The Enslaved Community of Silver Bluff: Family, Resistance, & Freedom in Early America

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BY BRYAN RINDFLEISCH

George Galphin, the master of the Silver Bluff plantation near Augusta on the Georgia-South Carolina border, died on December 1, 1780. Despite the chaos of the Revolutionary War, Galphin's family and friends executed his last will and testament, beginning by compiling "An Inventory and Appraisement of [his] Estate" that they filed with a probate judge in Abbeville County in September 1782. The inventory is a testament to the great wealth that Galphin had accumulated in his lifetime, listing his brick houses and other buildings, beds and furniture, tools and wagons, cattle and horses, bills and cash (worth over £30,000), bonds and debtor's notes (in excess of £29,000 pounds), and luxury items like walnut and mahogany desks and an "eight day clock." However, Galphin's most valuable possessions were the hundreds of human beings catalogued in that inventory, from a "fellow named Jamey" with an estimated "worth" of £500, to "Charlotte & [her] 2 children" appraised at £500. To those who inventoried Galphin's estate, the humanity of these individuals was distilled down to a number, "their personhood devalued," and their "bodies [transfigured into] commodities." Inventory entries for enslaved individuals were intermixed with those for saws and nails, iron pots and pump augurs, hogsheads of tobacco and deerskins, and an endless array of other tools and goods tied to—or were the product of—the enslaved laborers at Silver Bluff. The enslaved appeared in the inventory alongside Galphin's horses, sheep, hogs, cows, and cattle, an overt reminder of slavery's commodification and dehumanization of people.¹

Left: This is the only known sketch in existence of the Silver Bluff Baptist community and its church, drawn sometime in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Image in Public Domain.
Beyond the physical violence that defined the enslaved experience and undoubtedly the lives of those at Silver Bluff, the lives of people like Jamey and Charlotte were driven by "their monetary value," worth attached to their bodies by others that was continually reassessed at several life stages, from childhood to death. Jamey’s assessed value in the Galphin inventory was tied to his being a young adult laborer in his prime, and Charlotte’s to being a woman with many years of potential childbearing ahead of her. The historian Daina Ramey Berry emphatically reminds us that enslaved peoples had their own “thoughts, expressions, feelings, and reactions to their commodification,” and that they tried to reconcile their circumstances with the external value placed on them. Galphin bequeathed many of Silver Bluff’s enslaved women and their “future increase”—their unborn children—to his family members. The inventory cannot capture how those women adapted themselves and their unborn generations to the emotional violence of such grizzly fates.
Yet the story of the Silver Bluff community is not only one of violence; it is also a story of family and of the everyday ways the enslaved pursued freedom. Family was “the greatest source of strength,” for it provided a sense of identity and belonging, comfort and support amid degradation, and nurtured hopes for freedom. Scholars have also learned that “personal expressions of freedom among enslaved people could be found in nearly every aspect of chattel bondage,” for it “was always a dream and in some cases was a goal.” The family proved critical to fostering such hopes for the future. This familial unity and hope, however, did not negate or diminish the everyday violence that these enslaved families faced because family was “also their greatest vulnerability.” Enslaved peoples were subjected to a physical, emotional, and sexual violence that threatened to sever kinship ties. Altogether, the interplay of family, resistance to violence, and negotiations toward freedom defined the Silver Bluff community. This freedom dream came to fruition during the American Revolutionary War.

Seen in this light, the Galphin inventory takes on a different meaning for the enslaved peoples of Silver Bluff. It not only names the hundreds of human beings who lived and died there, it also reveals to us the families who gave meaning to life in slavery and who sought freedom together in the mid-to-late eighteenth-century. Galphin’s inventory and will catalogued the Silver Bluff community by family groups, such as “Cyrus, with Wife Maria & 5 children,” “Elsey & 3 children,” “Cato his wife Bess [and] their children,” or “French Peter his wife Silvia [and] their children.” Kinship among the enslaved provided what Berry calls “soul value,” or a “spiritual value...reinforced by loved ones” that defied their everyday condition. Using Galphin’s inventory and will, we can reconstruct the Silver Bluff community, which consisted of several hundred persons over the course of four decades.

From names in the inventory we can learn several details about a community that would normally be obscured by a limited historical record. For instance, the enslaved at Silver Bluff were not only of African descent, but also Indigenous, such as “Delia a half Breed Indian woman” and “Sally (Indian)... [and] her Children,” or Nitehuckey an “Indian Girl” and one “Indian Prince.” More importantly, these African- and Indigenous-descended peoples forged kinship ties to combat dehumanization and, in some cases, resist enslavement. Such was the case for Augustus (African) and Nitehuckey (Indigenous), who coupled and even had several children after Galphin’s rape of Nitehuckey. Family often provided the motivations for freedom, such as Cloe who used the opportunity of the Revolutionary War to “Absent
[herself] from the State & went off" with her five children. Or for Trump and "his Wife Tennah, her daughters Hannah and Lindsay with 4 children," who fled "to the British &...Indian Nations," never to return to Silver Bluff. 6

While scholars are limited by the documentary evidence when it comes to recovering enslaved communities like Silver Bluff, this article is informed by works by Marisa Fuentes and Jessica Millward, who have challenged historians to better "narrate the fleeting glimpses of enslaved subjects in the archives" despite the "disciplinary demands of history that require us to construct unbiased accounts from these very documents." In Fuentes's own research on the "dispossessed lives" of enslaved women in the Caribbean, she shows how to "stretch archival fragments by reading along the bias grain to eke out extinguished and invisible but no less historically important lives" in order "to recover what might never be recoverable," and to not be afraid of "allow[ing] for uncertainty, unresolvable narratives, and contradictions." As Fuentes puts it best, salvaging the enslaved experience is part of a "methodological and ethical project... and the consequences of reproducing indifference to violence against and the silencing of black lives" is a "responsibility to these vulnerable historical subjects" who lived their lives and empowered one another despite "subjugation and commodification." Or as Erica Dunbar Armstrong recounts in the life of Ona (Oney) Judge, a woman enslaved by George and Martha Washington, those who "study slavery in early America...understand how very difficult it is to find our subjects in the archives" but nonetheless those individuals "left the world just a bit of [their] voice." 7

With that said, the dangers of reading beyond the documents are real and at times impede historians' efforts to do justice to experiences of the enslaved in early America and to their narratives. Take for instance Lorena Walsh and her study of the community at Carter's Grove in eighteenth-century Virginia. As Walsh admits, since the peoples she followed were "shadow figures" in the documentary record at best, she wrote a "history of a group of slaves...presented as a composite of the generalized experience" rather than "the life stories of individual slaves" whose experiences remained "ambiguous" or forgotten. As Millward articulates so beautifully, these enslaved individuals "haunt historical memory because they carry the weight of the African diaspora's traumatic past," and "are persistent in their desire to be remembered." Therefore, "how we choose to engage the enslaved past, then, is not simply a matter of discourse. We honor...their stories [by] speaking their names,"
and “recreating their lives not only provides a better understanding of [their] humanity but may also bring peace to their souls.”

George Galphin entered the world of American slavery in 1737 as a newly arrived immigrant from County Armagh, Ireland, and as a lowly Indian trader of deerskins. Over three decades, Galphin reinvented himself as a “Gentleman distinguished by the peculiar Excellency of his Character—of unbounded Humanity and Generosity—incapable of the least Degree or Baseness—so much esteemed throughout the whole Creek Nation, that it may truly be ascribed to his Influence alone, that many a Rupture with those Indians has been prevented.” Galphin’s success owed much to the relationships he forged in the Creek (Muscogee) town of Coweta, one of the most influential communities among the Lower and Upper Creeks. Through his sexual relationship with Metawney, the daughter of Coweta’s Tastanagi (war leader), Galphin enjoyed connections to several important individuals within Coweta and Creek society. These relationships contributed to his becoming a wealthy merchant and intermediary for the Creeks with the British during the mid-to-late eighteenth-century. Galphin put his wealth into the Silver Bluff plantation. Visitors described Silver Bluff as a “very celebrated place,” one that would “prove to be the foundation of monuments of infinitely greater celebrity and permanence than the preceding establishments.”

Galphin, like other planter elites in the eighteenth-century South, overwhelmingly relied on enslaved labor; he accumulated hundreds of human beings over three decades. Galphin first inherited twelve slaves when his second wife, Bridget Shaw, died in 1743. He then acquired the majority of his enslaved community via the debts of others. For example, the planter Owin O’Daniel owed Galphin £800, and to settle his accounts sold “one man named Varow likewise Forty one Head of Cattle.” Or in the case of John Sellers, who was bound to Galphin for £7,640; Sellers gave up hundreds of acres along the Ogeechee River and a “Wench called and known by the name of Jenny.” Galphin also purchased slaves at markets, such as two men “and two Women... bought out of the first Ship that Comes in,” and from other masters like Joseph Butler and Edward Barnard. In some cases, he bought runaways captured in Creek Country, such as three men “carried down to Silver Bluff and sold to George Galphin” in 1769. Altogether Galphin inherited, purchased, or claimed somewhere between 280 and 410 human beings from 1743 to 1779.
Scholars have grossly underestimated the number of individuals who lived on Galphin's plantation, as well as the diverse and familial character of that populace. The scholar closest to the actual number of enslaved has estimated that “well over a hundred slaves” lived at Silver Bluff by 1763; instead, it was several hundreds who labored at Silver Bluff between 1742 and 1780. Of these hundreds of individuals, about two-thirds were men or young boys, and the remaining third were young girls and women. While the majority were of African descent (either from Africa or of multi-generational descent), around a tenth of the Silver Bluff community were of Indigenous descent, such as “Indian Peter.” Individuals like Indian Peter demonstrate the enslavement of Native peoples continued even after the seventeenth century, albeit in smaller numbers. In fact, many of these individuals—both African and Indigenous—intermarried, had children, and forged families, like David George’s wife Phillis “who was half an Indian by [her] mother’s side.” These relationships illustrate another insight into the Silver Bluff community: family was everything. It served, among other uses and needs, as a means to cope with their enslavement, a source of emotional support and “soul value,” and a way to transfer African and Indigenous culture and customs to future generations. This is why the Silver Bluff community together created more than seventy families, which accounted for more than two-thirds of those who were enslaved at the plantation.\[^2\]

The Silver Bluff community’s labors were the foundation of Galphin’s wealth. As David George recalled, they “plow &...weed Indian corn,” cultivated rice, hemp, and tobacco, as well as the incredibly expensive and pain-staking task of harvesting indigo.\[^3\] In addition, they staffed Galphin’s gristmills and sawmills, where they ground corn or sawed lumber that Galphin sent to the West Indies and Europe. African and Indigenous peoples were also employed in more skilled capacities as carpenters and sawyers who constructed out-buildings and provided the upkeep for Silver Bluff. Women like Moriah—derisively called “house wenches”—catered to the Galphin family’s every want and need, from cooking and childcare to laundry and sewing. Meanwhile, others among the enslaved performed more particular labors, such as Pompey, “a Gardener by trade,” who cared for Silver Bluff’s flora and fauna, which the natural scientist John Bartram found to be “very delightful.” Some individuals procured fish that sustained refugees at Silver Bluff during the Seven Years’ War, or were hunters entrusted with killing fur-bearing animals for food and trade. On occasion these hunters assisted Galphin in tracking down horse thieves and murderers, in one case shooting at a suspected murderer.\[^4\]
As shown in Henry Mouzon's 1775 map, the Silver Bluff plantation was strategically located along the Savannah River, the Creek Path, and near Augusta (the preeminent center of the deerskin trade in the South). Courtesy of the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens.

Enslaved labor on Galphin's cowpens further enriched his coffers. While men like Ketch maintained one of the “most considerable stocks of cattle” and horses in the South (estimated at “3 or 4000” head); women, or “cowpen wenches,” also cared for and maintained those animals. European observers noted that Galphin's cowpens “are the greatest curiosity this country affords...in which four or five negroes, with one white man, generally live to look after a number of cattle of various kinds, that occupy a range of country of six to ten miles round.” The “chief employment of these herdsmen...is to tend the calving of the cows, and the foaling of the mares, and to bring those to the pen that stand most in need of assistance and care.” These herdsmen proved so “dexterous in catching and training the wildest horses, [that] great profit is made to their master by the sale” of horses and cattle. Along with
tending to Galphin's animals, men and women maintained the barns and stables, butchered cattle, and transported the animals along the "Cattle Road[s]" for sale in Georgia, the West Indies, or to feed British garrisons in Florida. In one memorable instance, Galphin gloated to his nephew, Timothy Barnard, that his herdsmen "deliver[d] a gang of Steers to a Butcher I have sold about 300 they sell well from 50 to 60£ Sterling each."

Enslaved labor proved just as critical to Galphin's success in the deerskin trade. Despite imperial restrictions on "employ[ing] any...Slave in the Indian Country," British authorities consistently noted "Mr. Golphin carr[ies] Negroes to ye Creeks and Cherokees" and "constantly employs 400 pack-horses in trading through the Creek nations, Chicasaws, Chactaws, and other Indian tribes." These individuals, whom David Taitt disparagingly described as "half breeds and Negroes...[in the] trade," were packhorse men who transported the goods that Galphin traded in Creek towns for the deerskins they carried to Silver Bluff. On one enriching occasion, Galphin "sent 50 Horse loads...& brought back 8000£ weight of Leather," followed by "50 Horse loads a Second time" that reaped similar dividends. Galphin's packhorse men were also occasionally accompanied by Creek men who "guard the packe horses down & up" the trade paths. At the same time, packhorse men delivered communications from Galphin and imperial agents to Creek leaders, and vice versa. As Thomas Bosomworth recounted in 1752, he "Received a Letter...per Favour of Mr. Golphin, the Purport of which was that some People had been endeavouring to misrepresent every Thing done in the [Creek] Nation" delivered by "the Negro [who] returned to the Cowetas." While in Creek towns, packhorse men were often tasked by Galphin with gathering any intelligence relevant to the Creek-British alliance, such as the "two Gangs of my Packhorses [who] came in from the Lower Towns say it is all peace and quiet there."

Galphin relied on packhorse men fluent in the Muskogee language to interpret and mediate during negotiations between Creek and British leaders. For instance, Indian Peter served as "Linguist" at one of the most important congresses during the Seven Years' War; he facilitated peace talks despite hostilities between the British and Cherokees and attempts by certain Creeks, like the Mortar of Okchai, to join "in killing white People." By the end of that conference, one of the leading micos, Captain Aleck of Cusseta, vowed that "the day shall never come that we will help the French and the Cherokees against the English. We hold the English our Friends fast." For his services, Indian Peter was paid three pounds. African-descended
individuals similarly learned Muskogee, such as Ketch, who doubled as a “stock-
minder” and “an Interpreter among the Indians for Galphin.” These packhorse
men thus proved invaluable to both Galphin’s trade and maintaining peace with the
Creek Nation. 17

When packhorse men returned to Silver Bluff, they prepared and packaged the
deerskins for market, which Galphin then entrusted to patroons (enslaved boat-
men) who transported the skins destined for European ports to Augusta, Savan-
nah, and Charleston. As Henry Laurens confided to his suppliers in London, “Pack
Houses [were] where Negroes have the Management [of deerskins] & your Inter-
est so far is trusted in their hands.” In packhouses men like Old Cyrus, Petersison,
Syfa, Coboy, Coffee, and Mingo unloaded the deerskins, then “mended [the] deer
skins” (by scraping, stretching, drying, soaking, and dyeing) and packaged them for
transport. 18 It was then the responsibility of Galphin’s boat pilots like Pumpkin and
Abraham to deliver those goods to his merchants, which is exactly what Tom Bonar
and three other patroons did in 1772, guiding their “Trading boat” down the Savan-
nah River to market. Enslaved patroons became so commonplace on South Carolina

Whipping was the most common form of slave punishment. This image shows not only the violent dimensions of the master–slave
relationship, but also the violence directed against enslaved women. Georgia Historical Society.
and Georgia's waterways by the mid eighteenth-century that scholars describe their presence as a process of "Africanization" of the South's waterways. These boatmen not only transported deerskins and corn, but people as well, like Dougald Wood, who found "passage up the river Ogeechee" with Galphin's boat hands.¹⁹

As a master, Galphin joined a growing number of planters in South Carolina and Georgia who favored a more paternalistic relationship with their enslaved communities. In petitions to acquire land made to the South Carolina and Georgia legislatures, Galphin framed himself as the head of "a Family consisting of forty Slaves." Galphin was not alone in rhetorically equating enslaved peoples to family members, as masters increasingly relied "less on physical coercion and punishment" and instead demanded "deference and loyalty in return for benevolent oversight." While some scholars argue that such paternalism recognized "the humanity of their slaves, [and] developed emotional attachments to them," at the very least it produced "self-restrain[ed]" violence in some master-slave relationships. In addition, it is likely that Galphin's paternalism stemmed from his meteoric rise from poverty to gentility, which gave him the chance to "play the role of the landed country gentleman" and subscribe to "paternalistic ideal[s]." David George said that Galphin was "very kind to me" and considered him an "indulgent master."²⁰ Others of the enslaved likely had similar feelings about their owner.

Galphin's paternalism could not, however, eliminate the inherent violence of the master-slave relationship. As much as Galphin might have treated the Silver Bluff community as family, the enslaved were still "the most dependent members of [that]...family," and beholden to an "all-powerful father figure" who wielded intrusive and coercive power over their lives. Although there is little to no documentary evidence that Galphin himself was a physically violent master, it is altogether impossible to have kept an enslaved community of hundreds of peoples in subjection and from the freedom they sought without at least threatening or even occasionally employing violence. As the historian Marisa Fuentes argues, we have to assume violence within the master-slave relationship because "enslaved women (and men) are excluded from recounting their own violations except through the voices and interpretations of...white men. This archival silence effectively mutes...and profoundly suppresses enslaved subjectivity" and obscures the violence they experienced at their masters' hands. Moreover, despite Galphin's paternalism, the Silver Bluff community was governed by slave codes that "regulated slaves' behavior," everything from requiring passes to leave the plantation or restrictions on meeting in groups...
without white supervision, to "capital punishment for a range of transgressions [such as] injuring whites [or] crimes against property." Masters like Galphin were permitted "to punish their slaves without fear of prosecution." 21

Paternalistic masters also used physical violence to coerce both labor and obedience from the enslaved. As one of Galphin's closest confidants, Henry Laurens, observed, masters needed to "carry a steady command" and "exert...Authority" by "chastis[ing] [slaves] severely but properly." The use of force by paternalistic masters was an intimate act, not only an assertion of "personal domination" but the manifestation of a "wrathful and unforgiving father figure" who considered enslaved peoples a part of his household and family. As scholars have established, "feelings of compassion, even friendship, could [co-]exist between master and slave" but did not negate the use of violence in the master-slave relationship.

Such paternalistic intimacy did not, however, extend to Galphin's overseers, like John Crossley, John Large, and Jane Holmes. Overseers surveilled the enslaved in the fields, or accompanied the packhorse men who traveled between Silver Bluff and Creek towns; they may have used the whip or employed other forms of violence to ensure their authority in Galphin's absence. Such routine violence could be meted out for any reason, from Henry Laurens's slaves who packaged deerskins "damaged by Worm" to one of Galphin's slaves who refused to work and was punished severely. 22 The pain and the toll that slave labor had upon one's body was tremendous, since the cultivation of rice that was "the most onerous and labor-intensive... crop" and "hazardous to health." 23

The violence of the master-slave relationship extended to the spaces that the Silver Bluff community called home. Galphin positioned his brick house so that it overlooked the slave quarters and plantation fields so that he could engage in surveillance that Henry Laurens euphemistically described as being "very watchful." Also, because family was "the greatest source of strength [for enslaved peoples] but also their greatest vulnerability," masters like Galphin exploited kinship to ensure obedience. Despite Galphin's encouragement of family-formation at Silver Bluff, he was not above buying a young "boy sold to John Meally" and separating the boy from his mother, whose "husband and daughter were killed" when resisting capture. Galphin continuously used the threat of separation to coerce labor, an emotional terrorism that weighed heavily on enslaved families. He followed through on such threats when he used the services of the merchant firm Read & Mossman in October 1765 to ship
off an unnamed husband and father to St. Kitts in the West Indies. While we can only speculate as to the reasons for that sale, it should be assumed that this was not the first or last time that Galphin separated families, as he maintained “Account No. 232” with Read & Mossman throughout the 1760s and 1770s. Galphin’s actions are a testament to the varying degrees of physical, psychological, and emotional violence that the enslaved of Silver Bluff endured individually and collectively. 24

Galphin may have embodied an even more insidious aspect of slavery: sexual violence. As Sharon Block, Kirsten Fischer, Jennifer Spear, and other scholars remind us, the entire “slave system institutionalized the sexual exploitation of enslaved women by making access to their bodies a prerogative of male slaveholders” and “served as a sexualized marker of the victim’s...slave status.” In short, the entire institution of slavery was predicated on sexual exploitation and forced sex acted as an overt reminder of the power of white slave masters and the vulnerability of female slaves. To make matters worse, “beyond the unadorned physical power that could compel a woman into a sexual act, a master had an array of indirect means to force a dependent to have sex with him that simultaneously denied her resistance to him” and “violently reinforced the sexual, gendered, and racial orders of colonial societies.” Sexual violence perverted paternalism as the master-slave relationship turned from a father-like intimacy to incestuous rape. Unfortunately, these acts of sexual coercion were largely invisible, occurring behind closed doors or in the privacy of the master’s domain, generally unrecorded in archival documents. 25

In Galphin’s case, all we have are fragments of that violence, or what we can infer about it from his estate’s inventory and his will; nonetheless, those fragments reveal what was likely sexual violence. 26

We know that Galphin cultivated sexual relationships with at least five enslaved women, Nitehuckey, Sapho, Rose, Hannah, and Clarissa, three of whom bore children. While there is the possibility that these relationships may have been consensual, the very nature of the master-slave relationship calls into the question the ability of enslaved women to actually “consent” to sex. Take the case of Nitehuckey, an Indigenous woman. We know Nitehuckey first coupled with an African-descended man, Augustus, and had two or more children. At some point Galphin started a relationship with Nitehuckey, which produced another daughter, Rose, whom Galphin later manumitted. Nitehuckey, Augustus, and their own children remained enslaved. Galphin then repeated this pattern with four African-descended women and again manumitted the children born of those relationships.
while these women and their families remained enslaved. As Jennifer Morgan argues, masters like Galphin purposefully exploited “black women’s bodies in search of a promising future for their own progeny...[and] manifested their hopes for the future” through those women’s bodies. We can only imagine the physical and emotional toll that such relationships took on Nitehuckey, Sapho, Rose, Hannah, Clarissa, and their families—whether they were consensual or not.27

Violence also manifested itself outside Silver Bluff. The safety of the packhorse men and patroons who ventured to Creek Country was never guaranteed. Whenever European settlers antagonized the Creeks their men targeted property as a form of retaliation, or to express their displeasure with the current state of the Creek-British alliance. While Creek peoples primarily stole horses or killed cattle, they at times kidnapped slaves, which exasperated British leaders, who complained to Creek micos of their “mad people...[who] Carried off[f] horses, Cattle, Negroes...[and] Struck out the white wing of peace to your Nation.” In other cases, the Creeks lumped slaves together with their masters and indiscriminately killed both in times of conflict, such as “Ross’s slave” who was gunned down in the town of Sugespoga by a “son of the headman of that town.” Or in December 1773, when settlers trespassed on Creek lands despite warnings not to, several Creeks attacked the “Family of one White...[and] killed 7 and wounded 4 of the Sherrol [family]...[including] two Lads and a Negro.” Such danger was magnified in times of war, most notably in the Seven Years’ War, when one “Fellow...was killed on this Side [of] Savannah River...[and] found the next Day shot through the Body, and his Throat cut.” Such threats hit closer to home at Silver Bluff in March 1761, when “a white man and a negro were fired at by some Indians...from Galphin’s Fort at Silver-Bluff...[and] caused an alarm in that part of the country.” If enslaved peoples ever defended themselves, such as the “three Runaway Men” who killed a “Creek Indian hunting near Sittilly River” to prevent being recaptured, they were hunted down and “all tried and condemned to be hanged.”28

Despite the ubiquity of violence, enslaved communities like Silver Bluff continuously sought to negotiate—in ways large and small—to influence the master-slave relationship. Because Galphin postured as a paternalistic master, he was forced to compromise with the laborers he depended on for his livelihood, a “mutual dependence...forged in the heat of continual, inescapable, face-to-face encounters.” As scholars have established, the paternalistic master-slave relationship was thoroughly negotiated, or as Sharon Block asserts, slaves “maintain[ed] as productive a rapport
with their masters as possible [for their] relationship, even the incontrovertible inequitable one of slavery, depended on both participants' negotiations over its terms." Slaves walked a "fine line between covert resistance and... disobedience." On the other hand, Galphin was forced to abide by "reciprocal obligations and duties...[that] were the essence of" the paternalistic master-slave relationship, and a master "who failed to live up to [such] obligations could be held accountable by his slaves" in a variety of ways. Or as Jessica Millward describes so powerfully, negotiation and resistance by the enslaved community "was methodical and calculated," and "could be found in nearly every aspect of chattel bondage." This negotiated relationship was tied to their hopes for freedom.²⁹

The most important source of negotiation was forging family and kinship connections. From "Cyrus, with Wife Maria & 5 Children" to "Trump...his Wife Tennnah, her daughters Hannah & Lindsay with 4 children," family was "a key survival mechanism" for the Silver Bluff community. However, it is again important to recognize that families were "a powerful source of opposition [on] the plantation" at the same time it "reinforced attachment to their" masters. Nonetheless, African- and Indigenous-descended people "envisioned lives that included their families." It was particularly within the slave quarters where fathers, mothers, children, and extended relatives built a world together and sought to shield one another as much as possible from the horrors of slavery. At Silver Bluff, slave dwellings consisted of "wooden frame[s], [of] earthfast construction," in close proximity to one another, which further reinforced the bonds of family—this despite Galphin's intrusive oversight from his brick residence nearby.³⁰

David George's life is a testament to the importance of family for enslaved communities like that of Silver Bluff. Born in Virginia in the mid eighteenth-century to parents "who were brought from Africa," George "had four brothers and four sisters, who, with myself, were all born in slavery." The George family suffered terribly at the hands of their "master...Chapel, a very bad man to the Negroes," who repeatedly whipped and beat David "till the blood has run down over my waistband," and who tortured his brother Dick and sister Patty in similar fashion. But "the greatest grief! [David] then had was to see [Chapel] whip my mother, and to hear her on her knees, begging for mercy." This beating pushed David over the edge to run away while his mother "was on her deathbed." Although David initially eluded capture, he was eventually found and sold to Galphin, "who was afterward my master." Unlike Chapel, George described Galphin as "very kind to me" and soon after married
a half-Creek, half-black woman named Phillis, who was quickly “delivered of our first child,” one of many. For the remainder of their lives at Silver Bluff, David and Phillis did everything in their power to provide for and protect their children, so much so that when George “caught the smallpox...I wished my wife to escape, and to take care of herself and of the children [and] let me die there.” Time and again, David George invoked his love and the importance of family to him.31

But what did family actually mean to the Silver Bluff community? For one thing, the very act of marriage or giving birth to children was a fundamental act and source of resistance. These were assertions of one’s humanity and a willingness to carve out love and kinship despite the knowledge that the fate of their loved ones was perpetual enslavement. This is why “scholars of slavery agree that enslaved men’s and women’s ability to forge families and communities served as a key survival mechanism across the generations.” Meanwhile, the everyday act of parenting offered a source of resistance because “children were rarely protected and spared the realities of slavery.” Therefore, parents like David and Phillis George taught their children how to negotiate their circumstances: how to keep a low profile in the fields or when away from the slave quarters, to keep their master’s pass on their person when leaving the plantation; how to exploit Galphin’s paternalistic favor—like gaining access to “a spelling book...to read”—how to soften the “five hundred lashes or more” that one could expect in their lifetime; and – if female – how not to attract the attention of white men. Parenting, in other words, had to be methodical and calculated, an everyday form of resistance as much as an expression of love. For those who chose not to marry and have children, this decision “should not be read as a rejection of motherhood,” fatherhood, or companionship, “but rather an assertion of [their] own (unfree) will” to take what little power they had in their lives to make that decision. These individuals understood that despite the ameliorative power of family, such attachments were “the farthest thing from freedom.” Altogether, the Silver Bluff community “impose[d] their own meaning on a process of family formation” that proved critical to their everyday resistance and negotiation of slavery.32

The act of negotiation by forging family ties went well beyond immediate families and the slave quarters. While on an errand for his master in 1770, “Dick of Ashepoo...headed for Silver Bluff on the Savannah River to visit his kinfolk,” thereby illustrating how kinship networks extended beyond one plantation to encompass other plantation communities. In some cases, such expansive networks were a product of choice—perhaps a marriage between two people from different
plantations—while in other cases it was not, a consequence of family members being separated and sold.33 Such networks likely explain why so many people from other plantations, both runaways and enslaved, gravitated toward Silver Bluff in the 1760s and 70s. For example, in May 1775, Mordecai Miles published a runaway advertisement for one “Luxy...supposed to have gone to George Galphin, Esq.’s or stolen by horse thieves,” implying her connections to Silver Bluff. Similarly, “A Fellow named Will...was seen lately in South Carolina, near to Mr. George Galphin’s,” and a “Run-away...a short well set fellow, was seen last week near George Galphin’s.” These networks “only grew more numerous over time,” adding to a “central binding institution [of family] within slave community” and fostering resistance and hopes for freedom.34

Family and kinship networks also provided the Silver Bluff community with what Daina Ramey Berry calls “soul value,” or a “freedom of the soul...reinforced by loved ones.” Enslaved families passed down to future generations their life stories and memories, their knowledge, and even elements of African and Indigenous culture and language, which all shaped an individual’s identity and provided a sense of belonging and kinship. Elders in the community proved critical to transmitting “soul value” to children and their children’s children. Whereas one’s monetary value decreased with age, an elders’ “internal value [was] elevated and celebrated within their communities” because of what they were able to teach succeeding generations.

Religion (particularly Christianity and its liberating “promise of spiritual equality and universal salvation”) enhanced the “soul value” of enslaved communities.35 As David George described after the birth of his first child, “I lived a bad life and had no serious thoughts about my soul.” But then he met Cyrus, a believer who told George he “should never see the face of God in Glory.” George then went “in prayer to God...[confessed] I could not be saved by my own doings, but that it must be by Gods mercy [as] my sins had crucified Christ, [then] the Lord took away my distress.” It was then that George found in his faith “such pleasure and joy in my soul, that no man could give me.”36

The Silver Bluff community proved particularly strong when it came to the “soul value” of religion. In 1773, after David George and others “beg[ged] Master” to let them erect a Baptist church, Galphin permitted the community to use one of his sawmills as the site for a church and the nearby stream for baptisms, and thus was born the Silver Bluff Baptist Church.37 Although Galphin practiced a paternalistic
form of slavery that allowed greater latitude within the master-slave relationship and undoubtedly played a role in his decision to allow the construction of the church, he believed—like other masters—that religion could replace the “use of the whip at home or on the road. His slaves [would be] industrious and obedient... [and] live together in unity, brotherly love, and peace.”

At first, itinerant preachers like George Liele and Wait Palmer shepherded the new church, which quickly grew from “eight of us...to a large congregation” of which “the Black people all around attended with us.” David George eventually “began to exhort in the Church” and “was appointed to the office of an Elder, and received instruction from Brother Palmer on how to conduct” himself, and soon “had the whole management and...preach[ed] among them myself.” Together, George and the Silver Bluff congregation took their spiritual lives into their own hands and “claim[ed] spiritual authority for themselves.” By embracing Christianity, the Silver Bluff community asserted their own worth, and “despite being [treated] as commodities...their soul values transcended the external values placed upon their bodies,” thus demonstrating their resistance to slavery.

There were many other ways the Silver Bluff community negotiated enslavement, again exploiting the paternalistic master-slave relationship. Because Galphin’s deerskin trading firm depended on packhorse men, patroons, and herdsmen, he was forced to cede a measure of autonomy to those individuals who ranged far beyond Silver Bluff. As one of Galphin’s friends confessed, “we are forced to trust Negroes, ‘tis impossible to be constantly with them,” although it can be assumed Galphin’s traders kept an eye on them. Nonetheless, enslaved individuals enjoyed a mobility and freedom they did not have at Silver Bluff, like Tom Bonar and “three other Men Slaves” who piloted Galphin’s boats up and down the Savannah and Ogeechee rivers. Bonar and the other men spent “ten days before they Arrived [back] at Master’s Plantation,” during which they “went on shore & went a hunting,” slept “in [the] Cabin,” and “Invited [an] Indian on board.” Galphin valued Bonar so much that when he was accused of “kill[ing] an Indian fellow near the River...Ogeechee” and stood “Trial for the said Murder,” Galphin interceded with the interim governor, James Habersham. He did so to prove Bonar “does not know how far he may be considered” other “than [being] an Accessary,” after which it was proved the murder was committed by a “half breed Fellow.” Meanwhile, packhorse men ventured up to “four hundred miles, over five or six rivers” away from Silver Bluff, either to Creek Country or to Picolata, St. John’s, and St. Mark’s in Florida.
Similarly, the herdsmen who cared for Galphin's cows and cattle traveled as far as Pensacola and Mobile to transport those animals to British garrisons. Altogether these men enjoyed the relative autonomy that came with their mobility.40

The Silver Bluff community also sold their labors and wares. Since the production of rice (one of the main crops cultivated at Silver Bluff) was based on the task system, which meant that each of the enslaved was required to complete a "set amount of labor each day," many enjoyed a "measure of control over their work" and time. The degree of this autonomy was a "matter of continual contestation" with Galphin. Harry and Pompey kept their own gardens and raised their own animals and then sold any surplus to paying customers, such as when Harry sold "18 fowels" to John Rae. The cash accrued from such sales was often used to "purchase small material goods" or saved to hopefully purchase freedom. In David George's case, Phillis's brother sent him "a steer, which I sold, and had now in all thirteen dollars"; he later used this money to buy his family's passage from Charleston. In other cases individuals sold their labor to Whites, as when Dick was paid in cash and rum to repair "1 pair Shoes," or Tom and an unnamed "Negro Sawyer" who worked "36 days...sawing" and "Building Houses" for Gideon Allam. Others hired themselves out as "shipwrights, caulkers...coopers, porters, or [menial] laborers." According to archaeological excavations at Silver Bluff, the enslaved community manufactured "colono-ware," a type of ceramic dishware "developed in and brought over from Africa...[that] imitated common European forms." These items, too, were often sold to paying customers.41

There were more covert ways of testing the limits of Galphin's paternalism. For instance, David George confessed that on occasion he failed to "wait upon my master. I told him I was Ill," feigning sickness to escape a day's labor in the fields. Slaves also pretended to be incompetent; in February 1771, Henry Laurens complained that several of his slaves were "apt to commit Blunders, and to do worse Things." Individuals also stole or damaged their master's property for many reasons, to sell for oneself or one's family, or as retribution for a master's violence. Further, individuals like David George learned how to read and write in secret. Because Galphin "kept a white school-master...to teach the white children to read," George "used to go to the little children to teach me...They would give me a lesson which I tried to learn, and then I would go to them...and ask them if it was right." Literacy revolutionized George's world, as he described "the reading so ran in my mind, that I think I learned in my sleep, as ready as when I was awake, and I can now read the Bible." It
was then that George started “preaching at Silver Bluff” and taught other members of the Silver Bluff community to read and write. Those like George who managed to seize clandestine opportunities to become literate emerged as important leaders—particularly spiritual leaders—in their communities.\(^42\)

Enslaved women at Silver Bluff, like Nitehuckey, Sapho, Rose, Hannah, and Clarissa, may have negotiated the master-slave relationship by using “interracial sex...as an avenue to freedom.” These five women no doubt “tried to negotiate [their] way around master’s overtures rather than confronting him with direct resistance. But that compromise came at a high price...[where] sexual coercion could be reformulated into a consensual relationship.” As Sharon Block argues, “it was precisely women’s attempts to bargain their way out of sexual assaults that made these sexual encounters seem consensual” to slave owners. However, these women attempted to “maintain as productive a rapport with their masters as possible. Any relationship, even the incontrovertibly inequitable one of slavery, depended on both participants’ negotiations over its terms.” As several scholars have demonstrated, women used their sex to extract privileges from masters—like Sally Hemmings did with Thomas Jefferson. The women of Silver Bluff may have done the same with Galphin. For Nitehuckey, Sapho, Rose, Hannah, and Clarissa, sex with Galphin could have represented their taking “the chance for freedom for themselves and their children,” a gamble that paid off in 1776 when Galphin manumitted his children that they had borne. While the women and their other family members remained enslaved (thus clearly demonstrating the limits of sexual agency), Jessica Millward reminds us that “interracial sex always existed somewhere between coercion and choice, and the relationship was never one between equals.” At Silver Bluff, we see how women tested the “boundaries of slavery...[and] responded to the perpetual violence [of] their world.”\(^43\)

One of the more essential forms of negotiation at Silver Bluff was running away. As Ira Berlin and other scholars have illustrated, runaways did not necessarily expect to find freedom when they fled. Instead, they sought a measure of control—however small—over the master-slave relationship; they did so by withholding their labor by running away, thus exposing their master’s dependency. This recognition of dependency could potentially force that master to reevaluate the terms of the relationship. While there are no records for those who absented themselves from Silver Bluff, there are runaway advertisements posted by Galphin’s friends and peers in South Carolina. This included one placed by Andrew Williamson, who described Nero and Rank as wearing “a white negro cloth coat, the cuffs and cape turned
up with blue, a white negro cloth jacket and breaches, and a new felt hat" when they ran away; he offered a "reward of one hundred pounds... paid on delivery... at Silver-Bluff." Although we have no idea if Nero or Rank were captured or returned of their own volition, it may be assumed that their decision to run away with little more than their clothes was their attempt to effect temporary change in the master-slave relationship. Packhorse men and patroons also seized opportunities to run away from Silver Bluff, including a messenger sent "per Favour of Mr. Golphin" who "had run away from him," and when captured shortly after "made a second Escape." Or Jack, a repeat fugitive who "spoke good English...[and] may pass for a free man." For him, running away had become routine, a way of negotiating within the master-slave relationship.44

For other individuals though, running away was intended to be permanent. For Pompey the "gardener" ("about 50 years of age, his hair very grey, and his face much wrinkled; of the Angola country") fleeing Silver Bluff was a genuine attempt at freedom. While it was suspected he "will either make for Savannah or St. Augustine," Galphin's family worried he would use "his connections in Georgia" to make a serious bid for freedom. Although we never learn if Pompey was successful or not, we do know that if he had been, he likely spent the rest of his "life looking over [his] shoulder for kidnappers or officials of the law," which forced Pompey and other runaways to hopefully find "anonymity among the masses," perhaps in larger cities like Augusta, Charleston, and Savannah. Masters also feared that individuals like Pompey would go to Florida, where Spanish garrisons harbored runaways and stoked fears of "Spaniards and Mulattoes" attacking the southern colonies. In other cases, runaways sought refuge in the "Swamps" of South Carolina, where British authorities again feared fugitives banding together "to steal horses." In October 1767, imperial officials offered several hundred pounds for anyone who tracked down a group of runaways: "Tim, Tyrrell, Govey Black, John Anderson, Anthony Distow, Edward Wells...all horse thieves." The desire to find them intensified when news of the group reached other plantations and attracted more runaways, such as a "short well set fellow" from William Williamson's plantation. In rarer instances, groups of fugitives brazenly attacked former masters. One such example was the "Camp of Runaway Slaves at Beach-hill," led by one Caesar, who "with Horses, Fire-Arms, Cutlasses, and other dangerous Weapons...[broke] open the Dwelling and stores of...John Dr[a]yton...and carried away...his Property." Although most of those individuals were captured and "executed at different Times," they had not only asserted their freedom but heightened the fears of insurrection.45
Enslaved individuals who sought permanent freedom also ran away to Creek Country. These fugitives, however, recognized that they "took their chances in Indian Country...[and] faced an uncertain future" because they never knew if the Creeks would welcome them, return them for rewards, kill them for trespassing, or re-enslave them. In many treaties negotiated with the British, Creek micos promised "Our Selves & People...[will] Apprehend & Secure any Negro or other Slaves which shall run away from any of the English Settlements to our Nation [in exchange for] ...four blanketts or Two Guns or the Value thereof in other Goods." In many cases though, Creek peoples proved indifferent when it came to policing runaways, which infuriated British agents; one complained that "on my arrival in the Lower Towns I found that there were 16 Negroes who had eloped from their owners." Nonetheless, when David George "ran away up among the Creek Indians" he gambled with his life. In George's case, the Blue Salt King, a mico from Cusseta, "followed my track down to the River" and "carried me away 17 or 18 miles...to his camp." There George spent four months in which he built "fences, dug the ground, planted corn, and worked hard." Despite the arduous labor imposed upon him, George admitted that "the people were kind" to him. Others were not so fortunate: three runaways who escaped to Upper Creek towns in 1769 were "taken by Mr. Richard Brown and Thomas Mosley, and then carried down to Silver Bluff and sold to George Galphin." The American Revolution changed everything for the Silver Bluff community, for it presented unprecedented opportunities to negotiate their enslavement and even liberate themselves. As Sylvia Frey and other historians demonstrate, "the American Revolution in the South was a war about slavery" and ultimately a "slave revolt" (although Frey concedes that enslaved peoples "made only elastic gains"). What is important to recognize for enslaved communities was that the war allowed them to "imagine freedom as a possibility"; at Silver Bluff freedom became a reality. During the war, Galphin sided with the revolutionaries and served as their "Commissioner of Indian Affairs" in the South; in this capacity he once again depended on enslaved labor to facilitate trade and diplomacy with Native groups. During the war, Galphin sent packhorse men and patroons to supply Creek towns with ammunition and goods in an attempt to keep the Creeks out of the war. In December 1777, he "Sent off[20 od[d] horses Lo[a]ded with goods." In 1776, when Galphin found the waterways blocked by a British "Man of War," he "sen[t] [his] Waggons" to Creek towns. Galphin even planned to "furnish...[his] trading boats" and patroons to ferry Continental troops in an attack against St. Augustine (although plans never materialized). Galphin placed so much trust in his enslaved community
that he confessed to Henry Laurens that he had armed his slaves—as "a number of my negros that Can handle armes"—and that Laurens should not worry about "any violence coming hear [sic] to medle me." 48

For the Silver Bluff community, the Revolutionary War at first incited uncertainty and fear. At the beginning of hostilities, Galphin filed his last will and testament, which stipulated his slaves would be bequeathed to family members. This not only meant the dissolution of the Silver Bluff enslaved community, but also threatened to tear families apart. For example, "little March," whom Galphin planned to give to his "Sister Crossley," would be separated from her parents and siblings. Such plans were an overt "reminder...that they [the enslaved] had absolutely no control over their lives, no matter how loyally they served." Additionally, the Silver Bluff community learned of those slaves who had fled with Lord Dunmore (last royal governor of Virginia) in 1775, which provoked in them both hope and fear—given that the revolutionaries believed "the Governor of Virginia has embodied Negroes to Cutt their Masters' throat[s]" by "affording a ready asylum to Negro Deserters." Masters took steps to police enslaved communities accordingly. David George explained how "Ministers were not allowed to come amongst us lest they should furnish us with too much knowledge," one example of stricter surveillance. The South Carolina council of safety went so far as to debate "put[ting] every fugitive & Rebellious Slave to death." 49

As the war unfolded, hope and liberty replaced fear and uncertainty. When the British armies invaded the South in late 1778 and early 1779, Galphin had to "Send of most of my negros toward the Congarees" [sic] under the supervision of some of his traders. To his dismay, Galphin later learned that the majority of his slaves, led by David George, had fled to British lines in January 1779 and attained their freedom. Despite George remembering Galphin as "very kind to me," when presented with the opportunity to escape, the Silver Bluff community overwhelmingly liberated themselves. The Silver Bluff exodus was a family affair, as parents, children, and extended relatives escaped together. The religious community also fled; the entire "[Silver Bluff Baptist] church [moved] into exile." Galphin estimated he had "lost 129 ... negros" and lamented how he and "Every [other] indulgent master...[lost] his Slaves," which he blamed on "some Baptist preacher [who] has been the ruin of ale our negros." That preacher was likely none other than David George.
In addition to the mass flight from Silver Bluff, there were a "number [of] others [of the enslaved] gone off...to the Indian Nations," and when the revolutionaries attempted to recover such fugitives, Creeks from Coweta "refused to give up the Negroes in that town." Other runaways may have chosen to go to Florida because it was reported that runaways were encouraged by "the Spanish Governor" to come to Pensacola, despite the Spanish being allies of the revolutionaries.

In response to what he perceived as his slaves' disloyalty, Galphin filed a codicil to his will: "none of [my] Negroes may have any Mourning [gifts] or anything else (on account of their Ingratitude)." In the end, Galphin did free some of his slaves, like Dick, Juno, and their eight children. In November 1780, he "grant[ed] them their manumission...for the[ir] good and faithful services." This proved to be one of Galphin's last acts: he died one week later. 50

Freedom was every bit as negotiated as was enslavement. When David George led the Silver Bluff exodus in 1779, around "90 of Golphin's Negroes...joined [British] troops under [the] command" of Archibald Campbell, who held the runaways as hostages to force Galphin's surrender; they were later "sent to General Prevost" in Savannah, Augusta, or Charleston. Among those individuals were David George and his family, who were "thrown in prison and laid there about a month" before being taken out by "Colonel [Thomas] Brown." Between 1779 and 1782, George, his family, and other runaways from Silver Bluff pieced their community back together, at one point joined by George Liele, the founding minister of the Silver Bluff Baptist Church. The Silver Bluff community then found residence in British-occupied Savannah and Yamacraw. There they "plow[ed] and weed[ed] Indian corn" for their subsistence and hired their labor to British troops. For example, George ran a "butcher's stall" and his wife Phillis "wash[ed] for General [Henry] Clinton." They also provided mutual assistance to one another, such as being able to borrow "money from some of the Black people."

Several runaways who had "belonged to Mr. Golphin" and had sought freedom in Florida were sorely disappointed, as when Loyalists like John Fox captured and re-enslaved those "in his Possession." As were those who remained at Silver Bluff during the war; the British army quickly occupied Galphin's plantation and re-christened it Fort Dreadnought; they put the remainder of the community to work building fortifications and in the plantation's fields. When American forces returned to Silver Bluff in May 1781 and forced the British garrison to capitulate, the
revolutionaries re-enslaved "61 Negroes." But none of this stopped individuals like Mina who, after being "set free," eluded American and British forces throughout the war, even though her brother Ketch remained enslaved (Mina went on to live as a free woman in Georgia).\textsuperscript{51}

When British forces evacuated Savannah and Charleston in 1782, David George and his family and other members of the Silver Bluff community joined nearly fifteen hundred former slaves who boarded British ships bound for Canada, where they established Birchtown, "one of the largest free black settlements in North America." George recalled that despite being "used very ill" and "treated...as though" they "had been slaves" by White Loyalists, who had torn down his "dwelling house" and had beaten him "with sticks & drove" him "into the swamps," he and four of his "own colour" erected Baptist churches in Birchtown and Shelburne. Soon after, "the congregation was much increased" as George preached to and baptized "white and black audiences" in Halifax and New Brunswick. For the first time, George and his family obtained property from one James Masimore, who sold "unto David George...a certain [lot] situated in the said Town of Shelburne." The Baptist community grew

\begin{center}
\textbf{The Silver Bluff Church}
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\textit{By WALTER H. BROOKS, D. D.}

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\textbf{The Silver Bluff Church, by Walter H. Brooks. Brooks authored the first historical account of the enslaved community at Silver Bluff in 1910. The book focuses primarily on the Baptist congregants among the Silver Bluff community. Image in Public Domain.}
\end{center}
so large that the British "Governor said he heard a great deal of from [those] be-
ing baptized," both "white and black." He provided a certificate that stated: "David
George, a free Negro man, has permission from his Excellency...to instruct the Black
people in the knowledge and give them to the practice of the Christian Religion."
George and his family's journey did not end there (they joined the British expedi-
tion to Sierra Leone, where they established Freetown and another Baptist church),
but they and others from Silver Bluff had finally attained freedom.52

While we know little about the fates of the many other Silver Bluff enslaved after the
Revolution, one can imagine freedom was theirs too, whether it was real or "free-
dom of the soul." Take for instance Cornelia Leslie, whose life story was published
in newspapers in 1860 because her age exceeded "100 years." She had been "born...
at a place called Silver Bluff," and had "a distinct recollection of the war of the Revo-
lution." Although "advanced in years," she was "remarkably healthy and strong" and
walked "half a mile regularly every Sunday to attend church." While it was reported
that she was "the slave of her own son," this seems highly unlikely because the article
also stated "her own son...is a free negro." Leslie may have been a "slave" in name
only to disguise her freedom; what is certain is that she and the generations that
followed her were free, all the way up to the Civil War. Cornelia Leslie embodied ev-
everything that the Silver Bluff community had endured, fought for, and represented
in early America: they had survived the violence of slavery, engaged in the manifold
negotiations of the master-slave relationship, displayed the resilience of enslaved
peoples and their families, and realized their revolutionary hopes for freedom.53

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NOTES


2. "Galphin Inventory"; Berry, Price for Their Pound of Flesh, 2-3; "Galphin Will."

3. This is not to ignore the fact that enslaved communities experienced their own divisions, conflicts, and "jealousy and betrayal," which at times invited further violence, threatened kinship ties, and soured hopes for freedom. Jennifer L. Morgan, Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery (Philadelphia, 2004), 195.


5. "Galphin Will."

6. "Galphin Inventory"; Berry, Price for Their Pound of Flesh, 6, 61.


12. Throughout the eighteenth-century, the commercial staple of South Carolina and Georgia was rice. See Paul M. Pressly, On the Rim of the Caribbean: Colonial Georgia and the British Atlantic World (Athens, GA, 2013). Scholars have traditionally attributed the cultivation of rice to techniques and innovations introduced by African slaves, the "Black Rice Hypothesis." More recently, David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson have argued that African slaves were not sought for their knowledge of rice
cultivation, but simply for their labor, regardless of their expertise. Meanwhile, these scholars agree that African slaves were encouraged to use their knowledge alongside European experimentation to enhance the cultivation of rice. Because indigo had a "short [growing] season and [a] delicate nature [that] required careful attention" and intensive processing, Galphin had to train slaves on expensive equipment like vats and pumps. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, Cambridge, MA, 1998, 147-48.


15. Enforcement was incredibly circumstantial and often circumvented by traders like Galphin. Nonetheless, some authorities believed the "carrying of Negroes among the Indians has all along been thought detrimental, as an Intimacy between them ought to be avoided." Daniel Pepper to William Henry Lyttelton, March 30, 1757, *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765*, ed. William L. McDowell Jr. (Columbia, SC, 1970), 352–57.


22. As Kirsten Fischer demonstrates, such violence also "shaped racial ideology in profound ways" and represented a "performance of race," as the “brutal treatment of slaves, in particular those forms of violence that left permanent traces...supported whites' growing sense that race was a physical quality, inherent to the body and visible at the same time." Kirsten Fischer, *Suspect Relations: Sex, Race, and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina* (Ithaca, NY, 2001), 160.


25. As Wendy Warren demonstrates in the case of "Mr. Maverick's Negro woman," who "was raped, and [who] knew it was coming...[for] she had had warning. She waited, perhaps for nights, knowing that a man she lived with had orders to impregnate her, by force. An extra form of torture, the psychological before the physical, enacting the future attack from memory in her mind before living it in reality. Even if she had been lucky enough to escape the experience herself, she had undoubtedly seen and heard the rapes of other women. She knew what to expect, in graphic detail. Alone, scared, isolated by race, culture, even language from those around her, she had to wait. The attack itself remains shadowy. No amount of scholarship can uncover that encounter. I can only ask uncomfortable questions, verging on prurience, wondering how to reflect on the "details of a rape without becoming what Saidya Hartman has cautioned us against, a 'voyeur' of pain and terror." Wendy Anne Warren, “The Cause of Her Grief”: The Rape of a Slave in Early New England,” *Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 1046.


29. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, 280–82, 377; Millward, Finding Charity’s Folk, 2, 21; Block, Rape and Sexual Power, 145.


33. This process of forging kinship networks was situational and many times dependent on whether or not individuals chose to integrate outsiders into their families through marriage, adoption, etc.

34. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, 481, 511, 558; Millward, Finding Charity’s Folk, 45; Georgia Gazette, 1763–1776, May 17, 1775, and January 10, 1776; South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal, 1765–1775, October 20, 1767, MS CscG, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.


37. As Frank Roberson, George Mosley, Walter Brooks, Edward Cashin, and Maya Jasanoff all argue, the Silver Bluff community established “America’s first black Baptist congregation” in 1773, although some have gone as far as to say this was the “first African American church in the United States.” Roberson and Mosley argue—based on “oral history...passed down for over 250 years”—that the Silver Bluff Baptist Church...“had it’s beginning in 1750.” Walter H. Brooks, The Silver Bluff Church: A History of Negro Baptist Churches in America (Washington, DC, 1910), 5, 19; Walter H. Brooks, “The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters,” Journal of Negro History 7, no. 2 (1922): 172–73; Frank G. Roberson and George H. Mosley, Where a Few Gather in my Name: The History of the Oldest Black Church in America — The Silver Bluff Baptist Church (North Augusta SC, 2002), xv, 3; Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 47–48; Cashin, William Bartram and the American Revolution, 44–45.

38. African Christianity existed side-by-side with African religions, which “overlapped and merged in complex ways that allowed congregants to acknowledge Jesus and worship the Christian God, yet seek additional power from traditional African spirits and deities.” Or, as Michael Gomez describes, “people of African descent were allowed to enter the revivalist experience on their own terms” and “most did so of their own volition and by way of their own initiative.” They “understood the fundamentals of the religion as well as the implications of their own involvement with it.” Sensbach, Rebecca’s Revival, 88; Michael A. Gomez, Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998).
39. Roberson and Mosley, Where a Few Gather in my Name, 9–11; “Account of David George”; Sensbach, Rebecca’s Revival, 238; Berry, Price for Their Pound of Flesh, 197.


44. Berlin, Many Thousands Gone; South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal, 1765–1775, March 23, 1775; November 10, 1752, Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750–August 7, 1754, 319; October 3, 1770, South Carolina & American General Gazette, 1765–1781, MS C, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.


46. Creek micos did not always comply with British demands when it came to returning runaways. In 1766, Georgia governor James Wright complained to Captain Aleck, mico of Cusseta, of the “Eleven Runaway Negroes in the Indian Nation...that [should] be delivered up to the Traders.” Again in 1767, authorities “expect immediate restitution of the Negroes belonging to persons in the Settlements who have taken refuge in your Towns.” Similarly, in 1773, David Taitt trekked to the Creek town of Woositchie, where he “had a Meeting with the Lower Creeks to demand the Negroes which are here.”


