding, “the symbol and object of the Christian cross was not adopted as a cosmological symbol that displaced the BaKongo dikenga, but rather as a new form of nkisi container” (Fennell 2007:63).

A transformation this dramatic is unlikely to have occurred at Kingsley Plantation, where the slaveholder adhered to no religious belief and was disinterested in imposing Christianity on the enslaved. Regardless, the evidence at least suggests that the “crossed” sherd constituted a part of an individualized practice of spirituality.
Whatever the meaning of the “crossed” sherd, its interpretation as a personal object holding spiritual significance may be augmented by discovery of a faceted glass chandelier prism in 2012. The prism was recovered from the lower part of unit 229’s first 20-centimeter level, though no more precise information exists with regard to its placement in the unit. The prism provides a good example of ordinary objects repurposed for magico-religious aims. Apparently unaltered from its original state of manufacture, it nevertheless is quite out of place (in terms of its original purpose) near a slave cabin.

![Chandelier prism recovered from Unit 229](image_credit:James M. Davidson)

This curious placement, particularly given its proximity to the location of the “crossed” sherd, suggests that it may indeed have served some spiritual purpose. Other African diasporic sites have recovered crystals or crystal-like objects as well, and archaeologists often consider that they may have served magico-religious purposes. For instance, Klingelhofer noted the recovery of a “large natural crystal…from a slave site at Monticello,” as well as a “3 inch diameter spherical quartzite stone” with three flattened faces at “a probable slave site near the Chicahominy River” and a “polygonal-sided
glass stopper, of a flattened ovoid form, from a cut-and-pressed glass decanter” at Three Garrison Plantation. He suggested that all three may be “possible charms or ritual objects” (Klingelhofer 1987:116).

Figure 5-13. 2012 excavation units around Cabins West 15 (foreground) and West 14 (background), with Unit 229 indicated.

Image credit: James M. Davidson.

The particular spiritual potency of these objects, according to BaKongo belief, has to do with the “flash of the spirit,” and refers to the power of shiny, reflective objects. According to Thompson, the “flash” characteristic of porcelain, mirrors, and other reflective objects is actually “an ancestor come back from the dead to serve the owner of the charm, or a victim of witchcraft, captured in the charm by its owner and forced to do his bidding for the good of the community” (1984:118). The faceted chandelier prism,
like the other crystal and cut glass objects found on sites associated with slavery, holds that flashing quality to which Thompson refers.

Unfortunately, we have no more precise information about the chandelier prism’s provenience than the 1-by-2 meter unit from which it derived, and that it was recovered from the lower part of the first 20 centimeters excavated. If more precise contextual data were available, we could better determine whether it was used in conjunction with the “crossed” sherd. The two objects may not only have been associated with an individual spiritual practice, but also one another. They may represent two components of an nkisi, a BaKongo “physical container into which a manifestation of [an ancestor spirit or soul of the dead] could be summoned and focused” (Fennell 2007:56). Alternatively, they may have been worn together as part of a charm bag, used for protection against illness or bad luck. If the sherd and chandelier crystal were used in association with one another, a final option is that they could have been suspended from the eave of the house. The “crossed” sherd was located quite close to the cabin, so would certainly be near the roof line; depending on the precise location of the crystal (½ meter from the cabin vs. 2 ½ meters), perhaps the same could be said of it. The presence of such items together at a quarter is not unprecedented; in the excavation of Locust Grove Plantation in Jefferson County, Kentucky, Young (1996:144) noted the presence of several chandelier prisms at two separate slave cabins. In structure 2 (of the three slave cabins), in addition to the prisms, a coin with an “X” scratched into it was also recovered. In structure 3, the prisms were accompanied by a marble carved with an “X” before firing and a spoon with an “X” etched onto the handle. In each of these cases,
prisms exist alongside “flashy” items bearing “X” symbolism, though their associations with one another are not known with certainty.

Unfortunately, despite the presence of similar assemblages elsewhere, a paucity of further information or evidence precludes serious consideration of any of these possibilities. Thinking about them, though, does allow important deliberation about the number of ways that individual spirituality may have been in practice and the purposes that charms and rituals served. A final note on these objects, given that they are the two most likely to have magico-religious purpose, and are located within view of the slaveholders’ residences: unlike the chicken burial, which represents a dramatic event and likely an unmissable ritual performance, these objects are small and unassuming. One may wear them, bury them, or even suspend them from one’s eave or front door without garnering much attention. Personal privacy of religious practice could be maintained, even if such a practice would not endanger its practitioner on Kingsley’s island.

Apart from these two items, the remaining assemblage that may be associated with magico-religious activity and identity are more difficult to verify as such. They are largely comprised of ordinary, everyday objects; their distribution does not suggest clustering in any particular area or placement in a deliberate fashion. However, they are often recognized as having religious significance derived from West or Central African cultures, and are worth considering.
Figure 5-14. Distribution of brass nails in Cabin West 15 yard units. Each X represents one brass nail.
Brass nails, while distinctly utilitarian and by themselves fairly unassuming items, nevertheless offer possible support for the notion of a cluster of magico-religious artifacts in the area near the front doorway of Cabin West 15. Six brass nails were recovered from the yard in total; of these, one was located in the same unit as the “crossed” sherd (Unit 260) and another in the same unit as the chandelier prism (Unit 229). As can often be expected with such small and ordinary appearing artifacts, more precise information about their locations within the units was not observed.

Perhaps another byproduct of their unassuming appearance is that they do not necessarily appear that often in the documentary record. Minkisi that include nails have been documented in the archaeological record, but in perhaps the most well-known case, the metal from which those nails are made has not been named (Brown 1994:108-109). Researchers that rely on folklore have documented the presence of nails in magico-religious practices among African Americans, though they are often made of iron (cited in Fennell 2007:62).

African American folklore depicts use of nails for various purposes. Puckett (1926) documents nails (sometimes “rusty nails”) for all manner of purposes and often as part of a collection of items. Some of these purposes include injury of a person’s soul, contacting ghosts, conjuring individuals to cause them illness, good luck, causing another’s death, driving off an enemy, love charms, and “ward[ing] off the devil.” Typically, however, unless the type of nail is specified (as “rusty” or “horseshoe,” for instance), its make is unknown.

A few accounts refer to the use of brass nails for magico-religious purposes during slavery. Richard Carruthers recalls, “I never tried the conjure, but they would take
hair and brass nails and thimbles and needles and mix them up in a conjure bag” (Yetman 1970:53). Carruthers’s account indicates that conjure bags (and inclusions of brass nails in them) thrived and adapted through centuries of slavery, and at least their memory survived into the 20th century.

Thompson’s (1984:79) accounting of Yoruba gods and goddesses provides useful insight as to the significance of brass itself. In particular, he describes Oshun, Yoruba goddess of the river (among other things) as living in a brass palace, and “owning a wealth of bracelets, staffs, needles, earrings—all in brass,” importantly intoning that brass is “the metal the Yoruba regard as most precious.” This passage suggests two non-utilitarian purposes to which brass might be dedicated. First, on an island largely bordered by rivers, individuals may easily find it necessary to appease and appeal to the river goddess. Second, in addition to its association with Oshun, brass was valued in its own right. Its preciousness may have given it an appeal to the cabin’s resident beyond a particular association with a deity or specific belief.

That said, the distribution of brass nails throughout much of the yard casts some doubt on the notion that all (or, indeed, any) were placed deliberately. Though two of them were located in the same units as the “crossed” sherd and the chandelier prism, five others were located elsewhere. In fact, three were recovered from the units associated with the north wall activity area, one in each unit.

Ultimately, given that they are inherently ambiguous items—unmodified and placed in no certain arrangement with known magico-religious objects, any treatment of these nails as tied to spiritual practice is no more than speculative.
Another item of an ambiguous nature, the broken head of a hatchet, was recovered from Unit 230, which sits just to the north of the rear doorway. Davidson treats the uncertainty surrounding this artifact succinctly in his 2012 report, noting that “While it may be an accidental loss or deliberate discard of a broken utilitarian tool, it should be noted that iron objects have previously been found in unusual contexts in the Kingsley cabins.” In three of four instances, the objects had been buried at or near a cabin’s back doorway, while the fourth had been placed in the corner of a cabin’s bedroom (Davidson 2013:25).

If the hatchet was intended as a religious deposit of sorts, it could hold a variety of meanings. Perhaps the most obvious of possibilities is an association with the Yoruba god of “war and iron,” Ogun. According to Thompson, “He lives in the flames of the blacksmith’s forge, on the battlefield,” and “in the piercing or slashing action of all iron” (1984:52-53). Iron jewelry and other iron objects are often associated with Ogun (Thompson 1984:54-57).

In addition to possible affiliation with Ogun, the documentary record holds some evidence that iron axes and hatchets held particular power associated with cutting. One account recalls the “Negro custom of going out into the yard and chopping up the ground with an ax when a storm threatens. This is supposed to ‘cut de storm in two’ and so stop it.

Others stick a spade in the ground to split the cloud, or simply place an ax in the corner of the house” (Puckett 1926:320). The same “cutting” idea could apply in a number of ways. Freedwoman Julia Brown recalled its use as a pain remedy: “We didn’t go to no hospitals as they do now. We just had our babies and a granny to catch ’em.
We didn’t have all the pain-easin’ medicines then. The granny would put a rusty piece of tin or a ax under the mattress and this would ease the pain. The granny put a ax under my mattress once. This was to cut off the after-pains…” (Yetman 1970:47). Another account by Puckett brings this healing power more sharply into focus: “If you are sick and having hard pains, place an ax in bed with you. It will cut the pains” (1926:390). This magico-religious approach in this way acts like a homeopathic remedy; the object is imbued with a metaphorical or supernatural ability that replicates its literal, physical purpose.

Figure 5-15. Broken hatchet blade located in Unit 230.

Image credit: James M. Davidson.
Should this hatchet be interpreted as a reflection of religion or supernatural belief, it becomes significant that this is easily the largest object of that class, and is buried in an area blocked from the slaveholder’s view. Its location bolsters the idea that the cabin’s occupants practiced, if not entirely individually, at least privately enough to hope to elude the planter’s gaze and knowledge.

However compelling this interpretation appears, we must also consider the likelihood that this hatchet was nothing more than a tool. Located within one of the most intensively used activity areas uncovered by archaeological excavation of the yard, this hatchet may have been the victim of a botched attempt at repair or sharpening, or may have been too damaged to be of further use.

As with the brass nails and hatchet, interpretation of the beads in the West 15 yard from a magico-religious perspective is hindered by their placement. They are distributed along the north wall of the cabin and in the side and backyards, and are not apparently affiliated with any of the aforementioned objects, except that one bead and one brass nail occur in each of the units 238 and 258. Nevertheless, much has been made of the potential for beads to hold supernatural or religious significance, so it is important to consider how much of that potential exists in the West 15 yard context.

Beads recovered from a variety of African diasporic archaeological sites have been recognized as having potential spiritual meaning. They have been recovered from graves at sites like the African Burial Ground in New York (Bianco, DeCorse, and Howson 2006) and Freedmen’s Cemetery in Dallas (Davidson 2004) as well as domestic sites that housed enslaved Africans. Excavation at Hermitage returned 64 beads in a variety of colors including blue, black, brown, green, amber, turquoise, and
colorless; archaeologists were uncertain that any held a purpose beyond simple adornment (Russell 1997:69). In an early recovery of such an item in the discipline, Ascher and Fairbanks reported a single faceted blue glass bead from their excavations of the slave quarters on Cumberland Island, Georgia (1971:8). Excavations of three slave quarters at Locust Grove Plantation returned a single blue glass bead; Young noted that this may have been one of many, and others may have been lost due to screen mesh size. Ultimately, she interpreted it as one of possibly three amulets from this cabin, along with two coins (1996:142). The three blue beads clustered in the front doorway of Cabin West 12 at Kingsley Plantation certainly suggest deliberate and purposeful placement, likely associated with a spiritual or magical belief (Davidson 2007:99-100).

Beads have been recovered so frequently, the preponderance of them often blue, that they have begun to be treated as having an inherent potential for spiritual significance. As discussed previously, Stine, Cabak, and Groover approached this topic using a variety of sources, including archaeological research and historical documentation of practices in various West African societies as well as the American South, ultimately concluding that beads could serve a variety of purposes associated with spiritual symbolism or supernatural power (1996:53-63).

Along with the designation of color significance to Yoruba people (Thompson 1984:11-15, 42-43), Zora Neale Hurston details the various symbolic meanings assigned to candle colors (in Stine, Cabak, and Groover 1996:63). Thompson’s description adds another layer of specificity regarding symbolic use of color associated with the Yoruba god Osanyin: “beads are important to Osanyin because he associates
their colors with the hues and qualities of the forest herbs…In some parts of Yorubaland the beads of Osanyin, in their colors and cool glitter, equal the work of multiple, differently colored, healing herbs” (1984:43). In tying the colors to both particular meaning in the form of healing power and to the use of beads to represent that meaning, this description facilitates consideration of the ways these otherwise unassuming objects may have held specific significances.

Figure 5-16. Distribution of beads by color (one bead per unit).

Perhaps the most curious feature of the beads at Cabin West 15 is their relative quantities. Unlike most sites, where blue beads constitute the largest portion of all beads collected, the yard units here produced only one blue bead, an even ratio with yellow and white, and with two green beads representing the most of any single color. Half of the yard’s bead assemblage occurs in colors associated with Osanyin and his
herbal healing powers. This appears in keeping with an association that Thompson makes between Osanyin and the forest, when he explains that many New World adherents include in their worship “a deeper belief in the spirituality of the forest” (1984:42). The prevalence of beads in colors associated with Osanyin in the yard, then, could represent deliberate placement in the space that blends the domestic with the natural environment around it.

Table 5-2. Significance of colors in Yoruba and African American cultures, per Thompson and Hurston (respectively).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Yoruba (Thompson)</th>
<th>African American (Hurston)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>mystic coolness (or green or indigo)--associated with sacrifice or conciliation of the gods</td>
<td>protection and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>good character</td>
<td>peace, weddings, &quot;to uncross&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Relates to Osanyin, god of herbalistic medicine; holds a curative power distinct from other hues</td>
<td>victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Relates to Osanyin, god of herbalistic medicine; holds a curative power distinct from other hues</td>
<td>aids success, helps &quot;drive off&quot; spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Relates to Osanyin, god of herbalistic medicine; holds a curative power distinct from other hues</td>
<td>brings money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Relates to Osanyin, god of herbalistic medicine; holds a curative power distinct from other hues</td>
<td>evil or death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beads provide much fodder for speculation. They represent consumer choice at play in the lives of enslaved persons, whose choices are in so many ways constricted. These beads offer compelling insight into choices related to personal religious practice under harsh conditions. These particular beads, however, can only suggest so much. They lack necessary contextual evidence to support any of the speculation heretofore posited, aside from actually being located outside of the cabin. Moreover, these five beads represent a sample size far too small to allow for any confident conclusions.
However, they do suggest some ways forward in examining links between use of various colors of beads and spiritual practice. More qualitative studies of bead use, for starters, should compare quantities and ratios of bead colors in a way that distinguishes artifacts recovered from cabin interiors and those located in surrounding yards. Different components of domestic spaces may require different protections.

The final object of interest, “a baked clay object, formed with sand, clay, ferrous oxides and small iron concretions, and oyster shell inclusions,” was located in Unit 233 and 232. It was an irregular object measuring 8.5 centimeters by 19 centimeters by approximately 35 centimeters (Davidson 2013:29). Like some of the other classes of artifacts discussed, the location of this object is both compelling and insufficient to suggest its purpose. In fact, the clay mass may be most intriguing because a similar object was located “under the dividing wall” of the cabin’s interior during a prior excavation (Davidson 2013:29).

Figure 5-17. Baked clay object recovered from Units 232 and 233.
Image credit: James M. Davidson.
These clay masses together suggest some consistency of activity or thought process by the inhabitants of this cabin. Clay objects are also sometimes found in contexts suggesting magico-religious purposes. Fennell notes that, “White clay, soil, or ash provided metaphors of the purity of God, the spirits and the dead” (2003:14). Whatever else it might be, however, this object composed partly of ferrous sands is unlikely to ever have been a pure white.

Nevertheless, the oddity of the object itself, and the presence of a similar mass in the cabin’s interior are curious. Unfortunately, without more contextual evidence, they do not indicate a specific significance. Davidson’s speculative explanations include the possibility that these were “found” objects, collected and appropriated “as a form of charm or other religious act,” a deliberately-made clay object that baked in the sun before burial, or that the objects formed as natural concretions and the cabin’s residents were utterly unaware that they existed (Davidson 2013:29). Finally, it is possible that the objects formed as part of the construction process, and are remnants of lime mortar used to fill in holes left by tabby molds (Davidson 2016: personal communication).

Taken together and in their archaeological contexts, this assemblage represents a fairly sparse collection of two objects highly likely to be significant, and several others that could represent spiritual belief in practice, or could simply be ordinary items lost or discarded in the course of daily living. This ambiguity may be an archaeological signature of an effort to maintain privacy of religious practice with regards to the slaveholders. Certainly the two objects most clearly connected to individual spiritual practice would be easy to conceal. In this respect, keeping private one’s religious
observances and protections, like selective use of space for activity areas, can be seen as resisting the slaveholder’s “right” to surveillance of his (or her) enslaved population.

Unfortunately, aside from the sherd and the chandelier crystal, to claim that any one—or even any specific group—of these objects certainly reflects religious practice of any sort would be dubious at best. Rather, they should be considered as data points in a way forward, to build comparison to other sites and assemblages.

**Probability and Nature of Yard Sweeping**

A final tactic to explore notions of resistance and identity involves examining artifact frequencies and distributions to discover whether the cabin’s occupants swept their yards. Yard sweeping was likely a multivalent act; it has been documented as having not only practical use, but also spiritual significance, clearing the space to keep malevolent spirits at bay (Heath and Bennett 2000:43). In addition, some assert that yard sweeping may constitute a subtle form of resistance, delineating the domestic space of the cabin for its occupants, in contrast to the owned space of the planter. Battle-Baptiste compellingly argues that “it was the sweeping of the yard that became the means to create a cultural boundary understood by the captive families living at the site” (2010:88). She claims that, moreover, these cleared domestic spaces were sites for educating children and “communicat[ing] ideas and meaning…” allowing for “the social reproduction of African-American identity” (Battle-Baptiste 2010:90). Yard sweeping, where it can be demonstrated as taking place, reflects an ordinary activity that holds not only great, potentially subversive meaning, but also creates a safe space for practicing and reproducing cultural traditions.

The frequency and distribution of glass and ceramics in the yard space surrounding Cabin West 15 does indicate that the ground was intentionally being
cleared there, though it also suggests a nuanced, adaptive practice. To determine whether sweeping was taking place, I applied quantitative analysis of artifact density for glass and ceramics. I compared each unit only with the other W-15 yard units, to create a more accurate picture of the relationship between different yard spaces, as well as their uses and care by the residents of West 15. I noted which units had an artifact density equal to or higher than the mean artifact density for all yard units, also labeling those units for which artifact frequencies equaled or exceeded the standard deviation. I used this process to examine both total weight (an adaptation of Adams’s method) and artifact size (Heath and Bennett’s method and metric).

Adams’s approach to considering artifact frequencies using weight as a metric does hold some appeal, and we see it bear out on the distribution map (Figure 5-18). Weight should correspond with either the total number of fragments or their size in some way, though the drawback of this approach is in that it does not elucidate which of those relationships is most important. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable that, if sweeping is taking place, we should not see either a large quantity of ceramic and glass fragments or fragments of enough size that they are relatively heavy. The distribution map suggests that indeed, at least to some degree in the front yard, and possibly to a lesser degree directly behind the cabin, the occupants are keeping space relatively clearer than in other areas, like the area surrounding the cabin’s northeast corner. In other respects, though, it is not so useful. Aside from those small areas, which may be recognized only because the author is looking for them, the distribution pattern appears somewhat random, not apparently favoring any particular region of the yard for
sweeping or intensive use. It produces a picture of possible sweeping, but lacks specificity from which we can draw confidence about interpreting it as such.

The Heath and Bennett (2000:48) method does allow for greater specificity, though I found it necessary to modify the method as described in their article to account for a variety of fragment shapes and dimensions. In short, I created a map depicting artifact frequencies where the fragments are 13 millimeters or longer on one side, as well as one for artifact frequencies where fragments are 13 millimeters or longer on at least two sides. The first of these maps obviously includes a larger number of artifacts, and appears to offer somewhat less precision in terms of demonstrating a trend (Figure 5-19).

By this measurement, a bit more of a pattern emerges with respect to spatial use and maintenance. Relative to other units, the units along the north wall of the cabin have a slightly higher frequency of glass and ceramic fragments. This reflects the pattern seen in examination of activity areas, in which the space around the northeast corner appears to have been heavily used for day-to-day maintenance activities. This consistency suggests that the pattern emerging here, using a version of Heath and Bennett’s method, comes closer to reflecting actual use and treatment of space than does a simple analysis of frequency by artifact weight.

With that in mind, this map is nevertheless somewhat discouraging with regards to sweeping. Relative to some other units, the units in the front yard that extend from the doorway generally have a higher artifact frequency. It may reflect the heavy traffic that could be expected for that area, but does not appear to support the notion that this space—maybe the most likely to be swept—was cleared to a greater extent than some
others. That said, a hint of a pattern emerges. Unit 232, the western end of which
begins 2.5 meters in front of the front doorway, has only 23 fragments that reach the
size minimum, and the unit farthest from the front doorway, Unit 253, has only 21. The
space in between may have been the location of an artifact concentration at the
boundary of the active inner yard; in other words, the edge of the yard to which refuse
was swept. Aside from a high relative concentration of artifacts located within a half
meter of the rear doorway, the area behind the cabin appears fairly devoid of “large”
ceramic and glass fragments as well. Given the high frequency of artifacts associated
with daily maintenance activities, this dearth is surprising, unless sweeping removed
those larger objects while missing smaller and denser objects, like lead shot, that might
be more likely to sink into the soft sand.

The final measurement requires the most stringent metric—that at least two sides
be a minimum of 13 millimeters long (Figure 5-21). This more stringent standard
appears to cancel some noise, allowing us to see a pattern that clearly suggests that
sweeping took place. As with the previous measurement, for which only one side had to
be at least 13 millimeters long, a clear concentration occurs along the north wall of the
cabin. The relative infrequency of artifacts in the back yard (to the west of the cabin) is
consistent as well. The greatest distinction between these two sets of measurements,
then, occurs in the units extending from the front doorway. For the first four units,
extending some 4.5 meters, we see a relatively low occurrence of ceramics and glass
fragments that meet the minimum size requirement. Units 251 (35 fragments) and 252
(37 fragments), as in the prior measurement scheme and map, have a higher density,
with a lower frequency in the farthest unit, Unit 253. This echoes patterns established by both previous data sets, and offers the clearest image of them all.

Each of the data analyses thus reflect a pattern of cleared space in both the front and back yards, though the final metric provided the clearest picture of that activity. Given the high traffic that these spaces experienced, a smattering of artifacts can be expected even with regular sweeping. Moreover, the softness of the sand likely presented difficulty for removing all refuse, as the broom may have pushed them down into the earth rather than moving them across it. These data also suggest something specific about how sweeping occurred. First, the pattern indicates that only the spaces directly in front of and behind the cabin were swept; the north wall of the cabin had high frequencies for glass and ceramics, as did a few other scattered units. Second, even where the yard was swept in the front, it does not extend the six meters that Moir claims is a common measurement for the actively used inner yard (1987:234-235). The test units in front of West 15 extend lengthwise from the front door, limiting the precision with which one can determine artifact patterning—it is difficult to say, for instance, whether those large glass and ceramic fragments were limited to the farthest end of Unit 252, or were distributed evenly throughout it. That being the case, if we speculated in the most generous terms, we could conjecture that the yard extended 3.5 meters in front of the doorway. Conservatively, using only the accuracy afforded us by our unit layout, we can only say with any certainty that it extended at least 2.5 meters. Thus, the West 15 swept yard was maybe half the size that Moir estimates was common, based on the artifact patterning of rural farmsteads (1987:229-237).
These distributions, featuring high artifact frequencies to the north of the cabin and a truncated area of low artifact frequency in the front yard, indicate that the occupants of Cabin West 15 swept only in the front and back. Whether due to time or spatial and structural constraints, the strikingly lower overall quantities of glass and ceramic in the first 4.5 meters extending from the front door indicates that they swept only a limited portion of those spaces (Figure 5-21). This iteration of sweeping may not be all that unusual. For instance, Jurney and Moir’s report on late 19th and early 20th century rural farmsteads at Richland Creek (located in north Texas) indicates variations in sweeping practices: “Swept yards were not highly evident at most sites, although two excellent examples were revealed by sheet refuse patterns…On many sites, the inner part of the Active Yard may have been swept and cleaned on occasion to remove refuse and reduce fire hazards, but it was not a daily or weekly task” (1987:231). Some people swept their yards regularly, others likely less so. In another variation, Terry Brock’s research on two slave quarters associated with a 19th century plantation in St. Mary’s City, Maryland revealed that, for one quarter, sweeping was indicated for the front yard only, while the yard associated with a second quarter (a duplex) indicated that sweeping occurred in shared spaces—including the area shared with the single quarter nearby (2014:234). Variability in sweeping practices can thus be seen across sites or among quarters on a single site. It is possible that, while Cabin West 15 swept only a short distance into the front yard and some of the back yard, neighboring cabins approached sweeping in another way, or not at all. The presence of an apparently small area as swept yard does not undermine the probability of sweeping, or that it may have been a multivalent act.
Indeed, the Africans living at Kingsley Plantation likely brought cultural associations linking sweeping to management of ancestors’ spirits with them. The adaptation of sweeping to a new landscape imbued with stringent controls placed on the bodies and time of the enslaved may have necessitated a shrinking of the swept areas, so that only a bit of the front and rear yard could be cleared. However, maintaining that practice within those totalizing constraints also suggests the power of this act to order one’s world, to hold to cultural tradition, however grand or mundane, and to demarcate publicly visible space as a part of one’s own domestic realm.

Thus, as previously explored, the yard was a space delineated to some degree through sweeping, extending personal space claimed as part of the domestic sphere. This demarcation of “homespace” potentially served another purpose as well: establishing a visual “territory” of the home. By clearing yard space, even if intended to protect against incursion by ancestral spirits, women effectively created a contrast between “their” space and the land that was the domain of the slaveholder. While this offered no literal protection from a slaveholder who wished to invade domestic space, even to do harm, the very act of claiming domain and demarcating the yard can be seen as an act of resistance. Taking that which literally belongs to one’s master and ordering it as one’s own to some degree rejects the totality of that ownership. This should not be overstated—it may be unlikely that a planter would take issue with enslaved women bringing order to their domestic spaces. Nevertheless, sweeping could have held multiple purposes and meanings, and one meaning associated with it involves making the space one’s own, thereby asserting a subversive analogue of domain.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This thesis explores issues of identity and resistance practiced by enslaved Africans at Kingsley Plantation through excavation of the Cabin West 15 yard and subsequent recovery of material culture items associated with the cabin’s residents. Treating yards as discursive spaces, interpretation of everyday items and acts adapted for magico-religious practices suggests a subtle approach to religious activity in the front yard; placement of small, unassuming objects and the mundane act of sweeping a space clean could go unnoticed or appear ordinary. In effect, though, these practices allowed enslaved occupants of West 15 to place protective charms and delineate their own space without attracting the attention of anyone surveilling from the slaveholder’s residences. This is consistent with other strategies for yard usage at Cabin West 15, as the cabin’s occupants also selected work spaces out of view of the slaveholders.

Sweeping practices, though perhaps less extensive than expected, created a cleared space that served multiple purposes. Sweeping functioned to clean away debris, while also sweeping away the spirits of ancestors that may cause harm; but it also served to create a visual boundary demarcating the domestic space “belonging” to the cabin and its occupants. Ceramic and glass distributions in the front yard indicate that the space directly in front of the cabin was likely swept clean to a distance of approximately 4.5 meters; after that point, the quantity of debris increases noticeably, creating a visual marker indicating the end of the inner active yard space. This visible border extended the domestic sphere outside of the home and, as such, the symbolic domain of the cabin’s occupants.
It is not insignificant that these three sets of practices share the quality of nuance. Enslaved individuals were expert at strategic concealment, establishing “rival geography” and covert means of communication (Camp 2004:7). They chose small charms or religious objects that might escape notice (placing larger objects outside of the common landscape); likewise, artifact distribution patterns indicate that they chose workspaces for mending clothing or cleaning weapons that were located just around the corner and out of sight. Without being confrontational, these actions provided much-needed relief from constant surveillance and afforded individuals some control over their body, time, and labor.

Likewise, sweeping may have concealed a form of resistance by virtue of its multiple meanings, and of the slaveholders’ perceptions of it. Because it could be dismissed as nothing more than cleaning, one may not perceive that an enslaved woman, in sweeping her yard, was also asserting a boundary—creating space for “community building, social interaction, political struggles, and everyday resistance,” in part through passing critical knowledge of skills and survival down to her children (Battle-Baptiste 2010:89). Though these spaces were certainly subject to invasion and violation, the swept yard offered an understated but powerful resistance, taking symbolic ownership of a space on the landscape belonging to the slaveholder. By extension, this could be seen as asserting personhood through claiming space—inhomrently refuting the claim that one is no more than object property.

Enslaved Africans at Kingsley faced structural (if not literal) violence; as on any plantation, outright confrontation was no real solution to the problem of enslavement. These problems were amplified for women, who were confined to the plantation to a
greater degree than their male counterparts, and who were distinctly more vulnerable to sexual violence. Through the use of the “masked” practices of covert spiritual activity and sweeping, they could maintain a façade of cooperation while engaging in resistances associated with self-preservation, maintaining and expanding “homespace” into the shared landscape. None of the evidence points to practices aimed at revenge, hindering the plantation economy, or otherwise creating negative consequences for the planter and his family. Rather, the resistance carried out through these acts performed the essential functions that Scott would categorize as intended to “mitigate…claims made by superordinate classes” (1985:32-33) by creating space for a semblance of solitude or the solace of community.

**Future Research Directions.** To build on the research and interpretation undertaken herein, future studies will extend to take a broader view of Kingsley Plantation’s residential compound as a total landscape. It will integrate comparison with information gleaned through excavation of the Cabin East 10 yard. Study of these two yards, along with a yard from Bulow Plantation in Ormond Beach, will facilitate a more thorough analysis of yard sweeping, applying a consistent method involving intra-yard comparison of artifact frequencies using mean and standard deviation to all three lots. It will also expand to include other features documented through recent excavations, including an African burial ground, a water well, a midden, and an as-yet undefined midden-like feature. Future studies will continue to consider the plantation landscape as a cohesive space, and a place for important (if minimally conducted) discourse between the enslaved and slaveholder, particularly with respect to resistance. It will also involve an expanded interpretation of religious practice in order to explore variations among the
enslaved community in belief and expression. Future research will thus continue to investigate the ways that identity and resistance can be seen in the personal-but-public yard spaces around cabins, as well as exploring the religion, roles, and resistances of enslaved women. Examination of two yards on the same plantation will invite deliberation about intrasite variation, potentially raising questions to challenge overly simplistic views that characterize enslaved populations as monolithic entities. Rather, it will consider the enslaved community as diverse and dynamic, and attempt to understand the ways that treatment of yards varied among members of a single plantation, reflecting cultural, spiritual, and personal diversity.
Figure A-1. Frequencies of glass and ceramic artifacts in yard units around Cabin West 15 by weight (in grams).
Figure A-2. Frequencies of glass and ceramic artifacts in yard units around Cabin West 15 by size (one side must be at least 13mm).
Figure A-3. Frequencies of glass and ceramic artifacts in yard units around Cabin West 15 by size (both sides must be at least 13mm).
Figure A-4. Frequencies of glass and ceramic artifacts in yard units around Cabin West 15 by total count (in bold) and size (both sides must be at least 13mm—regular text). Units in which total count exceeds the mean are indicated by shading.
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