Conflict, Competition, and Courtship in the "Slave Community."

> The real character of a slave was brought out by the respect they had for each other. Most of the time there was no force back of the respect the slaves had for each other, and yet, they were for the most part truthful, loving and respectful to one another[1]
>
> Mrs Jane Pyatt

> lots of wickedness gone on in dem days, just as it do now, some good, some mean, black and white, it just dere nature[2]
>
> Susan Hamlin, 104 yrs old

Since John Blassingame's seminal treatment of the topic in the 1970s, the historiographical paradigm of "The Slave Community"[3] has been one of the most significant and rewarding areas of research amongst historians of slavery in the antebellum south. Rather than focus on the undeniable horrors of the system, a new wave of scholars challenged the historiographical dogma. They strove instead to shine the spotlight on African-American achievements and solidarity in the face of overwhelming oppression and hardship; to highlight the manner in which slaves successfully survived and 'sustained the mighty load of most

[1]Charles L Perdue Jr, Thomas E Barden, Robert K Phillips (eds), *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Indiana, 1980), p.235.
[2] George P Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement, Series 1, Volume 3, Georgia Narratives Part 1* (Westport, 1977), p.231.
[3] John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972).

frightful bondage.'[4] In order to do this the methodological toolbox was thrown open, expanding to include sources previously neglected or ignored. The aim was to remove overtly negative stories told *about* the enslaved with the tales of survival, love and communal solidarity that emanated from the enslaved themselves. In essence, to 'let the slaves and former slaves tell of their lives.'[5] From these humble beginnings successive historians managed to emphasise and applaud the successful manner by which enslaved people, from the very beginning to the very end of slavery in the United States, continually and communally strove to forge an autonomous social, cultural, and, indeed, physical sphere of existence. A distinctly African American "slave community," safe from the privations and depredations of slave owners and the larger white society: indeed, an African American community that continued to serve them throughout the perils of Reconstruction, the degradations of "Jim Crow," and that continues to serve them to this very day.

The emphasis on enslaved agency and communal solidarity quickly became mantra for the majority of historians of the "Peculiar Institution." Innumerable scholars have since taken up the mantle, with the result being a greatly enriched body of scholarly material that continues to expand and improve our understanding of life in the antebellum south. By demonstrating the potential autonomy the enslaved could hold, both individually and as a distinct community, historians have highlighted the manner in which theory and practice blurred significantly in the antebellum south. The work has not only advanced our understanding of the institution of slavery itself, but indeed, allowed the historian

[4] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Middlesex, 1982), p.37.
[5] Larry E Hudson Jr, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens, 1997), p.xxi.

to exhibit a greater awareness of the nuanced and rich lives the enslaved could lead. Demonstrating the existence of a vibrant and cohesive "slave community" has thus enabled historians to argue that the long held 'process of dehumanization,' said to be inherent within slavery, 'was not nearly as pervasive' as first argued; that 'the ties of affection' forged within enslaved communities in fact 'served as a means of resistance against oppression and illustrate how slaves of all generations were not demoralized by bondage.'[6] It was possible to argue that, 'far from being utterly dependent on their masters,' the enslaved in fact 'used substantial cultural resources of their own to resist oppression and maintain a sense of their dignity and worthiness as human beings.'[7] By allowing the slaves to speak of their lives, historians have been able to successfully reconstruct a past where African-Americans 'creatively shaped strong family institutions, a magnificent folk religion, and a vital folk culture'[8]; a heroic past where enslaved people, against all the odds, survived, even thrived, 'under the most deadly circumstances.'[9]

Yet despite these successes, it is possible to suggest that in their quest to bring the enslaved back into the picture as active agents, historians have allowed the pendulum to swing too far in the other direction. In attempting to highlight the strength of the communal bonds forged by African Americans under slavery and to showcase enslaved successes and triumphs, much revisionist work may have depicted - and continues to do so - an overly romanticised enslaved existence. However much one may wish to find celebratory tales and heroism

[6] Sterling Stuckey, 'Through the Prism of Folklore,' in Ann J.Lane (ed.), *The Debate Over Slavery. Stanley Elkins and His Critics* (Illinois, 1971), p.247, and Emily West, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Illinois, 2004), p.20.
[7] George M Frederickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (New England, 1988), p.115.
[8] William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (Oxford,1998), p.430.
[9] William H Grier and Price M Cobbs, *Black Rage* (New York, 1968), p.208.

rising from the terrible history of slavery, scholarship from the last decade has begun to demand a greater check upon these portraits of enslaved autonomy and supportive social interactions. It is possible to suggest that overly romanticised constructions of cohesive and conflict-free communities of enslaved people across the United States not only neglect or distort much of the evidence, but in themselves do the enslaved no justice. In their own (albeit well intentioned) way it could be argued that they too are further denying the slaves they depict of their essential humanity, with all of its requisite flaws. Treatment of enslaved family life, autonomous cultural existence and sanitized, even harmonious, communal living could in fact be said to have created 'an exaggerated picture of the strength and cohesion of the slave community.'[10]

There were success stories amongst the tragedies; this much is undeniable and, indeed, deserving of attention in itself. However, it could be argued that the notion of harmonious slave communities existing in a vacuum, free from the terrible brutality of "The Peculiar Institution," does not adequately address the pervasiveness of the system. Nor, it could be suggested, does it realistically deal with the physical, psychological, and emotional toll forced bondage, with its daily degradations and depredations, was likely to take upon the enslaved population; both individually and in their dealings with one another. Any community is liable to have division, conflict, and competition; such is life. Furthermore, it is commonly recognised that violence and conflict permeated the antebellum south[11], yet within the historiography it appears almost solely as a white phenomenon. But as Dylan Penningroth suggests: 'there is no reason to think that

[10] Peter Kolchin, 'Re-evaluating the Antebellum Slave Community,' *Journal of American History*, Vol.70, No.3 (Dec., 1983), p.581.
[11] Julie Ariela Gross, *Double Character: Slavery and Mastery in the Antebellum Courtroom* (Athens, 2006) - 'the Southern penchant for violence was commented on by observers from without and within,' p.48

the black community in the 1800s was any more harmonious than the white community.'[12] The enslaved not only faced the everyday challenges of antebellum existence; they faced them under one of the most brutal systems of oppression ever known.

The central question to address, therefore, is whether the initial historiographical construction of a cohesive "slave community" related more to a demand for 'positive and uplifting portrayals'[13] of enslaved existence in the face of the overwhelming negativity and offensive tone of previous historical treatments. Combining the new left's historiographical demand for a history whereby 'oppressed classes always resist their oppressors'[14] with the emerging civil rights and black nationalist movements search for a 'therapeutic history that would support' a 'strictly circumscribed sense of acceptable identity for' oppressed African-Americans, 'as well as their ancestors,'[15] may have led to histories whereby conflict and violence amongst slaves were neglected for ideological purposes.

Yet examining conflict and competition amongst slaves is not in any way attempting to denigrate the enslaved. On the contrary; it is attempting to bring back the horrors of slavery that seem to be missing from many of the accounts of enslaved solidarity and autonomy. Whilst they should be deemed laudable in many respects, it could in fact be suggested that these accounts 'seem to be

[12] Dylan Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2003), p.8.
[13] John Michael Vlach, 'The Last Great Taboo Subject: Exhibiting Slavery at the Library of Congress,' in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.57.
[14] Frederickson, *Arrogance of Race*, p.114.
[15] Edward T Linenthal, 'Epilogue: Reflections,' in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.216.

dulling, rather than sharpening, our awareness of the slavery experience,'[16] deflecting 'attention further from the ruthlessly manipulative and repressive system'[17] that was the "Peculiar Institution." It should not be shameful to suggest that slaves could argue, fight or kill one another, betray one another or disagree over "resistance," nor that marital and familial bonds could be strained or abusive. Such types of conflict have occurred in communities across time and space immemorial, and continue to do so. Furthermore, the enslaved population of the antebellum south faced tremendous pressures that undoubtedly impacted upon their interactions with one another. It is certainly possible that 'the violence and brutality that whites imposed on their slaves...influenced the ways in which bondsmen and bondswomen'[18] interacted with one another in their respective communities.

Finally, what also must be acknowledged is that whilst conflict undoubtedly occurred – whether due to external pressures or simple human weaknesses - this does not mean that slave communities were torn apart by division or incapable of peaceful coexistence. Indeed, it is abundantly clear that the African-American communities forged in slave times were remarkable in their constant struggles for autonomy and solidarity in the face of tremendous oppression. Nor, too, does any of the conflict discussed within this dissertation relate to pseudo-scientific explanations of inherent racial failings. Instead, it is hoped that this project will add to the historiography demonstrating the verve and vigour of enslaved communal life; showing that it was, in fact, as vibrant, rich,

[16] Peter H Wood, "The Facts Speak Loudly Enough." Exploring Early Southern Black History,' in Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (eds), *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South* (New York, 1997), p.6.
[17] Norrence T Jones Jr, *Born A Child of Freedom, Yet a Slave. Mechanisms of Control and Strategies of Resistance in Antebellum South Carolina* (New England, 1990), p.194.
[18] Brenda E Stevenson, 'Distress and Discord in Virginian Slave Families,' in Carol Bleser (ed.), *In Joy and Sorrow* (New York, 1981), p115.

and rewarding as has been described. However, if we are to truly acknowledge their humanity and celebrate enslaved agency; to recognise that these communities were populated by 'people with all the psychological characteristics of human beings,'[19] the simple fact is that we must also acknowledge 'the totality of their humanity, replete with their arguments, conflicts, and foibles.'[20] Accepting the enslaved as human means acknowledging that not all humans are heroes.

There are some methodological and semantic issues that require addressing. As this piece of work will be using the term "the slave community" fairly frequently, it is clearly vital to state what one means by the term. It is important to note that "the slave community," or indeed any community, should be considered as being more than simply a physical entity. Whilst it is no doubt true that the quarters, lodges, or houses on individual plantations and farms could be described as a physical manifestation of a "community," the historiographical term encompasses far more than this. Instead, community has been described as the efforts made by slaves to construct amongst themselves a "network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds."[21] In this sense, the manner in which slaves interacted with one another, loved and supported one another, participated 'in communal activities and used their own distinctive and strong conceptions of family, religion and culture to resist oppression and survive bondage,'[22] were the cornerstones of "the slave community." It is these interactions that will form the basis of this work.

[19] Nell Irvin Painter, *Southern History Across the Colour Line* (Chapel Hill, 2002), p.20.
[20] Jeff Forret, 'Conflict and the "Slave Community": Violence Among Slaves in South Carolina,' *The Journal of Southern History* Vol.LXXIV, No.3 (Aug., 2008), p.586.
[21] Thomas Bender, cited in Kolchin, 'Re-evaluating the Antebellum Slave community,' p.601.
[22] Forret, 'Conflict and the "Slave Community," p.586.

It should be clear that I intend to develop this paradigm; essentially recognising that social relations, irrespective of colour or gender, never simply reflect positive attributes or communal solidarity. Bonds and relations between enslaved people were as full of joy, sorrow, jealousy, violence and competition as those of their white counterparts. Furthermore, there was no simple black and white dichotomy. The slave community, and vice versa, was not constructed in isolation to the white community. Slaves and slave owners, free blacks, poor whites, yeoman whites; these groups all interacted with one another on a daily basis. "Community," in the sense of social interaction, in the antebellum South cannot be truly understood without recognition of the complex interplay between various different groups.

It should also be stated that this dissertation has a broad geographical framework. I shall be examining competition and conflict amongst the enslaved in a variety of locations, as indeed, 'discrepancies in the nature and condition of life under slavery…likely to create disruption, dissatisfaction, and pain' were frequently determined by 'where a slave lived.'[23] Acknowledging the geographical variations within "The Peculiar Institution" may allow for a more detailed understanding of conflict amongst slaves. Further reasoning behind this is to highlight that the massive plantations with hundreds of slaves, which may immediately spring to mind when attempting to analyse communal bonds, were the exception, not the norm. Slaves interacted with each other in a variety of different locations, not simply on large plantations. Conceptions of "community," in the sense of shared bondage and social relations, should not be bound explicitly to geographical location. Finally, it is also to emphasise further the manner in

[23] Hudson Jr, *To Have and To Hold*, p.184 and p.80.

which there was, quite simply, no single essential enslaved experience. Instead, one should stress the multiplicity of enslaved experiences that deserve to be examined in their own light: 'the lives of slaves, like those of all men and women, changed over time and differed from place to place…slavery was not one thing but many.'[24] This is not to say that I shall be able to deal with every experience in the space available; such a statement would clearly be nonsensical. However, to move beyond a static construction of "heroic" and one-dimensional slaves, to move beyond the stale dichotomy of "black" and "white", requires an awareness of the diverse lives slaves could lead, and the impact geographical location in America could play in this.

It is also vital to remember that slavery in the United States spanned the best part of two centuries: whether slave or free, black or white, male or female, conditions of life did not remain static over this period in time. There is simply no way of adequately covering the entire period or do justice to the complexity of the issues. Comparing the conditions of life and conceptions of community amongst the first slaves with those of the mature plantation society of the 1860s would present massive difficulties for any historian, and especially for a project as constrained by space as my own. Whilst I shall occasionally be discussing conditions during the late eighteenth century, the focus shall predominantly be on slavery in the nineteenth century. By this point slavery had long been established and legislated, thus providing the historian with ample material from which to study. This will limit discussions primarily to the southern states, yet this need not be a negative. It may instead allow for a more detailed examination of some of the more neglected, later formed, slave states; for example Louisiana, Texas or

[24] Ira Berlin, 'Coming to Terms with Slavery in Twenty-First Century America,' in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.7.

Arkansas. Dealing with the later period may also limit the historian aiming to focus on the role played by native African slaves. Whilst no doubt African cultural norms and communal values remained vibrant and continued to impact throughout the period, fewer native born slaves existed by the antebellum period. Yet once again, this can be turned into a positive. The contentious issue of "Creolization," the notion of a cultural transformation from Africans to African-Americans, is something that has sparked controversy in many of the areas in which I aim to discuss. Therefore the later antebellum period, where one may expect to find more evidence of this, is certainly a fruitful period to focus upon.

Having thus noted some of the initial caveats to the project, a few words should be expended on the structure this piece of work shall take. It is clear that within the historiography of "the slave community," the emphasis has been on the strength of familial ties and kinship bonds amongst enslaved people throughout the antebellum south. Innumerable historians have defended the 'central role of family life in the slave community,'[25] stating that it was *the* 'binding institution'[26] within the community. Histories depicting the strength of familial relations and enslaved relationships have become the principal means of refuting theories of complete demoralisation and dehumanisation. Yet it could be suggested that this, whilst no doubt accurate in many cases, has in fact led to the very human impulses of jealousy and anger; petulance and promiscuity; or even marital strife and domestic violence being neglected. Therefore, the familial and romantic lives of the enslaved shall be the avenue by which this dissertation aims to challenge the romanticised conception of the "slave community." Whilst enslaved kinship no doubt provided support and love for many, it could certainly be argued that the

[25] Emily West, 'The Debate on the Strength of the Slave Families: South Carolina and the Importance of Cross-Plantation Marriages,' *Journal of American Studies,* Vol.33 (Aug., 1999), p.238.
[26] Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, 1976), p.260.

slave community was not always bathed in an idealistic and supportive atmosphere; enslaved families were not as 'preternaturally immune to the brutality inherent in slavery'[27] as they appear to be in many accounts.

I also intend to deal with enslaved relationships in their nascent form. Courtship amongst the enslaved has developed a significant literature of its own, and I aim to add to this by discussing the role of competition and conflict within the romantic arena. The competitive side of courtship is often stressed as being a sign of the vitality of enslaved existence, yet it must surely be remembered that in competitions, there can rarely be more than one winner. The manner in which slaves were willing to resort to underhanded tactics; violence, conjuration and more, in order to defeat their rivals provides a fascinating insight into the complex social structure and hierarchies within enslaved communities, as well as the emotional difficulties which courting as a slave could bring.

It must be noted that conflict in the community was not limited to courtship or the family. Whilst constraints of space have forced my analysis to focus on the familial and romantic arena, it is clear that communal life encompassed more than this: conflict between African Americans could erupt over a wide variety of issues. An examination of the role played by gossip and rumour amongst slaves could highlight the existence of disagreements and quarrels, as well as the means by which the enslaved 'expressed the public values'[28] they shared. Examining gossip could in fact allow the historian to gain a greater awareness of accepted and deviant behaviour within the slave community. This could lead directly into an examination of the manner in which the enslaved constructed their own hierarchies, as well as a conception of honour that could

[27] Painter, *Across the Color Line*, p.21.
[28] Mary Beth Norton, 'Gender and Defamation in 17th C Maryland,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol.44, No.1 (Jan., 1987), p.39.

mirror that of their white counterparts, but also contain uniquely African American aspects too. This would be of direct relevance to the field as whilst historians acknowledge that the antebellum south was an "honorific" society, there has, until recently, been little to 'no attempt…to include free blacks and slaves'[29] in discussions.

Conflict within the community could also be addressed by directly challenging the paradigm as relates to resistance amongst the enslaved. The idea that 'almost every aspect of enslaved behaviour that did not conform to the wishes of slave-owners' should be understood as an act of "resistance"; that virtually all slaves remained 'fixated upon the ultimate goal of obtaining freedom'[30] remains commonplace in the historiography. However, it is certainly possible to suggest that not all slaves "resisted" the regime in the traditional sense of the word. Furthermore, those that did were not necessarily deemed by their peers as being the heroes that much of the historiography on the topic demands. Indeed, we have slaves describing tactics such as malingering, which has historically been celebrated, in negative and disdainful terms, suggesting that it could often reflect nothing more than a disinclination to work. One WPA respondent stated that 'der was an ol' nigger who was a "false teller" an' was lazy an' didn't lack [like] no work. While all de otter niggers worked hard, he would res' under a shady tree.'[31] Analysing the multiplicity of ways, and not always positively, in which the enslaved themselves could view "resistance" could provide an interesting avenue into discussions of conflict amongst the enslaved. Moving beyond the dichotomous resistance paradigm is long-overdue, as, indeed, is recognition that

[29] Bertram Wyatt Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford, 1982), p.xvi.
[30] Ben Schiller, 'Selling Themselves: Slavery, Survival and the Path of Least Resistance,' *49th Parallel*, Vol.23 (Summer, 2009), p.4 and p.1.
[31] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.347.

many enslaved people simply chose to accept what could not be helped. Those who chose to actively resist the institution could worsen their situation. "Day-to-day resistance"[32] could in fact make "day-to-day" life harder than it already was.

Even more controversially, it could be argued that the role played by turncoats and informers in the slave community deserves exploration too. This is a topic seldom approached by historians, with many of those that do tending to treat them as pariahs or reprehensible traitors. Yet the evidence strongly suggests that whilst shared oppression and colour bound many to one another, individual survival and personal benefits could frequently outweigh this bond. The literature provides abundant evidence of slaves willing to betray runaways or uprisings, both real and imagined; to lie about others to avoid punishment; or even enjoy witnessing the punishment of others. However, these characters are rarely given the same historical attention as the more heroic figures; the rebels or the runaways. It is clear that 'the study of defiance often seems rather more attractive, exciting, and ideologically satisfying'[33] than examining those who simply endured, or even worse, collaborated with their captors. Yet the simple fact is that slaves such as these existed, and their existence surely demonstrates further that whilst 'the evil of slavery' may be unambiguous, it is clear that 'the lives of the men and women – both black and white – who lived through the era were as complicated as any.'[34] Accepting that enslaved people strove to forge strong familial bonds and commitments may also mean acknowledging that these individual concerns may have 'at times undermined any sense of community

[32] Raymond Bauer, 'Day to Day Resistance to Slavery,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.27, No.4 (Oct., 1942), pp.388-419.
[33] Schiller, 'Selling Themselves,' p.3.
[34] Berlin, 'Coming to Terms With Slavery,' p.3.

within enslaved neighbourhoods and networks,'[35] and that colluding with the plantocracy may have been more attractive than protecting their peers.

Having thus noted potential areas of research for the future, the focus of the essay shall shift towards a discussion on conflict in communal and familial life. It is clear that, to begin with, one must chart the historiographical progression of scholarship on the African American family in the slave community. It could be argued that it is absolutely integral one understands the depictions of enslaved existence that existed prior to the revisionist movement's challenge. To be aware of this is to more fully understand what they were reacting against and why; what they achieved; what they neglected; and ultimately why it now requires revision. Only once this has been done do I intend to add to the revisionist trend by examining the role of conflict and competition in the romantic and familial sphere.

[35] Schiller, 'Selling themselves,' p.9.

The Slave Family

It is clear that the slave family has been one of the most contentious areas of research within the slave community paradigm. The depictions of enslaved family life that emanated from the plantocracy, and thus many histories of the early twentieth century which used these alone, were overwhelmingly negative. Thomas Jefferson declared that, amongst slaves, 'love seems...to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation,'[36] with innumerable planters recording their belief that 'negroes are very prone to violate their marriage obligations.'[37] The 'almost constant childbearing'[38] recorded by planters amongst their enslaved women, and the frequency of pre-marital sexual relations in the slave community, was used to paint a picture of a promiscuous society. It was the whites themselves who "valiantly" struggled to instil a semblance of monogamy in the slave community. However, despite their best efforts to 'imbue them with their own "Victorian" attitudes on the subject,'[39] the belief that, amongst African Americans, emotion, and even "love," was almost non-existent; that their relationships were based upon primitive, "base," urges alone, meant that the separation of these unions was deemed to be of no importance. Planters stated that slaves were 'comparatively indifferent about this matter,'[40] with observers such as Frederick Law Olmstead further noting the "transient" nature of enslaved romantic life. His suggestion that 'any distress they

[36] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes On The State of Virginia,* (London, 1787) Extract from Ch.14, p.4.
[37] James O Breedon (ed.), *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, CT, 1980), p.243.
[38] Francis Kemble, *Journal of A Residence on A Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (Athens, 1984), p.230.
[39] Herbert Gutman, "Victorians all?" Sexual Mores and Conducts of Slaves' in Paul A David, Herbert Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin and Gavin Right (eds), *Reckoning with slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (Oxford, 1976), p.135
[40] James Henry Hammond, cited in Harvey Wish (ed.), *Slavery in the South; First Hand Accounts of the Ante-Bellum American Southland, from Northern & Southern Whites, Negroes, & Foreign Observers* (New York, 1964), p.270.

experienced was but momentary,' was evinced at a sale he witnessed by recording that a female slave who lost her husband; 'whose heart three minutes before was almost broken, now laughed as heartily as anyone'[41] at the antics of a nearby dog. As enslaved relationships were, in essence, little more than an artificial construction of white society, they could be broken without adversely affecting their chattel. After all, they could always 'get another wife.'[42]

This was intrinsically linked with the near universal depiction of African Americans, both during the period and after, as sexually licentious. Enslaved men, in particular, were thought to be 'under the domination of his passions, especially his sexuality.'[43] The construction of the hyper-sexual African American male that so terrified the south of the early twentieth century had his genesis on the plantation. Male slaves were painted as uncaring and aggressive; capable of great violence towards those in the quarters, where 'oppression and even violence...run riot.'[44] Even those who did not support slavery and offered limited aid in their daily struggles, for example Francis Kemble, felt that, 'the father, neither having authority, power, responsibility, or charge in his children, is of course, as among brutes, the least attached to his offspring.'[45] The paternalistic society fostered within "The Peculiar Institution" was said to have removed male slaves of the burden of responsibility towards their families or wives as 'discipline, parental responsibility, and control of rewards and punishments all rested in other hands.'[46] This was, in fact, reinforced in legislation. It was stated

[41] Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey In The Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks On Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), p.28.
[42] Charles Ball, *50 Years in Chains* (New York, 1837) - Upon being separated from his wife, Ball was told nonchalantly that he 'would be able to get another wife in Georgia,' p.11.
[43] Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London, 1980), p.114.
[44] Breedon, *Advice Among Masters*, p.58.
[45] Kemble, *Journal of A Residence*, p.95.
[46] Stanley Elkins, 'Slavery and Negro Personality,' in Allen Weinstein and Frank Otto Gatell (eds), *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (Oxford, 1973), p.103.

that slave children would 'follow the condition of the mother'; a decision that contravened the almost unanimous contemporary laws which 'declared that a child's status was determined by the father's condition.'[47] Ultimately, this removal of responsibility was said to have been eagerly grasped by enslaved men, who 'with "hazy pasts and reckless futures"...lived in each moment as it flew'[48]; showing little to no care for either their offspring or partner.

The result of this was a portrayal of enslaved family life as matriarchal in form; enslaved men were seemingly non-existent in the familial sphere. This was further stressed by many early historians using plantation slave lists - which frequently highlighted female-headed households due to the aforementioned legislation - as their principal form of evidence in constructing a history of the enslaved family. These historians emphasised a depiction of enslaved familial life where male slaves, once their urges had been satisfied, were of little to no significance. Yet this is not to say that white society mythologised the enslaved mother. Even though it was generally accepted that African American women played a more fundamental role in familial life, many contemporaries suggested that they, too, had little depth to their compassion for children or their partners. Such was the lack of emotion and sensitivity amongst female slaves that the role of mother, in essence, was deemed to have been reduced to 'mere breeding, bearing, suckling.'[49] Seemingly incapable of familial considerations and concerns, white society and the plantocracy had to teach them to look after their families as 'none of the cares, those noble cares, that holy thoughtfulness which

[47] Erlene Stetson, 'Studying Slavery: Some Literary and Pedagogical Considerations of the Black Female Slave' in Gloria T Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (eds), *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York, 1982), p.72.
[48] Ulrich B Phillips, 'Southern Negro Slavery: A Benign View,' in Allen Weinstein and Frank Otto Gatell (eds), *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (Oxford, 1973), p.66.
[49] Francis Kemble, *Journal of A Residence*, p.95.

lifts the human above the brute parent, are ever incurred here by either father or mother.'[50] The overall picture presented was of a lawless, callous and potentially violent society. Not only was there 'general licentiousness among the slaves'[51] but indeed, their caring white owners had to constantly intervene in order to prevent the 'stealing, lying, adultery, fornication, profane language, fighting and quarrelling'[52] that would inevitably occur otherwise.

In the post war decades, challenges to these views began to take precedence within the academic community, yet the focus remained on the absolute devastation of enslaved family life. However, rather than take white pronouncements of racially inherent failings, historians instead suggested that it was the institution of slavery itself that destroyed African American familial bonds. The overwhelming emphasis of historians, social scientists, and even government advisors, during the early twentieth century was on the damage wrought upon the African American family during slavery. The presentation was 'a gloomy picture of widespread family disorganization and sexual immorality.'[53] Indeed, the extraordinary pressures of slavery were said to have "destroyed the entire concept of family for American Negroes,"[54] which, in turn, shattered any semblance of African American unity or kinship. The devastation was so complete that familial instability "continued into the twentieth century" and was "a common factor in Negro life."[55] The controversial Moynihan Report of 1965, dealing with many of the contemporary issues surrounding the African American

[50] Francis Kemble, *Journal of A Residence*, p.95.
[51] Ivan E McDougle, 'The Social Status of the Slave,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.3, No.3 (Jul., 1918), p.288.
[52] Breedon, *Advice Among Masters*, p.57.
[53] E Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family In The United States*, *with a New Introduction and Bibliography by Anthony M.Platt* (Indiana, 2001), p.xvii.
[54] E Franklin Frazier, cited in Herbert Gutman, 'Persistent Myths About the African American Family,' in Gad Heuman and James Walvin (eds), *The Slavery Reader* (London, 2003), p.255.
[55] Gutman, 'Persistent Myths,' p.255.

family, stated that ultimately, 'it was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white America broke the will of the Negro people.'[56]

The preponderance of matriarchal familial arrangements that appeared in the early treatments of the topic was agreed upon, and deemed to be of particular importance as regards familial disorganisation and conflict. Furthermore, it was the most prominent aspect said to have continued into the twentieth century; even up to 1998, it was argued that up to 'three-fourths of poor African-American families are headed by single Black women.'[57] The reasoning behind this was said to have been the devastating emasculatory effects of slavery on African American men. 'The degraded man-child'[58] that was "Sambo" - broken by the institution of slavery - is said to have 'had little sense of responsibility towards their families.'[59] Examples from the WPA projects, such as the case where a respondent noted, '[the overseer] was whipping my sister with a cowhide whip. He missed her and my father caught the lick in the face, and he told Bill Reedes if he was goin' to whip Nancy to keep his whip off of him,'[60] were used to stress the lack of input made by enslaved men. This was neither an inherent failing nor a free choice. However, knowing the limits to their power; unable to prevent 'his dear wife, his unprotected sister, or his young and virtuous daughters' from 'falling a prey to such demons,'[61] African American men were said to have been

[56] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 'The Negro Family: The Case for National Action' in Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey (eds), *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Massachusetts, 1967), p.76.
[57] Devon W Carbado, 'Black Male Racial Victimhood,' *Callaloo*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Emerging Male Writers: A Special Issue, Part II. (Spring, 1998), p.347.
[58] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, (Mass); London, 1982), p.96.
[59] Eugene D Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (London, 1975), p.483.
[60] George P Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography Supplement, Series 2, Volume 2, Texas Narratives, Part 1* (Westport, 1977), p.379.
[61] William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles For Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery, with a New Foreword and Biographical Essay by R.J.M Blackett* (Baton Rouge, 1999), p.6.

'psychologically emasculated and totally dependent,'[62] unwilling to commit emotionally to a family they could never hope to protect or provide for.

In terms of intimate personal relations, the portrait remained as depressing. Focusing on the lack of legal protection for their unions led commentators to state that 'marriage among slaves was a farce.'[63] Expecting slaves to live up to monogamous ideals whilst continually and virulently attacking them was deemed cruel at best. It was this white denigration of their commitments that 'prevented the development of strong emotional ties between the mates,'[64] not any sort of racial characteristic. The pain of separation was not denied, but it was suggested that the sheer frequency with which this occurred, alongside knowing their basic inability to protect or provide, to guarantee sexual or marital fidelity, led to a reduced emotional input amongst the enslaved: a terrible, yet necessary, psychological survival mechanism. Overall, it was deemed that the constant and all-pervasive degradation of familial life by white society meant that, 'in the life of the slave, the family had nothing like the social significance that it had in the life of the white man.'[65] Emotive bonds and ties were weak, and strife was common. This was not the fault of the enslaved population of the antebellum south, but it was deemed the overwhelming dynamic within the familial sphere. The tragic scars left by the legacy of slavery were said to have hindered the African American community long after their emancipation.

However, at the forefront of the historiographical shift examining "the slave community," as mentioned earlier, was a massive revision of the depiction of enslaved familial life. Rather than focus on victimisation, historians strove to

[62] Grier and Cobbs, *Black Rage*, p.60.
[63] Grier and Cobbs, *Black Rage*, p.102.
[64] Frazier, *The Negro Family*, p.481.
[65] Kenneth Stammp, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York, 1956), p.343.

highlight the manner in which slaves successfully constructed meaningful relationships with one another. White society may have denigrated their familial life, but it was suggested that 'slave testimony tells a very different story.'[66] Whilst acknowledging the inherent difficulties faced by the enslaved; the lack of legal marriage, the interferences from owners (whether sexual or otherwise), or the inability to control their domestic life, the new wave of historians argued that white pronouncements on enslaved relations were marked by endemic racism and a lack of cultural understanding: they did not present an accurate picture of African American familial life.

Although slaves may have engaged in pre-marital sex, they were not sexually licentious, and nor did it prevent them from developing monogamous relationships in the future. Instead, the enslaved were said to have constructed a unique moral code. Whilst they did not demand puritanical chastity, neither did they condone illicit or outrageous sexuality. 'Fidelity was expected from slave men and women after marriage'[67]; enslaved relationships may not have been legislated, but they were culturally constructed and said to have been respected by members of the community. Indeed, it was described that 'many narratives reveal the slaves' respect for each other and show how seriously they regarded marriage.'[68] Furthermore, sources that revealed white acknowledgement of the importance of marital bonds amongst their slaves were emphasised, suggesting that these had been ignored by previous historians for ideological motives. Slave owners were said to have noted that many slaves 'found a degree of

[66] Emily West, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Illinois, 2004), p.39.
[67] Gutman, *The Black Family*, p.67.
[68] Justin Labinjoh, 'The Sexual Life of the Oppressed: An Examination of the Family Life of Antebellum Slaves,' *Phylon*, Vol.35 (1974), p.397.

faithfulness…which owners admire,'[69] and in fact used this knowledge to enforce discipline: the threat of separation from partners was perhaps the most feared punishment available, 'a haunting fear which made all of the slave's days miserable.'[70] Yet the fear of separation, undeniably tragic as it was, simply provides further evidence of the importance placed upon intimate emotional relationships by the enslaved. That the vast majority of enslaved people appeared to enter monogamous unions, despite the lack of legal protection and constant threat of separation, was a clear demonstration of 'the strength of their romantic love and, more broadly, the resilience of their communities.'[71] Slaves strove to choose their own partners, and they did so for love. Rather than being beset by violence and conflict, their relations were in fact seen as 'egalitarian and supportive,'[72] a means of providing comfort and solace amongst their strife.

Furthermore, the notion that family life was inherently unstable and matriarchal in form was widely attacked - if not entirely debunked - by revisionist historians.[73] They challenged the use of plantation lists and the statements of the plantocracy, suggesting that these were inherently flawed. Instead, there was an emphasis on nuclear family life as being the desired norm amongst the enslaved. In a case study in South Carolina, a reassessment of housing structures found that 'approximately 46.2 percent of slave families consisted of two parents living together in nuclear families.'[74] This was increased further by recording the prevalence of cross-plantation marriages amongst the enslaved. In the same case study, these unions were said to 'have constituted up to 33.5 percent of slave

[69] Olmstead, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States,* p.6.
[70] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, p.89.
[71] West, *Chains of Love*, p.30.
[72] West, *Chains of Love*, p.70.
[73] Deborah White, 'Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status,' *Journal of Family History*, Vol.8, No.3 (1983) - 'partly in response to the criticism spawned by the Moynihan Report, historians reanalyzed antebellum source material, and the matriarchy thesis was debunked,' p.248.
[74] West, 'Debate on the Strength of Slave Families,' p.229.

families.[75] Whilst these sorts of arrangements had frequently been derided as weak and unstable, they were in fact defended, and even used to exemplify the strength of emotions between enslaved people. Despite knowing that visits would be restricted and severe punishments faced transgressors, slaves went to extraordinary lengths to maintain their long distance relationships. Romance could not be constrained within the plantation, much as masters would have liked; slaves could not help who they fell in love with. Monogamous unions, and particularly cross-plantation ones, were a demonstration that, despite the difficulties and constant interference, enslaved people strove to construct a norm of 'essentially nuclear families that sometimes saw all members living on the same slaveholding but that sometimes showed spouses, siblings, children, and other relatives dispersed across a more complex residential network.'[76] They were a further indication of the wider sense of kinship and harmony within the slave community.

Not only were abroad marriages said to have provided love and support for the enslaved, but they also became a means of repudiating the emasculation thesis. Examination of slave testimony was said to have shown a gendered dimension to courting and marriage, whereby it was male slaves who ran the gauntlet of the patrollers to visit their families and loved ones. The willingness with which male slaves were willing to risk serious punishments in such a way was said to have been a demonstration of their masculinity; an awareness of the gendered norms of the period and proof that they were not the emasculated "Sambo's" of lore. Enslaved men were depicted as caring and loving providers against all the odds.

[75] West, 'Debate on the Strength of Slave Families,' p.229.
[76] West, 'Debate on the Strength of Slave Families,' p.213.

Historians wrote how they would strive to bring 'opossum or some chicken or some vegetables or a little gift' for their families, whilst folk songs such as,

> Bye baby buntin'
> Daddy's gone a huntin
> Ter fetch a little rabbit skin
> Ter wrap de baby buntin in,[77]

were used to emphasise the lengths to which enslaved men strove to provide for their families. In one study, it was suggested that up to '96.9 percent of slave males mentioned that they partook in hunting and fishing.'[78] The suggestion was that one, if not *the*, definitive feature of enslaved masculinity was the role of father and husband. Male slaves were neither promiscuous nor cruel, but were active in the family. Not only did they strive heroically to meet their obligations; they did so willingly and lovingly.

It has now become almost mantra to state that the family was 'the primary institution in the slave quarters.'[79] It was within enslaved people's attempts to construct a strong and autonomous familial life, as well as romantic relationships, that one can find 'the foundations for a sense of community that could extend over time and across space.'[80] The manner in which familial bonds interlinked with a wider sense of community, 'a consciousness of kinship emanating from an awareness of a common fate,'[81] are said to have been, ultimately, that which enabled 'members of slave communities to survive and even resist the oppression

[77] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, p.474 and p.486.
[78] West, *Chains of Love*, p.100.
[79] Hudson Jr, *To Have and To Hold*, p.141.
[80] Frederickson, *The Arrogance of Race*, p.120.
[81] Labinjoh, 'The Sexual Life of the Oppressed,' p.390.

of the regime.'[82] The strength of familial bonds in the slave community were the means by which enslaved people of all generations could protect, provide, and ultimately survive, the brutality of "The Peculiar Institution."

[82] West, *Chains of Love*, p.19.

Competitive Courtship

black gal sweet,

Some like goodies dat de white folks eat;

Don't you take'n tell her name

En den if sompin' happen you wont ketch de blame[83]

Having highlighted the state of the historiography on the enslaved family, it would certainly appear apt that our discussions on conflict in the community centre on a revisionist examination of the romantic and familial life of the enslaved. It could be argued that in its most recent historical incarnation, 'the institution of the black family appears as preternaturally immune to the brutality inherent in slavery.'[84] Whilst not wishing to return to the days where the historiography stated emphatically that all 'slave families were highly unstable'; nor that 'parents frequently had little to do with the raising of their children,'[85] it should not be forgotten that many slave families *were* inherently unstable, albeit for the most part through no fault of their own. Interference from owners; whether in terms of choosing or denying potential partners, breaking up marriages and selling children, or even through the frequently recorded sexual abuse of African American women, played a significant role in disrupting enslaved familial life, as well as creating conflict and tension within the slave community.

Furthermore, whilst revisionist historians have stated that 'the relationships between slave men and women can be best characterized as broadly egalitarian and supportive'; that 'the norm within their communities was a climate

[83] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.232.
[84] Painter, *Across the Color Line*, p.21.
[85] Stammp, *The Peculiar Institution*, p.343.

of togetherness,'[86] it is also important to look beyond a purely romanticised notion of emotions, and particularly "love." It is a timeless fact of life that 'the potential sources of conflict between intimates are many.'[87] Enslaved relationships were not free from the very human emotions of jealousy, anger, or sadness. Arguments, adultery, domestic violence (including that perpetrated by women on men, and parents on children); these sources of conflict have existed in human relationships across the historical spectrum, and indeed, continue to do so. Furthermore, enslaved people faced all of the difficulties of constructing human relationships whilst being denied the legal framework of marriage or control of their domestic life. Examining conflict within enslaved familial life or relationships is not attempting to 'negate the viability and durability of the ideals of family life most slaves had,'[88] nor is it neglecting the heroic attempts countless made in the face of tremendous difficulties to carve out an autonomous family life. It is instead a recognition that the stark reality of enslaved life meant that 'African American romance and marriage...could be the most challenging and devastating of slave experiences.'[89] Human relationships, and especially intimate ones, are often fraught with conflict; tempestuous and hot-blooded. The enslaved were not immune from this.

Before moving onto the enslaved family in its established form, I intend to delve into one of the most exciting additions to the scholarship on enslaved communal life; the role of courting, and in particular, the competitive nature of this. Rather than taking stable (relatively speaking) family life as my starting

[86] West, *Chains of Love*, p.70.
[87]Christopher Morris, 'Within the Slave Cabin: Violence in Mississippi Slave Families,' in Christine Daniels and Michael V Kennedy (eds), *Over The Threshold: Intimate Violence in Early America* (London, 1999), p.269.
[88] Morris, 'Within the Slave Cabin,' p.269.
[89] Brenda E Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford, 1996), p.226.

point, I intend to analyse enslaved relationships in their nascent forms, to examine how slaves constructed their romantic engagements and the potential conflict and competition this could bring to the community. It could be suggested that, for too long, courtship has been 'understood as a "mere passage instead of its own social event."[90] It has frequently appeared as though the process itself is unproblematic or unimportant, often defined simply as 'social activities leading to engagement and marriage.'[91] Yet the enslaved experience offers a unique avenue to explore courting as a historical phenomenon. Not only have the enslaved 'been neglected in the historiography of love and emotions,'[92] but the constraints placed upon them by their masters, as well as the lack of a legal "marriage" at the end of the process, were fairly exceptional. Analysing courtship amongst the enslaved may thus provide the historian with greater evidence of the social and cultural aspects to courting; studying it within its own rights, and not simply as the precursor to a legal marriage.

Much early scholarship may have neglected courtship amongst the enslaved due to accounts from slaves themselves, with some stating that they 'didn't have time to do much courting in them days,'[93] suggesting that it was a relatively unimportant aspect of their harsh lives. The process of forming relationships was deemed a simplistic and somewhat cold experience; 'if a man saw a girl he liked he would ask his master's permission to ask the master of the girl for her. If his master consented and her master consented then they came

[90] Rebecca J Griffin, 'Goin' back over there to see that girl': Competing Social Spaces in the Lives of the Enslaved in Antebellum North Carolina,' *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol.25, No.1 (2004), p.95.
[91] Ellen Rothman, 'Sex and Self-Control: Middle Class Courtship in America, 1770-1870,' *The Journal of Social History*, Vol.15, No.3, Special Issue on the History of Love (Spring, 1982), p.410.
[92] Rebecca Fraser, *Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved In North Carolina* (Jackson, 2007), p.5.
[93] George P Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol 18, Unwritten History of Slavery, Fisk University* (Westport, 1977), p.132.

together.'[94] Yet, the negativity of these extracts does not tell the whole story. What becomes abundantly clear, the more one examines enslaved testimony, is the importance placed upon the construction of intimate relationships by the majority of slaves, and in particular, the manner in which 'the enslaved themselves sought to define the nature and shape of their own courtship experiences.'[95]

The manner in which the enslaved strove to choose their own partners, as well as the means by which they competed for these partners, not only provides the historian with evidence of the importance placed upon courtship as an event, but also abundant evidence of the vibrancy of the enslaved community. Courtship amongst the enslaved can thus be used by the historian of the antebellum south to highlight their constant struggles for autonomy and the strength of relations between many African Americans. However, alongside this lies a vast amount of competition and conflict too. Indeed, what is interesting for the purposes of this study is to analyse the means by which the manifestations of competitive courtship 'within the quarters of the enslaved…could pose serious ramifications for the concept of a "community."[96]

It is important to note that there are clear methodological issues as regards studying courtship amongst the enslaved. These are problems that shall impact our study on familial conflict too. Studying a history of emotions is fraught with difficulties irrespective of time or place, yet this is compounded when dealing with a group who were predominantly denied literacy. Whilst the study of courtship is frequently based around 'personal texts, such as letters and diaries,' only a minority of enslaved men and women 'were able to master the written

[94] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.161.
[95] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.4.
[96] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.7.

word and thus give expression to their emotions through this particular form.'[97] This could offer an immediate constraint to the study, although Maria Diedrich notes that there are some who write of their experiences, for example Henry Bibb or J.D Green.[98] Furthermore, the historian could also examine the testimony of thousands of WPA respondents, or the Freedmen's Bureau Records, which have been said to 'illustrate the existence of romantic love in their society.'[99]

However, the fact that we have some enslaved testimony on love and romance is no panacea. Simply being able to study the written word does not always adequately deal with the difficulties of dealing in emotions due to their inherent ambiguity and subjectivity. Furthermore, enslaved narratives published as part of the abolitionist movement, for example Bibb's, may have stressed the romantic side of enslaved courtship and neglected much of the competitive nature or, indeed, certain *African*-American norms. The motivations behind this may have been to convince white society that slaves, too, were 'capable of complex, responsible loving relationships'[100] that could mirror the idealised, if rarely realised, image that their white counterparts propagated.

Much of the WPA testimony is clearly flawed too. One unavoidable issue is that the majority of respondents were young children during slavery. Whilst some may have begun romantic engagements, for example Frank Adamson, who declared; 'did me ever do any courtin'? you knows I did,'[101] many respondents did not begin their courting until after slavery. The historian must acknowledge these problems, but the outlook need not be overly bleak. It is possible to suggest

[97] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.11.
[98] Maria Diedrich, 'My Love is Black as Yours is Fair,' *Phylon*, Vol.47, No.3 (3rd Qtr., 1986), pp.238-247.
[99] West, *Chains of Love*, p.20.
[100] Diedrich, 'My Love is Black,' p.243.
[101] George P Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Volume 2, South Carolina Narratives Part 1 and 2* (Westport, 1977), p.16.

that by analysing the manner in which enslaved people discussed courtship within narratives and testimony – whether they experienced it or simply recounted stories - alongside an analysis of the vernacular, oral history they constructed; for example, trickster tales or songs – the historian is able to gain some awareness of the forms courtship could take within the slave community.

It has been stated that the historiographical orthodox is to now assume that enslaved people were not 'incapable of falling in love or establishing relationships that were predicated around feelings of affection, intimacy, or tenderness,'[102] but indeed, as capable of love and affection as their white counterparts. However, the history of courtship and romance amongst the enslaved is not simply one of triumph and joy. Indeed, in the evocative words of one historian, studying love can reveal 'tyrants, conquests, battles and alliances.'[103] I intend to add to the growing literature on courtship that aims to move beyond a simplistic analysis of the difficulties faced by courting couples alongside the "master/slave" dichotomy, instead noting the important role that competitive courtship could play in causing conflict amongst slaves themselves. Furthermore, whilst a large body of work tends to deal with courting as a 'source of conflict and competition among slave men,'[104] there is evidence of female competition, and even violence, as regards romantic entanglements. Courting 'was a game designed for two players'[105]; women were not always the passive recipients of male attention.

We began by acknowledging that the enslaved were perfectly capable of falling in love, accepting that the majority 'courted one another in the hope of

[102] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.3.
[103] Theodore Zeldin, 'Personal History and the History of the Emotions' in *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 15, No. 3, Special Issue on the History of Love (Spring,1982), p.344.
[104] Forret, 'Conflict and the "Slave Community,"' p.570.
[105] Hudson Jr, *To Have and To Hold*, p.154.

entering some permanent relationship,'[106] desiring 'a spouse for companionship.'[107] However, I would like to establish a caveat to this established view. In some cases courting was not the romantic preamble to a stable marital life. This is not to suggest that simply engaging in pre-nuptial intercourse should act as evidence of an innate inability to control sexual urges. Whilst pre-marital sex may have been the reason why owners and the larger white society, constrained (theoretically at least) by their extreme Victorian morals, felt all African Americans were promiscuous, it is clear that enslaved people constructed their own morals as regards sexuality. Within the slave community, 'many slaves viewed prenuptial intercourse as a prelude to a settled marriage.'[108]

Yet despite acknowledging this, it is evident that not all pre-marital encounters occurred with this in mind - at least not for both parties. Indeed, in the words of one WPA respondent; 'sometimes they would slip there and sleep with the women and wouldn't marry at all.'[109] Women, too, were capable of enjoying casual sexual liaisons. John White described how he would "slip some things from out of the kitchen. The single womenfolks was bad that way. I favors them with something extra from the kitchen. Then they favors me – at night."[110] However, despite the more relaxed attitudes towards sexuality, it is often suggested that a limited form of the sexual "double standard" still existed in the slave community: overt 'female promiscuity was frowned upon.'[111] Instead, it appears that, much like their white counterparts in the antebellum south, and indeed in seemingly innumerable temporal locations, it was the young men who

[106] Hudson Jr, *To Have and To Hold*, p.158.
[107] West, *Chains of Love*, p.24.
[108] Gutman, *The Black Family*, p.65.
[109] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.140.
[110] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll,* p.465.
[111] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.241.

'made sexual experience a point of honor and boasting among themselves.'[112] Courting and sexual exploits became a manner in which one could stake a reputation; a means of proving one's manhood in the community.

Whilst the emasculation thesis has been long held in the historiography, the hypervirility of the black masculine has curiously existed in tandem. This sense of African American sexual potency has, in fact, been argued as being something that 'many blacks did not protest... having found at least one area in which their superiority was manifest.'[113] It has been suggested that 'slave men traditionally applauded their sexual potency, celebrating it in song, dance, jokes, and heroic tales,'[114] and that sexual conquest became an arena in which enslaved men could derive status amongst their peers. It is clear that many enslaved men felt pride in their prowess. Indeed, it has been noted that 'male WPA respondents appear to have been more willing to talk to their interviewers about courtship than the females'[115]; with respondents describing how following their courting they 'would brag to the boys about it,'[116] or declaring that their stepfather was known as 'a mighty ladies' man.'[117] Furthermore the enslaved song recounted by Levi Pollard containing the lines,

> black gal sweet,
> Some like goodies dat de white folks eat;
> Don't you take'n tell her name
> En den if sompin' happen you wont ketch de blame;

[112] Brown, *Southern Honor*, p.295.
[113] Diedrich, 'My Love is Black,' p.240.
[114] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.242.
[115] West, *Chains of Love*, p.37.
[116] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.260.
[117] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.176.

hints that slave men could deliberately avoid the consequences of pre-marital intercourse, whilst the suggestion that they had,

> Better shet dat door,
>
> Fo' de white folk'sll believe we er t'arin' up de flo[118]

seems to indicate pride in the sexual prowess that would "t'are up de flo." The implicit suggestion is that "white folks" would be unable to comprehend the passion of such an encounter. It would be unwise, and, indeed, unfair to use the lyrics of a folk song to tar male slaves as sexually licentious, yet it is certainly within the limits of reason to suggest that some may have been. Enslaved men were capable of treating enslaved women as 'sexual objects to pursue and dominate, often without a hint of marriage or longstanding commitment.'[119] This is not to suggest that all male slaves were the pseudo-scientific "Bucks" of white propaganda, 'dominated entirely by their sexuality.'[120] However, the idea that slaves were 'seldom so insensitive'[121] as to pursue casual, or even selfish, sexual liaisons perhaps presents an overly romanticised depiction of enslaved existence.

The sexual pursuit of African American women by their male counterparts could also take more aggressive forms. Whilst the accounts are rare, there is some evidence to suggest that sexual assaults on enslaved women were not limited solely to those perpetrated by white men, but could occur from within the slave community too. The case of George, a slave from Mississippi, could act as an example having been "indicted…for a rape on a female slave [under ten years of

[118] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.232.
[119] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.242.
[120] Diedrich, 'My Love is Black,' p.240.
[121] Leslie Howard Owens, 'Blacks in the Slave Community,' in Al Tony Gilmore (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), p.65.

age]."[122] Furthermore, there are numerous accounts of coloured drivers abusing their position to sexually harass their female charges.[123] Methodologically, rape is a notoriously difficult historical phenomenon to uncover. The stigma and shame that are attached to it ensure that, even today, a significant number of victims do not report their attacks. It is plausible that enslaved women or WPA respondents chose to hide these negative depictions of enslaved communal life; particularly in a period where the lynching of black males was predicated on a depiction of them as animalistic rapists. Furthermore, since 'legally the concept of raping a slave simply did not exist,'[124] and enslaved women faced the sexual aggression of whites on a far more frequent basis, many may have chosen not to mention it at all and simply endured in silence.

Indeed, the futility of the matter is perhaps exemplified in the aforementioned case of George. The verdict was 'reversed...indictment quashed, and defendant discharged,' as it was stated quite simply that the rape of a female slave 'charges no offence known to either system.'[125] Whilst the evidence is slim, and noting that the vast majority of recorded sexual aggression came from white men, it would be naive to suggest that rape could not occur within the slave community. Enslaved men were perfectly capable of sexually harassing their female counterparts 'in ways that they found unwelcome, inappropriate, and, quite

[122] Helen Tunnicliff Catteral (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume III, Cases from the Courts of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana* (New York, 1968), p.363.
[123] William L Van Deburg, 'Slave Drivers and Slave Narratives,' *The Historian,* Vol.39, No.4 (Aug., 1977) - 'a further example of a slave foreman exceeding his master's requirements for stringent disciplinary measures is found in Ben Horry's narrative account... the overseer brutalized those of his fellow bondsmen who would not obey his every command. Refusing Fraser's sexual advances, Horry's mother was taken to the barn, strapped to a "pony," and given twenty-five to fifty lashes.' p.727.
[124] Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York, 1975), p.162.
[125] Helen Tunnicliff Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning Slavery: Ga, Fl, Aba, Miss, La,* p.363.

possibly, also frightening.'[126] Whether this was the result of the sexual violence towards African American women that pervaded "The Peculiar Institution" influencing enslaved men, a further reflection of the sense of masculine privilege that dominated sexual relations in the antebellum south, or simply a horrendous facet of human behaviour perpetrated by a minority of individuals is a matter of interpretation: that it occasionally occurred is not.

The sense that enslaved men were as capable of exploiting women for casual - or even unwelcome - sexual liaisons as other patriarchal groups should not be used to frame a narrative that brands them as oversexed and uncaring. However, it should temper any overly romanticised narrative of enslaved relationships. Whilst pre-marital sex or childbirth in the slave community was not regarded as inherently shameful, neither was it deemed something that should be flaunted by all. The sexual "double standard" that marked the antebellum south may not have been as pronounced in the slave community, but much of the evidence appears to suggest that sexual prowess was a definitive code of masculinity. Much like amongst their white counterparts, the sexual arena could be a competitive and aggressive masculine proving ground; romance and marriage did not have to enter the equation.

Despite noting these less savoury aspects to the topic, it is certainly possible to suggest that at some point in their lives, the majority of enslaved people desired a stable and loving relationship. Yet upon making this decision, the path to "marriage" was never a stable one, and can provide the historian with yet more evidence of conflict within the community. Firstly, it is important to state that there may have been geographical variations to courting practices.

[126] Betty Wood, "For their satisfaction or redress." African Americans and Church Discipline in the Early South,' in Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (eds), *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South* (New York, 1997), p.119.

Types of labour may have influenced courting patterns, as well as shaped the forms competition may have taken. It is often noted that those slaves in areas where task labour predominated, as in Georgia, could have more free time if they worked harder. They could use this time to grow plants, hunt, earn money, or simply visit the objects of their affection more frequently. Another variation could be in industrial areas, as in the case of ironworkers in Virginia, where the overwork system could allow certain slaves 'to provide cash or small luxuries'[127] for their loved ones. Comparing these slaves to the 'physically exhausted' slaves who worked in Turpentine camps; who 'would have found it difficult to muster the energy, both bodily and mentally, to pursue a romance in their off-time,'[128] could offer the historian an insight into the impact labour conditions could have on the romantic lives of the enslaved. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that there were differences in courting opportunities between field and domestic slaves.[129] Types of labour and the different experiences of slavery that they brought played their part in structuring courtship throughout the slave states.

However, there are certain constants that appear. One such problem was that, given the controls placed upon enslaved movement and communal gatherings across the antebellum south, the chances for slaves to meet one another socially were extremely rare. Furthermore, whilst large plantations often appear as the defining image of slavery in the antebellum south, they were in fact a minority: smaller holdings predominated. For those on smaller farms, there would frequently be little alternative but to look elsewhere for suitable partners.

[127] Charles B Dew, 'Disciplining Slave Ironworkers in the Antebellum South: Coercion, Conciliation, and Accommodation' in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), p.218.
[128] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.54.
[129] Fraser, *Courtship and Love* - 'slaves employed in the fields of the plantation may have been able to acquire a greater degree of independence and influence over their rights to off time when compared to domestic slaves, who were employed in the houses of slaveholders.' p.55.

In many respects this was a deliberate choice, even for those on larger plantations. Not only could an "abroad" relationship offer the enslaved a chance to escape the monotony of their own residence for brief periods, but it also ensured that they did not witness the daily punishments of their courting partner.

However, courting a slave from a different location could also present certain problems, particularly as regards jealousy. Indeed, Mille Barber described how her 'pa b'longin' to one man and my mammy b'longin' to another, four or five miles apart, caused some confusion, mix-up, and heartaches.'[130] It has been suggested that, during the courting period, 'each man in the slave quarters also had to guard against the sexual incursion of other bondmen upon any woman he claimed as his own.'[131] This could be witnessed in the tale recounted by Anderson Bates. Coming to visit the girl he was courting, he found out that 'Dere was seven more niggers a flyin' 'round dat sugar lump of a gal in de night time.' Upon witnessing this he described his reaction:

> I knocks one down one night, kick another out de nex' night, and choke de stuffin' out of one de nex' night. I landed de three-leg stool on de head of de fourth one, de last time. Then de others carry deir 'fections to some other place than Carrie's house.[132]

Courting a slave on a neighbouring plantation could provide ample opportunity for amorous rivals to sneak in: "all's fair in love and war."

Amorous rivalry was not simply restricted to those on alternative plantations or farms. The fact that enslaved gatherings and movements were

[130] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.39.
[131] Forret, 'Conflict in the Community,' p.570.
[132] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.44.

limited often meant that men and women could only meet for social reasons at certain pre-arranged functions; for example corn shuckings or "frolics." Whilst Stephanie Camp has convincingly argued that the enslaved managed to carve out a "rival geography," a 'space for private and public creative expression,'[133] illicit gatherings were still often a communal affair. The result of this was that 'courtship was a community event as much as it was a relationship between two people.'[134] In order to impress a potential partner, you had to compete with others. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that the entire process of courtship was based around a competitive edge. This competition appears to have been structured along gendered lines. Whilst it was initially stated that women played a significant role in courting, it is certainly possible to note that it was 'generally enslaved men who were the more active agents of the courting process.'[135] Male slaves still strove to abide by the patriarchal conventions of the antebellum south; it was the men who would visit neighbouring plantations, who took the lead by attempting to procure material goods for their would-be-partners, and, who most frequently publicly competed to win the affections of their sweetheart.

The sense that courtship became a means of proving one's manhood in the community, by competing publicly with other men in order to "get the girl," is well demonstrated in the literature. The vast majority of female slave testimony describes how they, whilst not as constrained as their white counterparts, were actively courted by their menfolk; often by more than one at a time. Cases such as Alcey, a slave who 'had all the unmarried men at her feet,' with the men

[133] Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, 2004), p.7.
[134] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.19.
[135] Rebecca Griffin, 'Courtship Contests and Meaning of Conflict,' *Journal of Southern History*, Vol.71, No.4 (Nov., 2005), p.799.

described as 'rival suitors,'[136] or Sara Crocker, who mentioned that when she was courting, 'the boys would secure a pass from their master and come to see her,'[137] act as examples of this. Furthermore, the aforementioned Frank Adamson described how, in the game of courting; 'It's de nature of a he, to take after de she.'[138] Therefore, it appears that there was a significant, and accepted, gendered convention to courting. Whilst there were exceptions, enslaved men seem to have been the more active participants in the competitive process.

The manner in which they competed offers a fascinating insight into the social and cultural world of the enslaved, providing evidence of hierarchies as well as accepted conventions of behaviour and social interactions as regards gender. The means by which men attempted to prove themselves as worthy suitors varied dramatically. Some aimed for the display of physical strength, as in the case of John Anderson, who described proudly how he 'acquired great proficiency in running, jumping, and other athletic amusements.'[139] This would have stood him in good stead for the sort of competition described by another respondent; 'If two boys wuz in love wid de same girl an' dey couldn't decide who would git her; she would run an' de two boys would run after an' de one dat kotched her would marry her.'[140] Another potential means of physical competition could be through dance, as noted by Solomon Northup. Striving to gain the slave girl Lively's attention, Northup paints a vivid picture of the competition between young enslaved men:

---

136 Susan Dabney Smedes, with an introduction and notes by Fletcher M Green (ed.), *Memorials of A Southern Planter* (New York, 1965), p.63.
137 Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.225.
138 Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.16.
139 John Blassingame (ed.), *Slave Testimony. Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977), p.353.
140 Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol 10, Mississippi Narratives Part 5, Supplement, Series 1* (Westport, 1977), p.2035.

> 'it was well known that Sam cherished an ardent passion for Lively, as also did one of Marshall's and another of Carey's boys...It was a victory for Sam Roberts, when, rising from the repast, she gave him her hand for the first "figure" in preference to either of his rivals. They were somewhat crestfallen, and shaking their heads angrily, rather intimated they would like to pitch into Mr. Sam and hurt him badly. But not an emotion of wrath ruffled the placid bosom of Samuel as his legs flew like drum-sticks down the outside and up the middle…but Sam's superhuman exertions overcame him finally, leaving Lively alone, yet whirling like a top. Thereupon, one of Sam's rivals, Pete Marshall, dashed in, and, with might and main, leaped and shuffled and threw himself into every conceivable shape, as it determined to show Miss Lively and all the world that Sam Roberts was of no account.'[141]

As the story continues, more men try, but fail, to keep up with the impossibly "*lively* Lively."

Physical competition was perhaps the most overt manifestation of conflict in the community. Whilst contests could take the form of racing or dancing, they could also take less savoury forms. Courting males frequently settled their differences violently; proving their manhood by defeating their rivals in love. Anderson Bates' violent reaction was noted earlier, whilst Frank Adamson described how his "pappy" 'run all de other niggers 'way from my mammy.'[142] Even at events such as a corn shucking, the sense of competition could become so intense that violence was the only outcome. One WPA respondent recalled that 'I

[141] Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years A Slave* (Baton Rouge, 1968), p.167.
[142] Rawick, *WPA Narratives, S.Carolina*, p.14.

never will forget one night the niggers got to fighting and tore down a whole rail fence pulling the rails off, fighting with them.'[143] Another ex-slave mentioned that the rivalry that could beset dances would not simply remain on the dance-floor, but that 'often after the dance they would go to fighting.'[144] Physical prowess was most certainly a means of competition amongst enslaved men, and could frequently highlight the hierarchical arrangements and conflict that could erupt within the slave community when it came to competing for love.

Alongside physical accomplishments, personal appearance was also held to be of the utmost significance. Recent scholarship has suggested that 'the way in which slaves presented their bodies both to themselves and to whites was, to them, a matter of considerable importance.'[145] In terms of courting, it has been described that, even within the constraints of slavery, 'the better dressed the slave, the more he looked the part...the better would be his chances of winning the object of his desire.'[146] The importance placed upon garments when attempting to impress slave women could be witnessed in the oft-repeated tale of the slave caught by the patrollers without a pass. About to be whipped, he is said to have pleaded with them, 'please don't let my gal see under my coat, 'cause I got on a bosom and no shirt.'[147] Furthermore, 'dirty, unkempt, and ragged' slaves could be a target of mockery, as in the case of one who faced the derision of one female slave; the unfortunate slave was told, in no uncertain terms, to 'gi' ye some clo's.'[148]

---

143 Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.106.
144 Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.255.
145 Shane White and Graham White, 'Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' *Past and Present,* No. 148 (Aug., 1995), p.150.
146 Larry E Hudson Jr, 'All that cash: Work and Status in the Slave Quarters,' in Larry E Hudson Jr (ed.), *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (New York, 1994), p.85.
147 Rawick, *The American Slave, S Carolina,* p.39.
148 Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.341.

The emphasis on appearance has also been used to stress the important role the informal economy played within the slave community. As noted earlier, this may have impacted courting rituals more in those areas where task labour was prevalent as the more industrious would have been able to spend more time on their side projects and earned the money to fuel their pursuit. A WPA respondent noted the importance of this, describing how those who 'wuz smart an' made a good crop...had mo' money than the lazy ones did.'[149] Ironworkers in Virginia too, were able 'to provide cash or small luxuries'[150] for their prospective partners through the overwork system. This could translate into demonstrating the ability to provide for loved ones, something that was of clear importance to slaves throughout the antebellum south. The suggestion that 'some slaves turned the counting of property into a public display and peppered these sessions with boasting and joking,'[151] alongside the denigration of the "lazy ones," could provide yet more evidence of the existence of hierarchies and competition amongst the enslaved.

The role played by cash in courting could also be witnessed in the song recorded by Gus Feaster. Gus described how 'we sing dis vulgar song, "I'll give you half-dollar if you come out tonight; I'll give you half-dollar if you come out tonight"[152] when they went courting. However, whilst spending money may have helped some, it was not always so simple. Aaron Ford mentioned the time when he 'bought a girl 10 cents worth of candy en sent it to her.' Yet rather than play the part of dutiful and grateful recipient, 'she stamped it in de ground wid her foot. Girl never even mentioned it to me en I ain' never bothered wid her

[149] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.27.
[150] Dew, 'Disciplining Slave Ironworkers,' p.218.
[151] Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk*, p.95.
[152] Rawick, *The American Slave, S Carolina*, p.51.

again.'[153] Money was not the only factor, but having cash to spend; whether on the object of their affections, to improve their appearance, or to increase their standing in the social world of the enslaved, could play a decisive role in determining whether one was successful in the competitive world of courtship.

It has also been suggested that competition was not simply related to physicality or wealth, but also 'a battle of wits played by resort to riddles, poetic boasting, toasts, and ridicule.'[154] It has been argued that 'slaves' talent for improvising songs of wit and beauty had a special outlet among the suitors,'[155] and that this sort of talent could prove decisive in the competitive sphere of courtship. This is where analysing the folklore of the enslaved, alongside their testimony, can prove useful to the historian. Trickster tales frequently provide examples where wit and cunning prove superior to brute force, and can highlight the competitive edge to courtship contests. Indeed, these contests are deeply 'embedded in a number of the stories.'[156] The trickster tales provide further evidence of not only the manner in which courtship and sexual prowess were considered avenues of status and power, but also the manner in which competition could be cut-throat and malicious. It is important to note from the outset that the trickster tales are highly ambiguous, and should not be viewed as a simplistic allegorical representation of life in the slave community. Clearly, one should not take the tale of the whistling competition for Brer Bear's daughter, where 'Rabbit offers to help his only serious competitor, Brer Dog, whistle more sweetly by

[153] Rawick, *The American Slave, S Carolina*, p.76.
[154] John Blassingame, 'Status And Social Structure In The Slave Community: Evidence From New Sources,' in Harry P Owens (ed.), *Perspectives And Irony In American Slavery,* (Jackson, 1976), p.144.
[155] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, p.471.
[156] Griffin, 'Courtship Contests,' p.771.

slitting the corners of his mouth,'[157] as literal examples of courtship contests amongst the enslaved. However, the common theme of rivalry and competition amongst members of the animal world could be used to reinforce a depiction of enslaved communal life as never simply harmonious, but beset by conflict too.

The most frequent protagonist of the tales, Brer Rabbit, does not simply use his cunning and wit to trick the more powerful creatures, for example Brer Wolf (often seen as representatives of white society). Instead, in many of the tales Brer Rabbit 'tricked and deceived animals who were similar to him in terms of physical strength,'[158] and particularly over matters of courtship. It is also useful to note that the principal characters in the tales are male, whilst women 'are cast as trophies in the contests between the male competitors,'[159] perhaps further highlighting the gendered conventions to competitive courtship. Examples of verbal skills defeating physical accomplishments could be found in the fable related to the corn shucking between Brer Coon and Brer Rabbit,[160] or when Brer Rabbit tricks Brer Fox into acting as his horse, taking him to visit the ladies they were competing for.[161] In this tale, Rabbit mounts Wolf (perhaps in itself an allusion to sexual dominance), 'humiliates him, reduces him to servility, steals his

---

[157] Lawrence Levine, "Some go up and Some Go Down": The Meaning of the Slave Trickster' in Lawrence Levine (ed.), *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (Oxford, 1993), p.69.

[158] Griffin, 'Courtship Contests,' p. 778.

[159] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.82.

[160] Griffin, 'Courtship Contests' – 'Brer Wolf offered his attractive daughter to the animal that could shuck the most corn. In promising her to the hardest worker Brer Wolf described the suitor that a father wants for his daughter: someone who can provide her...[Brer Rabbit] knew he was unable to compete with Brer Coon at shucking corn. Rather than spending his time trying to shuck the most corn, Brer Rabbit sang, danced, and charmed Miss Wolf while the others worked. At the end of the contest Brer Rabbit declared himself the winner, and Brer Wolf left to his daughter the decision of who would be crowned victor of the contest. Brer Rabbit's attempts at wooing Miss Wolf were successful, and she declared, "it most surely are Brer Rabbit's pile." P.780.

[161]Harris, Joel Chandler, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings,* By the University of Virginia American Studies Program 2003-2004. Digitized and first spell-checked October 2003. Tagged in HTML October, 2003. Copy-edited and overall design and construction: Parrish Bergquist, October, 2003. This version available from American studies at the University of Virginia. Charlottesville. Va.http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Harris2/toc.html*egends of the Old Plantation* – VI - Mr Rabbit grossly deceives Mr Fox.

woman, and, in effect, takes his place.'[162] He does so through wit, not brute force: perhaps such competition could be reflected in the slave community too. However, deceiving and tricking other slaves in the community was not always the safest decision. On trial for the murder of a fellow slave, the defendant justified himself, in a statement that would have resonated with much of white society, by stating that "the deceased had told lies on him."[163] Tricksters did not always come out on top.

Alongside more traditional modes of competition, perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of enslaved courtship could be found in attempting to analyse the role played by conjuration in striving to win the affections of another. In the words of one scholar, 'the use of conjuration in the arena of courtship was a central element in enslaved practices across the slaveholding South.'[164] Whilst the use of magic may have declined as the number of native African slaves dwindled, many WPA respondents mentioned it still, suggesting that 'the practice of conjuration was carried on by quite a few,' predominantly by those 'who were from the Indies and other Islands.'[165] In terms of its use in courtship, Henry Bibb recounts the disastrous attempts he made to win over Malinda through the use of magic. Having been told by 'a black two-headed doctor' that 'he can win any girl by touching her skin with a bone,' Bibb "fetched her a tremendous rasp across her neck with this bone, which made her jump." However, the desired effect was not achieved, with Bibb describing how "in place of making her love me, it only made her angry with me."[166] This failure did not prevent him trying another method of conjuration. Whilst he did eventually have success, it was not through the use of

[162] Levine, "Some go up and some go down," p.69.
[163] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, *Ga, Fl, Ab, Miss, La*, p.356.
[164] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.50.
[165] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.267.
[166] Henry Bibb, cited in Maria Diedrich, 'My Love is Black,' p.246.

magic, with which he stated that he had "accomplished nothing."[167] Although the attempts made by Bibb are amusing in their innocence, it is possible to suggest that conjuration was not simply a method used by wistful and romantic lovers, but could have aggressive and negative connotations too. It has in fact been suggested that 'when two black males vied for a woman's affection, one of them often attempted to subdue his antagonist with the aid of a conjurer.'[168] This is, unfortunately, extremely difficult to prove, but the fact that conjuration was most frequently described as being a method used when 'an enemy wanted to fix you,'[169] could imply that slaves were willing to use this to get one over their rivals.

Whilst this must unfortunately remain unproven, the hypothesis becomes more acceptable if one notes the willingness with which slaves were willing to fight to the death over matters of the heart. Having noted the forms of competition that could take place within the slave community when it came to romance, as well as the violence that could erupt, it is important not to ignore the fact that slaves were capable of resorting to murder to resolve courtship contests. WPA respondents recalled this sort of conflict, as in the 'occasion when two slave cousins quarrelled over a girl...one became so infuriated he picked up a rack and hit the other in the head killing him,'[170] whilst there are court cases for murder which reflect the jealousy that could pervade the slave community.[171] These must

[167] Henry Bibb, cited in Maria Diedrich, 'My Love is Black,' p.246.
[168] Steven E Brown, 'Sexuality and the Slave Community,' *Phylon* (1960) Vol. 42, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1981), p.7.
[169] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.263.
[170] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia,* p.64.
[171] Helen Tunnicliff Catteral (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume II, Cases from the Courts of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee* (New York, 1968) - State v Scott, 4 Iredell 409, June 1844. "The prisoner was indicted for the wilful murder of Johnson . . [witness] heard the deceased say he would kill the prisoner, if there were no other negro left in the state, and that he informed the prisoner of the threat . . a colored witness testified "that the deceased had been on good

surely temper any suggestion that courtship was unproblematic or that the slave community was a harmonious sphere of existence. This is not to say that murder was a necessary outcome; indeed, the respondent who described the murderous love triangle noted that 'there was very little killing among the slaves.'[172] Violent conflict may have erupted over romantic entanglements, but the majority of slaves did not resort to murder. That some did simply demonstrates that life in the slave community could be as tempestuous and aggressive as anywhere else. Considering the honorific violence that pervaded the antebellum south, this should come as no surprise.

The overwhelming focus has been on enslaved men, but this is not to state that women did not play their part. Dancing competitions, as mentioned earlier, were not simply a stage for the menfolk, but indeed, could be an opportunity for 'women to demonstrate the strength and agility of their bodies'[173] to potential suitors. Martha Haskins recorded how, whilst she was a good dancer, 'dere was a gal named Cora…ev'ybody knowed she was de bes,'[174] whilst another proudly stated that she 'jes' danced ole Jennie down,'[175] suggesting that the competitive side to dances were known amongst the slaves. Furthermore, the issue of personal appearance was said to have fostered an element of competition amongst female slaves, with the 'young women seeking to win the affection of their beaux' attempting to charm them "wid honeysuckle and rose petals hid in dere bosoms."[176] The sense that females were competing for men too was expressed by the ex-slave Queen Elizabeth Bunts, who stated that her husband 'could have

terms with a yellow girl . . but had had a falling out with her, and she had come to stay at witness's house where the prisoner was boarding." p.106.

[172] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.64.

[173] Stephanie M H Camp, 'The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South,' *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol.68, No.3 (Aug., 2002), p.557.

[174] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.137.

[175] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.316

[176] Hudson Jr, *To Have and To Hold*, p.155.

married any girl in "The Quarters" that he wanted, for all of them liked him.'[177] Whilst it is easy to suggest that such competition acts as evidence of the vibrancy of enslaved life, one could also note examples that appear shocking in their callousness. When a slave girl named Narcis, 'quarrelled with another slave girl about a colored Adonis,' there was no simple dance competition. Instead, the 'jealous rival told her master that Narcis was preparing to run away. She was thrown into jail and sold.'[178] Enslaved women were no less capable of malice than their male counterparts. We should not forget that when it comes to matters of the heart, not all competition is light-hearted.

Having undergone the tribulations of courtship, and assuming that the parties had come to an agreement, the possibility of conflict was not yet over for the enslaved couple. Indeed, Andy Marion, a slave in South Carolina, described the complicated procedures enslaved relationships had to abide by; "de gal's marster got to consent, de gal got to consent, de gal's daddy got to consent, de gal's mammy got to consent. It was a hell of a way."[179] It is well noted that for a "marriage" to occur the master of both the male and female had to agree to the match, and that this was not always a guarantee. Indeed, in many cases, it was recorded that they chose partners for the slaves with little or no compunction for their personal feelings, as in the case described by Charles Ball, where Lydia stated to him that her overseer "compelled me to be married to a man I did not like."[180] However, it could be suggested that this sort of interference has been extremely well documented already. Rather than focusing on this, it may be more interesting to analyse the motivations for which slave parents would not agree to,

[177] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.125.
[178] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.505.
[179] Griffin, 'Courtship Contests,' p.782.
[180] Ball, *50 Years in Chains,* p.157.

and even strive to prevent a marriage. The fact that this could occur highlights once more that there was no simplistic and harmonious empathy and solidarity between African Americans. Status and standing in the community was a continuous matter of debate, capable of causing strife and conflict, and not least when it came to marriage.

Ex-slaves recalled that even when they had the permission of the master and the girl in question, parents could object. Philip Coleman described how his lover's mother 'put up so strong objection that the wedding, both the girl and myself looked forward to, was called off.'[181] Yet despite the interferences, many slaves chose to disregard parental objections. One respondent recalled how her 'first husband courted me seven years, and then liked to have stealed me for my mother never did say "yes,"[182] whilst Silas Glen described how his wife's 'daddy didn't want us to marry; he didn't like me.' Despite the objections, he 'slipped to the field where she was working and stole her; went to the preacher and got married.'[183] Whether they succeeded or failed, analysing the reasons why enslaved parents would strive to prevent a match highlights the existence of conflict within the slave community. Whilst not suggesting that all slaves had a 'tendency to despise and undervalue their own race and color,'[184] it is certainly possible to suggest that some held a skewed vision of their fellow sufferers. In particular, it has been suggested that 'racially mixed slave women...socialized to be more culturally akin to whites than black'[185] could view themselves as superior to their darker counterparts. Statements such as "I will never give all the gal I

[181] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.562.
[182] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.195.
[183] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.136.
[184] Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, p.261.
[185] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.241.

have to a black nigger like you,"[186] or the declaration of a slave whose children were fathered by a white overseer that 'she didn't want none ob her chillum to marry'er black "Nigger"[187] could highlight a sense of stratification and strife within the community.

Colour was not the only issue with parents when it came to approving a match. Allen Parker recalled how if a slave was viewed as 'a "no-account nigger" owned by a failed planter or let out to a poor white,' then obtaining the consent of parents was much harder than 'if he belonged to a good family.'[188] Indeed, it was suggested that 'to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed.'[189] The fact that courtship was a community affair ensured that parental opinion could play a significant role in deciding the success of courtship. Whilst they did not have the same power as owners, they were able to interrupt and interact at numerous stages of the procedure. In doing so they allow the historian to bear witness to the stratification and hierarchies that clearly existed within slave communities. These hierarchies were never constant or unchanging, and perhaps most obviously as regards colour; whilst we noted earlier that some rated themselves according to the lightness of their skin, others declared that they were 'ashamed of the white blood that was in me.'[190] Alongside the hierarchies that reflected the views of white society were also those constructed by the enslaved themselves. They did not always share the same opinions, but they were constantly being constructed.

---

[186] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.195.
[187] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.649.
[188] Allen Parker, *Recollections of Slavery Times:* Electronic Edition. Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the electronic publication of this title. Text scanned (OCR) by Chris Hill. Image scanned by Chris Hill. Text encoded by Bethany Ronnberg and Natalia Smith. First edition, 2000. 100K. Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000. p.22.
[189] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, p.63
[190] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.154.

It is abundantly clear that the competitive nature of courtship could 'rent the harmony of the slave quarters,'[191] and play a significant role in creating conflict. This is not a return to the days where competition between the enslaved was said to have 'assumed the character of animal rivalry.'[192] In fact, the rivalries and competitions that occurred amongst the enslaved were not dissimilar from those that beset white society. Furthermore, this does not negate the slave's humanity, nor denigrate their behaviour. The very existence of such rituals and competition highlights the sheer strength of bonds and emotions between slaves; emphasising the importance they placed upon constructing intimate relationships with one another despite the consistent denigration of white society. Indeed, Anderson Bate's defence of his violent actions; 'Us have some hard words bout my bad manners, but I told her dat I couldn't 'trol my feelin's wid them fools a settin' 'round dere gigglin' wid her. I go clean crazy'[193] eloquently attests to the depth of emotions between enslaved couples. The fact that competition could manifest itself in aggressive or unpleasant forms is not indicative of any flaws amongst enslaved African Americans, but indeed, simply further evidence of the imperfections and foibles that are inextricably intertwined with human emotions.

[191] Bertram Wyatt Brown, 'The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South,' *The American Historical Review*, Vol.93, No.5 (Dec.,1988), p.1247.
[192] Frazier, *The Negro Family*, p.28.
[193] Rawick, *WPA Narratives, S.Carolina*, p.44.

Familial Conflict in the Community

Having dealt with the formation of enslaved relationships, the focus of the essay shall now shift towards deconstructing overly romanticised notions of family life within the slave community. Whilst it has been convincingly argued that the slave family was often the supportive and egalitarian structure depicted in the revisionist histories, it is important not to overdo this. The slave quarters could also be 'a place of smouldering emotions and anger,'[194] where violence and aggression could manifest itself as much as love and support. Indeed, taking the pronouncements of the plantocracy at face value, one is greeted with a picture of enslaved familial life where violence was so common 'that Ole Massa constantly had to intervene.'[195] Examining the plantation rules that were frequently published in the antebellum south that demanded that slaves did not 'mistreat a member of his family'[196]; or that stated hypocritically, 'I never permit a husband to abuse, strike or whip his wife...it is disgraceful for a man to raise his hand in violence against a feeble woman,'[197] one would imagine that enslaved family life was consistently brutal and aggressive.

Revisionist historians have done a commendable job in proving that this was not the overwhelming dynamic within slave families. However, it is important not to allow the pendulum to swing too far in the other direction. The sense that physical abuse, whether between partners or of parent on child, could occur within the slave family should instead be placed within the patriarchal framework of the antebellum south; where 'the most socially approved course for

[194] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.255.
[195] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, p.483.
[196] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.21.
[197] Breedon, *Advice Among Masters,* p.51.

a husband with a wayward mate was to take the law into his own hands.'[198] Domestic abuse is never laudable, but it would be anachronistic to judge slaves by our standards. The fact that the antebellum south generally tolerated the 'moderate correction'[199] of wives and children should not be forgotten in our discussion of violence between intimates. Stating that violence could occur within slave families does not mean that marital or familial relations between African Americans were inherently and perpetually antagonistic. However, ignoring the fact that domestic abuse could occur does the enslaved no justice either. Analysing the motivations behind such violence can in fact offer evidence of the damage the institution of slavery could bring to enslaved familial life, as well as the essential humanity, with all its requisite flaws, of enslaved people.

On a methodological note, it has been suggested that the vast majority of enslaved testimony stresses the supportive nature of the family in the slave community, and that abuse is rarely mentioned.[200] However, it is possible that many slaves chose not to 'tell these stories in their full details'; that they were 'ashamed to reveal parts of their past'[201] that were less pleasant. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that, much as in the discussions on rape, familial violence is frequently hidden from the records: a problem that exists even today. The motivations for this silence are myriad, and have been touched upon earlier, but it is possible that this could account for the relative scarcity in the historical records that historians have claimed exists. Accounts that we do have often only reflect the tragic times when violence between intimates translated to murder, and became the economic concern of the plantocracy. Cases of slaves being found

198 Brown, *Southern Honor*, p.306.
199 Stetson, 'Studying Slavery,' p.76.
200 West, *Chains of Love* – 'slave testimony consistently emphasises the importance of marriage and family, and it is rare to find ex-slaves denigrating family life,' p.38.
201 Fraser, *Courtship and Love*,' p.15.

guilty of the 'murder of a female slave, the wife of the prisoner...and sentenced to be hung,'[202] or 'indicted for the murder of his wife,'[203] rarely offer any sort of motivation for the killing, but clearly reflect that the potential for intimate violence existed.

Furthermore, whilst acknowledging the scarcity of evidence suggesting that domestic violence was commonplace, there is simply no way of avoiding the fact that former slaves do occasionally mention it. Indeed it has been noted that some testimony suggests that 'slaves disciplined their wives in ways more severe than the masters themselves normally practiced,'[204] and even that which states explicitly; 'Negro men...didn't treat their own women right.'[205] Having noted that domestic violence also relates to that committed against children, the fact that the majority of WPA respondents were young during slavery may actually work in the historians favour. Ex-slaves frequently recorded the violent discipline that their parents, both male and female, accorded them. However, what must also be noted is that many do so within their own conceptual framework; a framework that either tacitly approved, or grudgingly accepted violence as part and parcel of their everyday life, as in the case of the woman who, with grudging respect, 'decried the husband who beat her as "too mean to die,"[206] or the ex-slave who lamented that, whilst 'we had what you call strict fathers en mothers den...chillun ain' got dem dese days.'[207] This is not to say that all slaves were so accepting of violence. George Weatherby described how his "cruel pa," "was mean to us

[202] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery, N.C, S.C, Tenn*, p.566.
[203] Helen Tunnicliff Catteral (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume V, Cases from the Courts of the Ohio and west of the Mississippi Rivers, Canada and Jamaica* (New York, 1968), p.310.
[204] Labinjoh, 'The sexual life of the oppressed,' p.393.
[205] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.103.
[206] Morris, 'Violence in the Slave Cabin,' p.272.
[207] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina,* p.102.

children and especially to ma…made it terrible for her to get along,"[208] whilst another slave exclaimed 'I had such a bad mammy; she would beat me.'[209] Whether deemed acceptable or not, slave testimony makes it clear that conflict could erupt within enslaved families; the motivations behind such violence are deserving of further attention.

The plantation rules stressing the overwhelming sense of violence within slave families certainly may have presented an overly negative depiction of enslaved familial life. However, when analysed alongside the testimony of the enslaved, they strongly suggest that domestic violence could occur. The very fact that these rules were created indicates that some violence may have existed, and that the plantocracy wanted to stamp it out. It is certainly possible to suggest that this was never for the altruistic reasons given. Considering the abuse of enslaved women and children that took place on a daily basis it would seem laughable, were it not for the awful reality it exposes, that this was the case. Instead, it could be argued that the aim was to further deny slave men the privileges of patriarchal dominance that they espoused for themselves. Indeed, it has been suggested that by 'asserting himself as the protector of black women and domestic peace, the slaveholder asserted himself as *paterfamilias* and reinforced his claims to being sole father of a "family, black and white."[210] Domestic violence is rightfully condemned now, but in a society where "moderate correction" of partners was deemed a masculine privilege, denying enslaved men this prerogative has been portrayed as another means by which white society aimed to emasculate them.

However, it is possible to suggest that slave men were aware of these intentions, and in fact used violence against their families as a very means of

[208] Morris, 'Violence in the Slave Cabin,' p.268.
[209] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.196.
[210] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll,* p.483.

asserting their masculinity; however warped and damaging this may appear. Indeed, the sense that black male emasculation is to blame for domestic abuse is used even today to frame a narrative of 'racial victimhood as a primarily male phenomenon'[211]:

> The reason a black man may beat his wife is because he is facing racism on his job and racism in America. What is the reason a white man beats his wife? It's certainly not because of oppression in America.[212]

Historians have thus suggested that the domestic violence that could erupt within enslaved familial life in fact related to the "overwhelming sense of powerlessness and impotence which threatened the male's concept of his manhood and fatherhood"[213]; an unpleasant manifestation of masculine rage. By physically dominating their families, enslaved men were emphatically, if self-destructively, denying their powerlessness.

However, it is possible to suggest that this does not adequately do justice to the complexity of the issue. Furthermore, it also acquiesces to a dichotomous reading of life in the antebellum south as one dictated by purely black and white interactions. Certainly one could agree that a sense of powerlessness and degradation of the masculine role overwhelmed some enslaved men, and that this translated into violence towards their families. However, as previously noted, the emasculation thesis has been convincingly challenged; many male slaves strove against the odds to act as providers and protectors of their loved ones. Further damaging the credibility of the emasculatory explanation is the fact that enslaved

[211] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London, 2006), p.70.
[212] Denise Cade, (a securities lawyer) cited in Carbado, 'Black Male Racial Victimhood,' p.340.
[213] Ann Malone Patterson, cited in Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood* (Washington D.C, 1997), p.37.

women were perfectly capable of violence too, both towards their children and their partners. WPA respondents described this, as in the case of one who noted that 'ma fussed, fought, and kicked all the time…father was often the prey of her high temper,'[214] whilst owners recorded examples too, such as the female slave, described as a 'violent and bad woman who, after many attempts, succeeded one day in stabbing her husband to death.'[215] The motivations for female aggression evidently cannot be encompassed within this interpretation. The fact that domestic violence could occur perhaps deserves explanations on a more limited framework. Rather than suggest that conflict was endemic as a result of a sense of emasculation, it is possible to suggest that violence could erupt more as a result of 'the horrors and debilitating effects of slave family and communal life' which 'invariably created tensions and anxieties'[216] amongst intimates.

Whilst individual circumstances varied dramatically, the 'brutality and pervasive violence of slavery itself'[217] may have impacted adversely upon enslaved relationships. Whilst we shall note later that not all abuse was left unchecked, it has been suggested that the sexual exploitation of enslaved women that marked the antebellum south provoked a tragic reaction from some enslaved men. Whilst theoretically understanding 'the inability of their wives to protect themselves against the sexual overtures and attacks of white men,' it is possible that many 'resented and were angered by such occurrences.'[218] Indeed, there are numerous cases reflecting this, such as where a slave 'quarrelled with his wife, in presence of the overseer' after accusing 'his master of being the father of her

[214] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.285.
[215] Smedes, *Memorials of A Southern Planter*, p.89.
[216] Ralph D Carter, 'Slavery and the Climate of Opinion' in Al Tony Gilmore (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), p.86.
[217] Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, p.37.
[218] Stevenson, 'Distress and Discord,' p.121.

child.'[219] In another example, a female slave was forced on the defensive by her husband, who angrily exclaimed, "dis chile is got blue eyes. Dis chile is got white fingernails. Dis chile is got blue eyes jes like our overseer."[220] Whilst in this case violence was averted, it is possible to suggest that; unable to react violently towards the real targets of their aggression, some enslaved men instead 'targeted their helpless wives to be the recipients of their frustration, pain, guilt, and rage.'[221]

It is also possible that, despite knowing the consequences of defiance, some enslaved women resented the inability of their partners to defend them from such assaults. The manner in which Linda Brent states that 'there are some who strive to protect wives and daughters from the insults of their masters; but those who have such sentiments have had advantages above the general mass of slaves,'[222] could suggest that enslaved women desired more from their menfolk. The tragic reality was that defiance brought nothing but more violence upon the enslaved. Yet whilst the vast majority recognised this, it is possible that enslaved people subconsciously displaced their anger and that it was instead manifested in arguments amongst slave couples.

Another example of external pressures manifesting themselves in violence amongst intimates is described by Christopher Morris. A slave who had unwillingly been sold exploded in rage, 'not at the master who had disrupted his life, but at his wife. He kicked Diana in the stomach, knocked her about the head and stabbed her to death.'[223] Furthermore, parents, too, may have been influenced by the brutality that they were subjected to on a daily basis. One slave

[219] Linda Brent, *Incidents in the Life of A Slave Girl* (Oxford, 1988), p.12.
[220] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.207.
[221] Stevenson, 'Distress and Discord,' p.122.
[222] Linda Brent, *Incidents in the Life*, p.43.
[223] Morris, 'Violence in the slave cabin,' p.273.

defended the violence committed on her by her mother as a result of the fact that 'she had been treated so bad during slavery, she just thought she ought to treat everybody that same way.'[224] Having witnessed the punishments meted out to rebellious slaves, it has been suggested that 'slave parents beat children to make them regard obedience as an automatic component of their personal makeup,'[225] and that they had to 'punish severely children they loved so as to instil in them the do's and don'ts of a hideous power system in which a mistake could cost lives.'[226]

Yet looking beyond deep-seated psychological reasons such as these, it is also feasible to suggest that slaves such as George Weatherby may purely have "had the *bad luck* [italics mine] to have a cruel pa."[227] The converse of accepting that slaves were capable of great love and kindness is accepting that some may have simply been aggressive, malicious and brutal. Violence among intimates appears to be an uncomfortable staple of life; the enslaved were not free from this. Conflict amongst the enslaved could be the result of the petty arguments and squabbles that mark intimate and emotional relationships exacerbated by the daily degradations and constant violence that marked life in the antebellum south. Ex-slaves highlight this by stating that conflict could erupt over seemingly trivial matters; 'there were many disagreements between pa and ma about his drinking'[228] or, 'one day w'en I wus 'bout fourteen I did supin an' ma didn' like it. A bunch of gals bin home an' ma wheel my short over my head an' start to beat me right 'fore the gals.'[229] In a violent society where the line between discipline and brutality was ambiguous, enslaved families were neither free from

[224] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.196.
[225] Painter, *Across the Color Line*, p.23.
[226] Eugene D Genovese, 'Toward a Psychology of Slavery' in Al Tony Gilmore (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), p.33.
[227] Morris, 'Violence in the slave cabin,' p.268.
[228] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.285.
[229] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.166.

aggression and conflict nor torn apart by it. Not all relationships and families were marked by violence and anger; the vast majority of slaves strove for domestic stability and loving relationships. However, the stresses, violence and brutality that pervaded enslaved life in the antebellum south could ultimately, and tragically, pervade their familial relationships too.

Alongside this, it is important to note that adultery and abandonment could also cause conflict and strife within the slave community, and indeed, often act as the primary motivation for hostility and violence amongst the enslaved. As in regards to pre-marital sex, revisionist historians have argued that the white pronouncements on the promiscuity of their slaves noted earlier were in fact indicative of their limited understanding of the morality constructed within the slave community itself; 'the ignorant prejudice' of those 'who wished to believe ill of the slaves.'[230] It is clear that sexual activity prior to marriage did not prevent monogamous unions at a later date. Even though slaves did not have the legal protection of marriage, historians have done sterling work in highlighting the 'matrimonial devotion'[231] that frequently existed in the community. However, whilst this appears the case amongst the majority of slaves, statements declaring that 'married ones had respect for each other's wives,'[232] or that 'few explicit references to adultery...exist either in owner's records, or...slave source materials'[233] either ignore or neglect evidence that highlights the existence of adultery and abandonment in the slave community. They also do not address the possibility that slaves may have occasionally constructed polygamous unions

[230] Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days*, p.116.
[231] Brown, 'Sexuality and the Slave Community,' p.4.
[232] Labinjoh, 'The Sexual Life of the Oppressed,' p.397.
[233] West, *Chains of Love*, p.67.

based on cultural ideals that did not correspond with those of white society.[234] Ultimately, despite acknowledging the laudable work done by historians, it is certainly possible to suggest that the consistent degradation of enslaved marital life, including, but not limited to, the sexual abuse of bondsmen's wives or the capricious splitting up of families, meant that 'some slaves had limited respect for the institution.'[235] Furthermore, it is perfectly feasible to state that slaves were as privy to lust and moments of weakness as any other human beings, and that occasionally they succumbed to these despite their marital obligations to another.

This is not to say that adultery was condoned or sanctioned by the enslaved. On the contrary; the evidence we have of it shows that it was one of the most significant causes of conflict and strife within the community. The vast majority of slaves 'took a stern view of postmarital philandering.'[236] The degree to which they were willing to fight over their marriages could in fact underscore the sheer depth of emotional input they placed in their fragile and much maligned unions. Cases such as that of the slave Lewis, who explained his murderous attack on another by stating 'I found him in my cabin, with my wife'[237] highlights the fact that slaves were prepared to defend their wives from the sexual incursions of other men. Even the suspicion of adultery was enough to create conflict in the community. In one case, the accused tried to defend his fatal assault on another slave by attempting 'to prove that an adulterous intercourse had been carried on

---

[234] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat* – Rev. Isrhael Massie - 'naw, slaves didn't have wives like dey do now…ef I liked ya, I jes go an' tell marster I wanted ya an' he give his consent – dat's on de same plantation ef both slaves wuz his. Ef I see another gal over dar on anoter plantation, I'd go an' say to de gal's marster, I want Jinny fer a wife." Waal, dat marster will give me a strip of paper ot take to my marster day I could have her. I got two wives now, ain't i? hit may be still another gal I want an' I'll go an' git her…dars three wives an' slaves had as many wives as dey wanted. Do ya kno' women den didn't think hard of each other? Got 'long fine together. Now, out of all dem wives, when Lee surrended, ya choose from dem one 'oman an' go an' git a license an' marry her. Some turned all dey wives loose an' got a new wife from some t'other place,' p.209.

[235] Stevenson, 'Distress and Discord,' p.122.

[236] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, p.467.

[237] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, *GA, Fl, Ab, La*, p.594.

for some time . . between the deceased and Flora [his wife].'[238] Whilst murder was not always the end result, numerous examples of quarrels in the community highlight the fact that there was no overwhelming climate of trust between slaves when it came to intimate matters. Just one example of this could be in the case of "Bill de Giant," who is said to have broken 'Uncle Phil's right leg' after suspecting he had designs on his wife. This violence on his "relation" - fictive or not - was explained quite simply: Bill 'didn't 'low other slave men to look at my mammy.'[239]

In this regard, it has been argued that white society granted male slaves the same masculine privileges they had; according them 'the same legal right to vindicate his wounded male pride that was enjoyed by white husbands.'[240] Indeed, "Bill de Giant" escaped without even a whipping. However, this was not a given. The aforementioned John was convicted and sentenced to death. The fact that some did escape without punishment suggests that, despite their constant denigration of enslaved marital life, white society knew that slaves placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of monogamous relationships, and were willing to defend them violently. This was proved time and time again by the manner in which many enslaved men refused to tolerate the sexual abuse of their wives. Whilst it has been noted that some transplanted their impotent rage onto the unfortunate victims of abuse, there are innumerable examples of slaves murdering the abusers of their loved ones. One such example was the slave who killed his overseer for forcing his wife 'to submit to sexual intercourse with him.' The slave made no attempt to hide his crime and simply stated, 'I have killed the

[238] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, *N.C, S.C, Tenn*, p.123.
[239] George P Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina,* p.130.
[240] Margaret Burnham, 'An Impossible Marriage: Slave Law and Family Life' in *Law and Inequality* 5 (1987), p.213.

overseer.'[241] Many enslaved men were willing to violently defend their marital relations, whether against white or black.

However, adulterous affairs were not always settled by the rough justice of the emotionally wounded party. Instead, there are cases within the court records where it is the cuckold who is murdered. In the case of State vs Frank, it was declared that the accused had been 'intimate with Lucy [a free woman of color, the wife of Eli]... for the last four years.' They had 'endeavoured to keep this intimacy a secret,' but the husband discovered them together and fight broke out. Sometime after this 'the body of Eli was found in a mill pond...bruises . . seemed to have been produced with an axe.' Ultimately, the 'Blood was traced . . to the house of Lucy."[242] The violence is said to have been committed by the male slave, yet the collusion of the female in question is extremely likely. It is clear that women could play their part in adulterous relations too. The abundant evidence of violence occurring within the slave community as a result of adultery surely indicates that not all relationships were as egalitarian or loving as have been depicted. Adultery was an issue that could not only affect enslaved relationships, but relations between all enslaved members of the community. The honorific violence that frequently determined romantic entanglements in their nascent form could be replicated in the marital arena too.

There is further evidence of adultery in African-American relationships, albeit not addressed through violent means. An examination of church discipline records provides abundant depictions of sexual indiscretions in the community. The fact that it was deemed a matter for discipline further highlights the fact that it was deemed by the enslaved themselves to be morally wrong; it was not just the

[241] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning Slavery*, *Ga, Fl, Ab, Miss, La*, p.362.
[242] Catteral, *Judicial Cases Concerning Slavery*, *N.C, S.C, Tenn*, p.217.

white members who brought charges, but slaves too. In Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood's analysis of 'the charges made against 262 Afro-Baptists (89 women and 173 men) belonging to twenty-eight different Southern congregations between the mid 1770s and 1830... 37.4 percent, of these cases involved adultery' or 'abandoning a spouse in favor of another.'[243] Furthermore, the church records, more so than an analysis of violence, provide evidence that adultery was committed by women as well as men. The minutes of Jones Creek Baptist Church state that 'a charge of adultery was brought up against Mary a black woman'[244] whilst at the Darien Presbyterian Church, 'the crime of adultery was charged against' Phoebe Rice, to 'which she made no denial, nor did she evince a becoming spirit of regret for her improper conduct.'[245] This is not to say that enslaved men were free from the moralistic judgements of the church. The Little Ogechee Baptist Church records show their refusal to reinstate a member of the congregation as a result of his 'living with another man's wife.'[246]

It should be stated that not all slaves abided the strict moral pronouncements of the Baptist and Methodist churches. Many may have felt, understandably so, that 'the demands being made of them'[247] as regards fidelity and sexual morality were simply unreasonable. An example of this could be in the case of Kitty, who wanted to remarry following her husband's abandonment of her. Whilst 'the committee was satisfied that Kitty was blameless,' she was not allowed to take another husband and 'was forced to choose between her church

[243] Sylvia R Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting To Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p.188.
[244] Minutes of Jones Creek Baptist Church [Mercer University Archives, Macon] January 24 1846.
[245] Darien Presbyterian Church Records [Georgia Historical Society, Savannah] May 26 1844.
[246] Little Ogechee Baptist Church [Mercer University Archives, Macon] Screven County, Sep 1833.
[247] Frey, Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, p.189.

and the man she loved.'[248] Kitty chose her new love, and was excommunicated as a result. Whilst therefore we should be cautious in our use of the word "adultery" as a loaded term suggesting abandonment and guilt, there are enough cases in the historical record to suggest that it did occur. The fact that it was considered such an important disciplinary issue; indeed, the pre-eminent concern of the disciplinary meetings, further suggests that infidelity was a potential source of conflict amongst the enslaved.

This leads on to another problem that could haunt the slave community; spousal and familial abandonment. As the case of Kitty would suggest, this sort of occurrence was not unknown amongst slaves, and could offer yet more evidence that relations between African Americans were not as harmonious as revisionist work would suggest. First and foremost, it is vital to state that the vast majority of marital unions amongst the enslaved were broken not out of choice, but through the predilections of the plantocracy. The internal slave trade acted as a 'mandatory and often indiscriminate exodus which separated husband from wife, and mother from child.'[249] Indeed, Rebecca Fraser found that at least '20 percent of enslaved marriages were broken by sales'[250] in the Upper South.

Whilst those who were torn from their families faced indescribable hardships and did not choose to abandon their spouses or children, testimony from the enslaved themselves highlights the sense of desertion that could occur when a former partner found new love. Rebecca Jane Grant described the time when her mother received a letter saying that her 'father had married another woman.' Her mother 'was so upset she say, "I hope he breaks dat woman's jawbone. She know

[248] Frey, Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, p.186.
[249] Stevenson, 'Distress and Discord,' p.104.
[250] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, p.33.

she aint his lawful wife."[251] Another case, where a couple were married but separated, ended with the tragi-comic chase of 'hubby No.2 into the interior of Missouri with a dog and double-barrelled gun.'[252] Yet perhaps the most eloquent indication of the sense of abandonment that could affect enslaved relations, whether the result of the slave-owners or not, can be found in the letter of an enslaved wife to her husband:

> this is the third letter that I have written to you, and have not received any from you; and don't no the reason that I have not received any from you. I think very hard of it…I wish that you would try to see if you can get any one to buy me up there. If you don't come down here this Sunday, perhaps you wont see me any more...I wish to see you all, but I expect I never shall you all – never no more. I remain your dear and affectionate wife,
>
> Sargry Brown[253]

Judging those slaves who were split from their families unwillingly, who ultimately knew that they 'were separated without the hope of ever again meeting'[254] as having abandoned their responsibilities is grievously unfair; the vast majority of people will thankfully never know the suffering and torment they faced. Furthermore, it is well noted that following Emancipation 'ex-slaves made great efforts to reunite families that had been split between different locations.'[255] However those slaves that recorded their hurt and anguish at the manner in which

[251] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina,* p.181.
[252] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.508.
[253] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.46.
[254] Ball, *50 Years in Chains*, p.144.
[255] West, 'Surviving Separation,' p.223.

some moved on following their sale deserve acknowledgment too, and simply highlight one of the many tragedies that were inextricably intertwined with family life in the slave community.

Having noted that interference from the plantocracy was the most divisive and decisive factor behind the splitting up of families, it is also important to note that there are cases where African Americans willingly chose to leave their partners and families. The case of Kitty has already been noted, yet church minutes reveal others too. Jacob's membership to the Little Ogechee Baptist church was delayed 'in consequence of having left his wife and getting another previous to his conversion,'[256] whilst Betty Wood and Sylvia Frey note that Giles, 'a member of the Berryville Baptist Church, "complained" that his wife had "left him."'[257] There is also the example of an abandoned man so desperate that he resorted 'to conjure... to get his wife back': unfortunately for him, 'he couldn't succeed.'[258] Desertion of children could occur too. Caroline Ates described how she didn't 'know nuthin' 'bout my daddy 'cause I never did see him an' mother never did talk ter me 'bout him.'[259] There is always the possibility that cases such as that noted above were the result of illicit interracial activity preventing acknowledgment of the father.[260] Yet the response of ex-slaves such as Randall Flagg, who explicitly stated that 'my mother deserted my daddy'[261] or Priscilla Joiner, who mentioned that, 'I never saw my real father. He left, I learned later,

[256] Little Ogechee Baptist Church [Mercer University Archives] Screven County, May 1832.
[257] Frey, Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, p.186.
[258] Helen Tunnicliff Catteral (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume IV, Cases from the Courts of New England, The Middle States, and the District of Columbia* (New York, 1968), p.235.
[259] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.245.
[260] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina* - 'Dat's not a fair question when you ask who my daddy was. Well lets just say he was a white man and dat my mother never did marry nobody, while he lived.' p.35.
[261] Rawick, *The American Slave, Georgia*, p.245.

on the day I was born,'[262] could suggest that the motivations for leaving partners and families were not always so clear-cut.

Whilst few of the children offer any sort of motivation for their abandonment, historians have often suggested that the overwhelming pain of having to watch the suffering of their loved ones, whether children or spouse, spurred many to leave. Whilst it certainly could be argued that this was the case for some, one could surely offer the possibility that it may have covered less historiographically acceptable reasons. The aforementioned case of Jacob, where he left his wife for another, or Alcey, who, having fallen for a new slave, had this to say about her previous husband: "tell marster not to bother 'bout sendin' for him. He lazy an' puny an' no 'count,"[263] could highlight the simple possibility that not all slaves felt so constrained by their marital commitments. For the most part free from the strict obligations of antebellum marriage, enslaved people were less (legally speaking) constrained to their partners than their white counterparts. That a distinct minority may have used this to their advantage is neither a slur on African Americans as a whole, or even the individuals themselves, it is simply stating that emotions can fade amongst intimates; not all marriages last forever.

Another means by which one could discuss abandonment and conflict in the family is by approaching the historiographical construction of "resistance" from a different angle, and particularly one of its mainstays - running away. It is frequently noted that flight was a highly gendered phenomenon, 'an action attempted predominantly by black males.'[264] Yet whilst in the historiography it is

[262] Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, p.174.
[263] Smedes, *Memorials of A Southern Planter*, p.64.
[264] Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, 'Black Men's History: Toward a Gendered Perspective,' in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), p.8.

often stated that 'the typical runaway was a young man who absconded alone,'[265] or that slaves heroically 'ran off to be with mates or families,'[266] there were a significant number who ran without their partners, abandoning children or marriages along the way. This is not to denigrate them, nor suggest that these were mere flights of fancy or a way of avoiding familial responsibility. Indeed, the vast majority stress the fact that they simply could not bear the pain of seeing the degradations to their loved ones daily; they did not want to watch them 'beaten, insulted, raped, overworked, or starved without being able to protect her.'[267]

Yet despite this, the 'tales of heroism' based on runaways 'center almost exclusively on those who left'[268]: they rarely deal with those they left behind. Broken marriages and broken homes could be the result of a runaway's flight, and the pain caused by this separation is frequently recorded by slaves, both male and female, as well by the children who had no recollections of their parents. A Fisk University WPA respondent declared: 'I don't know nothing about my mother and father. She left us and run off, and I was the oldest, and she left me and a little brother and another little suckling baby.'[269] Blassingame noted the massive 'psychological barrier' faced by enslaved runaways, 'having to leave a home, friends, and family he loved,'[270] yet he too focuses on the feelings of the runaway. Furthermore, despite the oft noted gendered nature to the phenomenon, women could flee too, as in the case of Harriet Tubman, or the WPA respondent

[265] Michael P Johnson, 'Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799-1830,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol.38, No.3 (Jul, 1981), p.418.
[266] Marvin L Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, 'Slave Runaways in Colonial North Carolina, 1748-1775,' in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), p.136.
[267] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, p.86.
[268] Stetson, 'Studying Slavery,' p.62.
[269] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University,* p.271.
[270] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, p.111.

previously noted who stated that their mother 'left us and run off.'[271] Running away has often been seen purely through the lens of selfless heroism, yet it must be acknowledged that it was not always viewed as this by the slaves themselves, and was capable of causing conflict within enslaved families.

This is reinforced in witnessing the occasions when enslaved family members disagreed with the plans of runaways. It has been noted that, frequently, enslaved 'mothers and wives argued passionately against'[272] flight, whilst Harriet Tubman described that 'her brothers did not agree with her plans and she walked off alone.'[273] Additionally, those who were left behind, often 'in a state of distress which I cannot describe'[274] did not always react with the stoicism that the historiography seems to demand of them. Examples of this can be found in the case stated above, whereby having successfully escaped, Tubman 'went back to Maryland for her husband.' Rather than wait patiently for her return, he 'had taken to himself another wife'[275] in her absence. Another example can be found in the case of Harry Jarvis, who described how 'when I got back from Africa, I sent for her, an' she sent me word she thought she'd marry anoder man.'[276] Discussing runaways requires an awareness of the conflict that their flight could cause amongst those who chose, or simply had no choice, but to remain.

Moving away from the more dramatic examples of strife and stress within the enslaved family; violence, adultery and abandonment, there were numerous other potential manifestations of conflict. One of the most common defences of enslaved family life noted earlier, in particular in its suggestion of strong nuclear

[271] Rawick, *The American Slave: Fisk University*, p.271.
[272] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, p.111.
[273] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.458.
[274] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.141.
[275] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.459.
[276] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, p.609.

families, male interaction, and wider community links, was the stress placed on the importance of abroad marriages amongst slaves. It has been argued that they 'were vigorously supported by the slaves concerned' and 'point to the resilience of the slave community.'[277] However, having noted the adultery and abandonment that could mark these communities, it is possible to stress that whilst they brought benefits to some, they could be a significant cause of strife and distress too. Orlando Patterson suggested that many revisionists have been 'preposterously naïve' in their romantic assumptions 'about the sexuality of unattached male slaves,' and that abroad husbands, 'forced to spend long periods of time away from their "wives"[278] did not remain chaste to their partners. Whilst the evidence of adultery mentioned earlier could support this, it should be remembered that the vast majority treasured their marital obligations. Despite the hardships attached to abroad marriages, adultery was not endemic.

However, many slaves do mention the fact that these marriages were frequently marked by jealousy and strife. Indeed, Caleb Craig described how 'a man dat had a wife off de place, see little peace or happiness. He could see de wife once a week, on a pass, and jealousy kep' him 'stracted de balance of de week, if he love her very much.'[279] This view was supported by Louisa Davis, who mentioned that living abroad from her husband meant that he 'didn't get to see me often as he wanted to...Us had some grief over dat.'[280] Furthermore, whilst many abroad husbands made tremendous efforts to visit their families to ensure nuclear stability, not all could, or did, such were the constraints placed upon them. One WPA respondent described how her father 'jest come on Saddy

[277] West, 'Surviving Separation,' p.222.
[278] Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, p.36.
[279] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.231.
[280] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.300.

night and we don't see much of him. We called him "dat man." Our mammy tole us to ought to be more respectful to him cause he wuz our daddy, but we don't keer nothin' bout him'[281] Abroad marriages certainly could provide benefits for the enslaved population of the antebellum south; they highlight the sense of community and 'complex, cross plantation kin networks'[282] that the enslaved sought to create. However, there is no sense in romanticising them to the extent that enslaved relationships appear mythological in their ability to withstand the strife and stress that could encumber them. The pressures of everyday enslaved life, as well as the potential for adultery, abandonment, or simply falling for another, that undoubtedly existed ensured that they were never simply the harmonious and loving unions that some have suggested.

I would like to conclude this chapter by suggesting that the notion of a wider conception of family and community existing amongst the enslaved population of the antebellum south, whilst true in many cases, was by no means a given. This idea, that slaves, linked by common oppression and shared bondage, constructed 'quasi-kin relationships...networks of mutual obligation that extended beyond formal kin obligations dictated by blood and marriage,'[283] has, ultimately, been the key to understanding conceptions of a harmonious slave community. Yet if the work on familial and romantic conflict has done nothing else, it should have demonstrated that despite shared oppression, there was no overwhelming and universal African American unity. Enslaved life was far more complex than this; it cannot be split along a simplistic dichotomy of black and white. The idea that in times of need slaves would implicitly care for one another was not always

[281] George P Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol 10, Mississippi Narratives Part 5, Supplement, Series 1* (Westport, 1977), p.2084.
[282] Jean Buttenhoff Lee, 'Problem of Slave Community,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol.43, No.3, (Jul., 1986), p.336.
[283] Gutman, *The Black Family*, p.222.

reflected in reality. Dylan Penningroth used the example of Josiah Henson to demonstrate this. After being sold away from his mother, his new master:

> put me into his negro quarters with about forty others, of all ages, colours, and conditions, all strangers to me. Of course nobody cared for me…all day long I [was] left alone…lying on a lot of rags, thrown on a dirt floor…crying for water, crying for mother; the slaves, who left at daylight, when they returned cared nothing for me.[284]

William Parker described this sense of isolation too, even whilst amongst his fellow slaves. Having been separated from his mother, he was placed in the "Quarter," and occasionally checked on by his grandmother. Yet rather than being protected, he describes how 'the smaller and weaker' were 'subject to the whims and caprices of the larger and stronger.'[285] Indeed, these statements actually appear to mirror the pronouncements of the planters - frequently depicted as culturally ignorant or racist - who suggested that 'in every Servants' quarter there are the strong and the weak, the sagacious and the simple.'[286] The plaintive end to Parker's statement; 'how desolate I was! No home, no protector, no mother, no attachments,'[287] or Josephine Bacchus' recollection; 'Bein dat I never had no mother to care for me en give me a good attention like, I caught so much

[284] Dylan C Penningroth, "My People, My People": The Dynamics of Community within Southern Slavery,' in Edward E Baptist and Stephanie N Camp (eds), *New Studies in the History of American Slavery* (Athens, 2006), p.166.
[285] William Parker, *The Freedman's Story. In Two Parts:* Electronic Edition, Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the electronic publication of this title. Text scanned (OCR) by Bethany Ronnberg. Images scanned by Bethany Ronnberg. Text encoded by Carlene Hempel and Natalia Smith. First edition, 1999, ca. 200K. Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1999, p.153.
[286] Breedon, *Advice Among Masters*, p.58.
[287] Parker, *The Freedman's Story*, p.155.

of cold dat I ain' never been safe in de family way,'[288] does not suggest the existence of an automatically harmonious and warm African American community.

In dealing with fictive and wider kin networks, it is clear that we must deal with 'exclusion as well as expansion, the moments when slaves chose to reject kin or communal ties as well as the moments of embrace.'[289] Even when these fictive bonds and wider networks were in use, the results could be startling. An altercation between two female slaves was noted where one had punished a child that was not her own for having 'told a lie on her." Rather than accept this external disciplinary input, the mother of the child 'rushed in and said, "you whip my child, God drast your eyes! I will kill you! I will cut your heart-strings out;" and struck her with the butcher's knife.' The victim 'was in bed about five weeks, and then died.'[290] Fictive kin and bonds could, and did, exist and support many in the slave community. However, they were by no means automatic and unproblematic.

[288] Rawick, *The American Slave, S.Carolina*, p.20.
[289] Penningroth, "My People," p.170.
[290] Tunnicliff, *Judicial Cases, Oh, Miss, Canada and Jamaica*, p.314.

Conclusion

If we are to critically examine the construction of a slave community through the medium of emotional relationships and kinship it is important that we do not overly romanticise those whom we examine. The enslaved family provided love and support to innumerable African Americans within the slave community; this much is clear. But, as individuals and collectively, they were not free from weakness and selfishness; anger and jealousy. Enslaved family life was inherently unstable, and despite the best efforts of the enslaved, this was often reflected in their dealings with one another. Conflict occurs amongst intimates: there is no avoiding this issue. The fact that problems could erupt in the tumultuous and tempestuous arena that was enslaved familial life in the antebellum south does not denigrate the very real efforts slaves made to protect their families and loved ones. It simply highlights the stresses and strains that made the process of building human relationships even more difficult than it already is.

Attempts to challenge the 'positive and uplifting portrayals'[291] of enslaved communal life may not be popular. The treatment of slavery and the enslaved themselves remains extraordinarily contentious; it is no simple sound-bite to state that 'the history of slavery continues to have meaning'[292] even today. Racialised explanations for conflict in African-American communities remain in public discourse. Anyone doubting this need only examine the online rants of ideologues such as David Duke, who explains that America 'has a high rate of

[291] Vlach, 'The Last Great Taboo,' p.57.
[292] James Oliver and Lois E Horton, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.x.

violent crime because it has a large number of violent black criminals.'[293] These are most commonly fringe statements from the far right that neglect many of the social, economic and historical factors that influence these statistics. However, the fact that the largest demographic of violent crime appears to be that committed by African Americans on African Americans,[294] in the ravaged inner-city projects across the country, ensures that they do have an impact. Furthermore, one need not look as far back as the Moynihan Report to consider controversy over African American familial life. The furore caused by Barack Obama's comments on young African American men and the need for increased familial commitment in those same urban projects, led to the Rev. Jesse Jackson declaring that he ought to 'cut his nuts out' for 'speaking down to black people'[295]; demonstrating further that racial politics and policies continue to have a significant bearing on life in America. It is possible to suggest that histories examining African American conflict in the antebellum period run the risk of being hijacked to support notions of racially inherent violence amongst African Americans; dealing with enslaved conflict in this regard could be considered as simply adding fuel to the fire.

However, whilst it is clear that 'the contemporary racial atmosphere complicates any history involving race,'[296] examining conflict and competition within the slave community is not attempting to explain contemporary issues; and most certainly not by implying that racial characteristics are to blame. Contemporary economic and social concerns undeniably have their genesis in the tragic scars left by centuries of repression and abuse, but there is no point in

[293] http://www.davidduke.com/general/facts-about-black-crime-in-america_30.html, July 31.
[294] http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2007-01-01-wickham_x.htm, July 28.
[295] http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/us_elections/article4306177.ece, July 25.
[296] James Oliver Horton, 'Slavery in American History: An Uncomfortable National Dialogue' in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.53.

reading 'the story of the twentieth century black ghettos backward in time.'[297] Conflict within the slave community occurred for reasons that cannot be explained anachronistically.

Revisionist historians and activists have liberated 'Afro-Americans from historical invisibility,'[298] and successfully provided a "reinterpretation of the entire American past."[299] Yet the result of this is a far more multi-faceted and nuanced understanding of enslaved communal life in the antebellum south than the earliest studies would suggest. There is no doubt that communal bonds existed amongst slaves, but there is no point romanticising them to the point of denying reality. Slaves were no more conflict orientated than their white counterparts, and considering the incredible pressures placed upon them, the strength of the bonds amongst the enslaved population was nothing short of remarkable. However, the extraordinary pressures that enslaved people faced on a daily basis played havoc with communal life and intra-slave relations; there is no avoiding this issue. Despite the best efforts made by slaves to forge autonomous and supportive relations, 'their struggle was an unequal one'[300] and not all slaves emerged unscathed. Whilst it is tempting to see slaves as heroic figures who survived the rarely equalled brutality of life in the antebellum south, we cannot ignore the psychological and physical damage of those that were left demoralised and divided; violent or vicious, and who tragically took this out on their fellow slaves.

Word count – 20,115

[297] Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll*, p.451.
[298] Frederickson, *Arrogance of Race*, p.112.
[299] Joanne Melish, 'Recovering (from) Slavery: Four Struggles to Tell the Truth' in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.103.
[300] Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days*, p.177.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Ball, Charles, *50 Years in Chains*, (New York, 1837).

Blassingame, John (ed.), *Slave Testimony. Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977).

Breedon, James O (ed.), *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, CT, 1980).

Brent, Linda, *Incidents in the Life of A Slave Girl* (Oxford, 1988).

Catteral, Helen Tunnicliff (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume II, Cases from the Courts of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee* (New York, 1968).

Catteral, Helen Tunnicliff (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume III, Cases from the Courts of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana* (New York, 1968).

Catteral, Helen Tunnicliff (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume IV, Cases from the Courts of New England, the Middle States, and the District of Columbia* (New York, 1968).

Catteral, Helen Tunnicliff (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, Volume V, Cases from the Courts of the Ohio and west of the Mississippi Rivers, Canada and Jamaica* (New York, 1968).

Craft, William, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery with a New Foreword and Biographical Essay by R.J.M Blackett* (Baton Rouge, 1999).

Douglass, Frederick, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Middlesex, 1982).

Jefferson, Thomas, *Notes On The State of Virginia*, (London, 1787).

Kemble, Francis, *Journal of A Residence on A Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (Athens, 1984).

Northup, Solomon, *Twelve Years A Slave* (Baton Rouge, 1968).

Olmstead, Frederick Law, *A Journey In The Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks On Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856).

Perdue Jr, Charles L, Barden, Thomas E, Phillips, Robert K (eds), *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Indiana, 1980).

Rawick, George P (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol 10, Mississippi Narratives Part 5, Supplement, Series 1* (Westport, 1977).

Rawick, George P (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography Supplement, Series 2, Volume 2, Texas Narratives, Part 1* (Westport, 1977).

Rawick, George P (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol 18, Unwritten History of Slavery, Fisk University* (Westport, 1977).

Rawick, George P (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement, Series 1, Volume 3, Georgia Narratives Part 1* (Westport, 1977).

Rawick, George P (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Volume 2, South Carolina Narratives Part 1 and 2* (Westport, 1977).

Smedes, Susan Dabney, with an introduction and notes by Fletcher M Green (ed.) *Memorials of A Southern Planter* (New York, 1965).

Wish, Harvey (ed.), *Slavery in the South; First Hand Accounts of the Ante-Bellum American Southland, from Northern & Southern Whites, Negroes, & Foreign Observers* (New York, 1964).

Church Records

Darien Presbyterian Church Records [Georgia Historical Society, Savannah].

Jones's Creek Baptist Church [Mercer University Archives, Macon].

Little Ogechee Baptist Church [Mercer University Archives, Macon] Screven County.

Published Secondary Sources

Bauer, Raymond, 'Day to Day Resistance to Slavery,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.27, No.4 (Oct., 1942), pp.388-419.

Berlin, Ira, 'Coming to Terms with Slavery in Twenty-First Century America,' in Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.1-19.

Blassinggame, John, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972).

Blassingame, John W, 'Status And Social Structure In The Slave Community: Evidence From New Sources,' in Owens, Harry P (ed.), *Perspectives And Irony In American Slavery*, (Jackson, Mississippi, 1976), pp.137-151.

Brown, Bertram Wyatt, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford, 1982).

Brown, Bertram Wyatt, 'The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South,' *The American Historical Review*, Vol.93, No.5 (Dec.,1988), pp.1228-52.

Brown, Steven E, 'Sexuality and the Slave Community,' *Phylon*, Vol.42, No.1 (1st Qtr., 1981), pp. 1-10.

Brownmiller, Susan, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York, 1975).

Burnham, Margaret A, 'An Impossible Marriage: Slave Law and Family Life,' *Law and Inequality* 5 (1987), pp.187-225.

Camp, Stephanie, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, 2004).

Camp, Stephanie, 'The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South,' *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol.68, No.3 (Aug., 2002), pp.533-572.

Carbado, Devon W, 'Black Male Racial Victimhood,' *Callaloo*, Vol.21, No.2, Emerging Male Writers: A Special Issue, Part II. (Spring, 1998), pp.337-361.

Carter, Ralph D, 'Slavery and the Climate of Opinion' in Gilmore, Al Tony (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), pp.70-95.

Dew, Charles B, 'Disciplining Slave Ironworkers in the Antebellum South: Coercion, Conciliation, and Accommodation' in Hine, Darlene Clark and Jenkins, Earnestine (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), pp.205-227.

Diedrich, Maria, 'My Love is Black as Yours is Fair,' *Phylon*, Vol.47, No.3 (3rd Qtr., 1986), pp.238-247.

Dusinberre, William, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (Oxford, 1998).

Edwards, Tim, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London, 2006).

Elkins, Stanley M, 'Slavery and Negro Personality' in Weinstein, Allen and Gatell, Frank Otto (eds), *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (Oxford, 1973), pp.92-116.

Forret, Jeff, 'Conflict and the "Slave Community": Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina,' *The Journal of Southern History,* Vol.LXXIV No.3 (August, 2008).

Fraser, Rebecca J, *Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved In North Carolina* (Jackson, 2007).

Frazier, E Franklin, *The Negro Family In The United States*, with a New Introduction and Bibliography by Anthony M.Platt (Indiana, 2001).

Frederickson, George M, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (New England, 1988).

Frey, Sylvia R and Wood, Betty, *Come Shouting To Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, 1998).

Genovese, Eugene D, *Roll, Jordon, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (London, 1975).

Genovese, Eugene D, 'Toward a Psychology of Slavery' in Gilmore, Al Tony (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), pp.27-41.

Grier, William H and Cobbs, Price M, *Black Rage* (New York, 1968).

Griffin, Rebecca J, 'Courtship Contests and the Meaning of Conflict,' *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol.71, No.4 (Nov., 2005), pp.769-803.

Griffin, Rebecca J, 'Goin' back over there to see that girl': Competing Social Spaces in the Lives of the Enslaved in Antebellum North Carolina,' *Slavery and Abolition,* Vol.25, No.1 (2004), pp.94-113.

Gross, Julie Ariela, *Double Character, Slavery and Mastery in the Antebellum Courtroom* (Athens, 2006).

Gutman, Herbert, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, 1976).

Gutman, Herbert, 'Persistant Myths About the Afro-American Family' in Heuman, Gad and Walvin, James (eds), *The Slavery Reader* (London, 2003), pp.252-274.

Gutman, Herbert and Sutch, Richard, "Victorians all?" Sexual Mores and Conducts of Slaves' in David, Paul A, Gutman, Herbert, Sutch, Richard, Temin, Peter and Right, Gavin (eds), *Reckoning with slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (Oxford, 1976), pp.134-161.

Hine, Darlene Clark and Jenkins, Earnestine, 'Black Men's History: Towards A Gendered Perspective' in Hine, Darlene Clark and Jenkins, Earnestine (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), pp.1-61.

Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006).

Horton, James Oliver, 'Slavery in American History: An Uncomfortable National Dialogue' in Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.35-57.

Hudson Jr, Larry E, 'All that cash: Work and Status in the Slave Quarters' in Hudson Jr, Larry E (ed.), *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester, 1994), pp.77-95.

Hudson Jr, Larry E, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens, 1997).

Johnson, Michael P, 'Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799-1830,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol.38, No.3 (Jul., 1981), pp.418-441.

Jones Jr, Norrece T, *Born a Child of Freedom, Yet a Slave. Mechanisms of Control and Strategies of Resistance in Antebellum South Carolina* (New England, 1990).

Kay, Marvin L Michael and Cary, Lorin Lee, 'Slave Runaways in Colonial North Carolina, 1748-1775' in Hine, Darlene Clark and Jenkins, Earnestine (eds), *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity Volume 1: "Manhood Rights": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Indiana, 1999), pp.130-165.

Kolchin, Peter, 'Re-evaluating the Antebellum Slave Community,' *The Journal of American History*, Vol.70, No.3 (Dec., 1983), pp.579-601.

Labinjoh, Justin, 'The sexual life of the oppressed: an examination of the family life of Antebellum slaves,' *Phylon*, Vol.35, No.4 (4th Qtr., 1974), pp.375-397.

Lee, Jean Buttenhoff, 'The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol.43, No.3 (Jul., 1986), pp.334-361.

Levine, Lawrence, "Some go up and Some Go Down": The Meaning of the Slave Trickster' in Levine, Lawrence (ed.), *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (Oxford, 1993), pp.59-78.

Linenthal, Edward T, 'Epilogue: Reflections,' in Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.213-225.

McDougle, Ivan E, 'The Social Status of the Slave,' *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Jul., 1918), pp. 281-302.

Melish, Joanne, 'Recovering (from) Slavery: Four Struggles to Tell the Truth' in Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.103-135.

Morris, Christopher, 'Within the Slave Cabin: Violence in Mississippi Slave Families' in Daniels, Christine and Kennedy, Michael (eds), *Over The Threshold: Intimate Violence in Early America* (London, 1999), pp.268-281.

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick, 'The Negro Family: The Case for National Action' in Rainwater, Lee and Yancey, William L. (eds), *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Massachusetts, 1967), pp.39-125.

Painter, Nell Irvin, *Southern History Across the Colour Line* (Chapel Hill, 2002).

Norton, Mary Beth, 'Gender and Defamation in 17th C Maryland,' *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol.44, No.1 (Jan., 1987), pp.4-39.

Owens, Leslie Howard, 'Blacks in the Slave Community' in Gilmore, Al Tony (ed.), *Revisiting Blassingame's THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: The Scholars Respond* (Connecticut, 1978), pp.61-69.

Patterson, Orlando, *Rituals of Blood* (Washington D.C, 1997).

Patterson, Orlando, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, (Mass); London, 1982).

Penningroth, Dylan C, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2003).

Penningroth, Dylan C, "My People, My People": The Dynamics of Community within Southern Slavery,' in Baptist, Edward E and Camp, Stephanie N (eds), *New Studies in the History of American Slavery* (Athens, 2006).

Phillips, Ulrich B, 'Southern Negro Slavery: A Benign View,' in Weinstein, Allen and Gatell, Frank Otto (eds), *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (Oxford, 1973), p.66.

Rothman, Ellen, 'Sex and Self-Control: Middle Class Courtship in America, 1770-1870,' *The Journal of Social History*, Vol.15, No.3, Special Issue on the History of Love (Spring, 1982), pp.409-425.

Schiller, Ben, 'Selling Themselves: Slavery, Survival and the Path of Least Resistance,' *49th Parallel*, Vol.23 (Summer 2009).

Stammp, Kenneth, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York, 1956).

Stetson, Erlene, 'Studying Slavery: Some Literary and Pedagogical Considerations of the Black Female Slave' in Hull, Gloria T, Scott, Patricia Bell, and Smith, Barbara (eds), *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York, 1982), pp.61-85.

Stevenson, Brenda E, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford, 1996).

Stevenson, Brenda E, 'Distress and Discord in Virginian Slave Families' in Bleser, Carol (ed.), *In Joy and Sorrow* (New York, 1981), pp.103-125.

Stuckey, Sterling, 'Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery' in Lane, Ann J (ed.), *The Debate Over Slavery. Stanley Elkins and His Critics* (Illinois, 1971), pp.245-268.

Takaki, Ronald T, *Iron Cages; Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London, 1980).

Van Deburg, William L, 'Slave Drivers and Slave Narratives: A New Look at the "Dehumanized Elite," *The Historian,* Vol.39, No.4 (Aug.,1977), pp.717-32.

Vlach, John Michael, 'The Last Great Taboo Subject: Exhibiting Slavery at the Library of Congress' in Horton, James Oliver and Horton, Lois E (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.57-75.

West, Emily, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Illinois, 2004).

West, Emily, 'Surviving Separation: The Debate on the Strength of the Slave Families: South Carolina and the Importance of Cross-Plantation Marriages,' *The Journal of American Studies,* Vol.33, No. (Aug., 1999), pp.221-241.

White, Deborah, 'Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status,' *The Journal of Family History,* Vol.8, No.3 (1983), pp.248-261.

White, Shane and White, Graham, 'Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' *Past and Present,* No. 148 (Aug., 1995), pp. 149-186.

Wood, Betty, "For their satisfaction or redress." African Americans and Church Discipline in the Early South' in Clinton, Catherine and Gillespie, Michele (eds), *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South* (New York, 1997), pp.109-124.

Wood, Peter H, "The Facts Speak Loudly Enough." Exploring Early Southern Black History,' in Clinton, Catherine and Gillespie, Michele (eds), *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South* (New York, 1997), pp.3-15.

Zeldin, Theodore, 'Personal History and the History of the Emotions,' *The Journal of Social History*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Special Issue on the History of Love (Spring,1982), pp. 339-347.

Websites

Harris, Joel Chandler, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, By the University of Virginia American Studies Program 2003-2004. Digitized and first spell-checked October 2003. Tagged in HTML October, 2003. Copy-edited and overall design and construction: Parrish Bergquist, October, 2003. This version available from American studies at the University of Virginia. Charlottesville. Va.http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Harris2/toc.html.

Parker, Allen, *Recollections of Slavery Times:* Electronic Edition. Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the electronic publication of this title. Text scanned (OCR) by Chris Hill. Image scanned by Chris Hill. Text encoded by Bethany Ronnberg and Natalia Smith. First edition, 2000. 100K. Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000.

Parker, William, *The Freedman's Story. In Two Parts:* Electronic Edition, Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the electronic publication of this title. Text scanned (OCR) by Bethany Ronnberg. Images scanned by Bethany Ronnberg. Text encoded by Carlene Hempel and Natalia Smith. First edition, 1999, ca. 200K. Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1999.

http://www.davidduke.com/general/facts-about-black-crime-in-america_30.html, July 31.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2007-01-01-wickham_x.htm, July 28.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/us_elections/article4306177.ece, July 25.