

**Sexual Violence in the Slaveholding Regimes of Louisiana
and Texas: Patterns of Abuse in Black Testimony**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University
of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

by Andrea Helen Livesey

June 2015

Abstract

This study is concerned with the sexual abuse of enslaved women and girls by white men in the antebellum South. Interviews conducted by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s are studied alongside nineteenth-century narratives of the formerly enslaved in order to make calculations of the scale of abuse in the South, but also to discover which conditions, social spaces and situations were, and possibly still are, most conducive to the sexual abuse of women and girls.

This thesis is separated into two parts. Part One establishes a methodology for working with testimony of the formerly enslaved and determines the scale of sexual abuse using all available 1930s interviews with people who had lived in Louisiana and Texas under slavery. This systematic quantitative analysis is a key foundation from which to interpret the testimony of abuse that is explored according to different forms of sexual violence in Part Two. It is argued that abuse was endemic in the South, and occurred on a scale that was much higher than has been argued in previous studies. Enslaved people could experience a range of white male sexually abusive behaviours: rape, sexual slavery and forced breeding receive particular attention in this study due to the frequency with which they were mentioned by the formerly enslaved. These abuses are conceptualised as existing on a continuum of sexual violence that, alongside other less frequently mentioned practices, pervaded the lives of all enslaved people.

Common features existed along the continuum. Abuse was intergenerational in nature for both the abusers and the abused. Light-skinned enslaved children born of rape were far more likely to become victims of abuse themselves and young enslaved girls were prematurely sexualised. Sexual abuse was brought into the white domestic space through the institution of sexual slavery, white children were thus unconsciously schooled in the abusive sexual mores of southern society from an early age. Abuse was quite open among white male family members. Other institutions existed that normalised and legitimised abuse, such as the fancy-girl trade and sexual interference through forced breeding practices that included eugenic manipulation and the use of 'studs'. Despite this, enslaved women showed remarkable levels of emotional survival and initial reflections are made on the ways in which women could resist and cope with sexual abuse. Testimony suggests that abuse was discussed amongst the black community, support was rarely denied to victims, and there was no stigma was attached to children born of rape.

With recent revelations on the scale of the institutionalised sexual abuse of women and children, as well as vast modern sex-trafficking networks, there are special opportunities presented through the current cultural climate in order to understand the southern experience. The South is reframed as a 'culture of abuse' where sexual violence against enslaved people was naturalised and culturally reproduced.

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank Dr Mike Tadman and Dr Stephen Kenny for their supervision of this thesis, I am especially grateful to Mike for taking so much time out of his early retirement to do so. I would also like to thank other members of staff in the School of History for their advice, in particular Dr Dmitri Van Den Bersselaar and Dr Richard Huzzey. Staff at the University of Georgia have been extremely helpful both over email and while I was on the Franklin-Liverpool exchange, and particular thanks are extended to Dr John Inscoe and Dr Stephen Berry. I am grateful to Dr Connie Atkinson at the University of New Orleans for her hospitality during the course of my research, and to archivists at the Earl Long Library at the University of New Orleans, and the Amistad Research Centre at Tulane University.

I would like to thank the University of Liverpool for funding the first year of this project, and the Economic and Social Research Council for funding the remainder. I would also like to thank my parents, Ann and David, and my family for their support and understanding throughout some very busy times. Natalie Parkinson and Rebecca Williams have proof-read drafts of my early work and provided valuable support throughout this thesis. Finally I would like to thank my son, Harper, who has sacrificed the most in order that I could finish this thesis, and has brought so much joy to the time I have spent away from my work.

Contents

	Page
Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Abbreviations	
List of tables	
List of figures	
Introduction	1
 <u>Part One</u>	
<hr/>	
Chapter One: Historiography	13
Ulrich B. Phillips and the white view of the Jim Crow Era	15
Genovese and the Civil Rights Era: Chaos and Community	17
Second wave feminism and the emergence of black female academics	21
Intersections	25
Rape laws, legal definitions, and a continuum of sexual violence	27
Grooming, consent and sexual slavery	29
Forced breeding	34
Capitalism and the ‘second slavery’	39
Existing quantitative studies of WPA interviews	42
Resistance and survival	45
Understanding the impact of rape and exploitation: new approaches	48
 Chapter Two: Sources of testimony (methodology I)	 55
The Louisiana Writers’ Project	61
The Texas Writers’ Project	72
Narratives of the formerly enslaved	83
 Chapter Three: Working with 1930s interview testimony (methodology II)	 93
Age of interviewees	94
The interviewers	101
Further reflections on white interviewers: the case of Fred Dibble	106
Race of interviewers	108
State level editing	117
 Chapter Four: Quantitative results of 1930s interviews	 127
Existing quantitative studies	129
Initial indications of the scale of sexual abuse	132
White fathers	136
Rape	148
Forced breeding	152
Sex slaves and sexual slavery	154
Unpacking a fuller understanding of the scale of abuse	156
Conclusions	168

Part Two

Chapter Five: Testimony on rape: evidence spoken and unspoken	171
Scale in former slave sources	177
Undercounting	179
The black body and evidence of white rape	181
Trauma	183
‘Consent’ and premature sexualisation	187
The southern slaveholding family and collusion with abuse	197
Callous disregard	206
The transformation of ‘rape’ into ‘benevolence: my family black and white	209
Conclusions	213
Chapter Six: Sexual slavery	217
The question of scale: nineteenth-century autobiographies versus 1930s interviews	222
Undercounting of sexual slavery in 1930s interviews	226
Light skinned sex slaves	231
Occupation of sex slaves	237
Black and white children: secondary victimhood and cycles of abuse	241
The slaveholding woman: complicity and victimhood	249
Conclusions	255
Chapter Seven: The typical case of Louisa Picquet	257
Background of the narrative	262
The life of Louisa Picquet	265
Reverend Hiram Mattison and the wider context of Picquet’s narrative	267
Sexual slavery in the Picquet narrative	270
Picquet’s participation in the ‘fancy trade’ of New Orleans	278
‘Whiteness’ and sexual slavery	281
Premature sexualisation, corrupted childhood and the ‘culture of abuse’	285
Resistance, coping and survival	291
Chapter Eight: Experiences of ‘forced breeding’ in Louisiana and Texas	299
Historiographical context	300
Scale in interviews and longer narratives	305
WPA interviews: Issues of skew/undercount	306
Themes of forced breeding in 1930s interviews	319
Conclusion: sexual exploitation and the trauma of forced breeding	343
<u>Conclusion</u>	349
Bibliography	365

Abbreviations

DWP	Dillard Writers' Project
FWP	Federal Writers' Project
LWP	Louisiana Writers' Project
MCC, UNO	Marcus Christian Collection, University of New Orleans
TAS	G. P. Rawick, (ed.), <i>The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography</i> (Westport, 1972)
TAS SS (I&II)	G. P. Rawick, (ed.), <i>The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series One and Supplement Series Two</i> (Westport, 1979)
TWP	Texas Writers' Project
WPA	Works Progress Administration

Tables

<u>Table Number</u>		<u>Page number</u>
2.1	Occupations of interviewees by state	70
3.1	Average ages of Louisiana and Texas interviewees in 1865 by subsample	95
3.2	Sexual issues recorded by selected Texas interviewers	104
3.3	Selected interviewers and references to white fathers	107
3.4	Louisiana: Correlation between the race and gender of interviewer and discussion of sexual issue	109
3.5	Issues omitted from Texas interviews sample	123
4.1	Louisiana and Texas: Frequency with which sexual issues were mentioned in 1930s interviews	133
4.2	Size of slaveholding on which interviewees with white fathers lived	137
4.3	Size of slaveholding in which interviewees without white fathers lived	137
4.4	Race and occupation of fathers of Louisiana and Texas interviewees by the size of the slaveholding unit where interviewee lived before emancipation	138
4.5	Types of references to white fathers who were identified as neither master nor overseer	141
4.6	Correlation between gender and occupation of interviewees under slavery and mentioning of a white father.	143
4.7	Correlation between occupation of mother of interviewee and race of interviewee's grandfather	144
4.8	Types of references to rape: subset of 26 interviews mentioning rape	148
4.9	Rape references: Identity of rapist	150
4.10	Rape references: Size of unit where rape occurred	150

4.11	Correlation between the size of slaveholding unit with mention of forced breeding	153
4.12	Types of reference to sex slaves and sexual slavery	155
4.13	Correlation between the occupation of the interviewee and the mention of a sexual issue	157
4.14	Proportion of male and female interviewees in Louisiana and Texas interview samples	159
4.15	Mention of sexual issues by gender in Louisiana and Texas combined	159
4.16	Various sexual issues mentioned by the gender of interviewee in combined Louisiana and Texas interview sample	160
4.17	Issues of sexual abuse in interviews conducted by black interviewers	162
4.18	Sexual issues recorded by black interviewers	162
4.19	Sexual issues recorded by each individual black interviewer	164
4.20	Number of male and female interviewees in subsets of interviewees who did, and did not, mention a sexual issue.	165
4.21	Table to show correlation between age of interviewee at emancipation and the discussion of sexual issues (Louisiana and Texas)	166
5.2	Identity of white male involved in rape or the fathering of enslaved interviewees	198
6.1	Types of reference to sexual slavery	226
6.2	Occupations of those who mentioned sexual slavery and stated their occupation, and the composition of total sample	239
8.1	Effect of gender on the mentioning of slave breeding in a 1930s WPA interview	312
8.2	Relationship between the occupation under slavery of 1930s interviewee and the mention of slave breeding	313
8.3	Types of reference to forced breeding	320

Figures

<u>Figure Number</u>		<u>Page number</u>
2.1	Louisiana interviewees: place of residence during slavery (map)	69
2.2	Texas interviewees: place of residence during slavery (map)	78
2.3	Map to show approximate location of administrative areas where the Texas interviews took place.	79
2.4	Photograph of Peter Bruner with his own son and the son of a faculty member of Miami University	89
5.1	Valmar Cormier (WPA photograph)	199
5.2	Donaville Broussard (WPA photograph)	204
7.1	Original cover of Louisa Picquet narrative	259
7.2	Image from the front cover of 1860 edition of <i>The Octoroon</i> play by Dion Boucicault	263

Introduction

This thesis explores sexual violence in the slaveholding regimes of Louisiana and Texas. Sexual violence can take on numerous forms that are changeable by time, place, and the individuals involved. Forms of sexual violence against women lie on a continuum that can include sexual harassment, pressurised sex, domestic abuse, rape, incest, and many other aggressive or interfering male behaviours that women interpret as abusive. In slave societies, the conditions exist whereby these abuses can, and did in the United States, become normalised, legitimised, and endemic. This study argues that in American slavery abuse existed publicly and privately: it was institutionalised in both the slave market and in the white family home; indeed, it formed part of the essential culture of the South.

This project has a systematic quantitative base that allows for a careful consideration of the scale of rape and sexual exploitation suffered by enslaved girls and women. This quantitative analysis is based exclusively on black testimony, testimony where key issues include rape, white fathers, long-term coercive sexual relationships, and a range of forced breeding practices. The present study seeks to understand these sexual relationships between masters and the enslaved. Often these relationships have been represented as consensual, sometimes even paternalistic, but I argue that they are better understood as sexual slavery.

One key aspect of the project will be an investigation of forced breeding, a broad category of sexual interference that could include the long or short-term forced

pairing of slaves for reproduction and eugenic manipulation, or even rape by the master or overseer specifically for financial gain. Louisiana and Texas are of particular interest for this issue because they were both major slave-importing states. According to the traditional abolitionist claim, it was the exporting, and not the importing states that saw the worst sexual exploitation of enslaved people through a process of 'breeding' slaves for the Lower-South market. This project assesses the significance of forced breeding for enslaved people in the Lower South.

Slavery developed differently in Louisiana and Texas in terms of both scale and context. Louisiana was colonised from the start of the eighteenth century, passing through French and Spanish control until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803; a date that forms the starting-point of this project. Slavery was present in Louisiana from the very beginnings of the Natchitoches colony in 1718 and was well established by 1803. Conversely, slavery developed much later in Texas: Mexican authorities made slavery conditionally illegal in 1829 and it was not until the annexation of Texas into the United States in 1845 that slavery really began to expand and thrive.¹ Texas' enslaved population expanded by 213.9 per cent from 58,161 in 1850, to 182,566 in 1860. Louisiana's slave population in 1860 had only expanded by 35.5 per cent through this same period and totaled 331,726.² This project covers the period until 1865, by which time slavery was established throughout the Lower South.

¹ See R. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1989); A. Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* (2nd ed.), (Norman, OK, 1996); J. Spear, *Race, Sex and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, 2009).

² W. S. Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth: From the First to the Twelfth Census of the United States: 1790-1900*, available at <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00165897ch14.pdf> [originally published 1909]

The differing rates of slavery's development in the two states does affect the nature of the sources available: there are few antebellum narratives that discuss Texas, and later testimony comes from enslaved people who had often experienced slavery elsewhere and had moved to the state through the domestic slave trade or slaveowner migration. These factors are discussed later in this work. Despite the variances in the development of slavery between the two states, all colonial authorities -- whether English, French or Spanish -- made some attempt to police interracial sexual practices. Louisiana, in particular New Orleans, has often been singled out as an exceptional place in terms of interracial sex, but this thesis argues that it was rather a space in which sex was marketed more boldly than elsewhere.³

The themes uncovered in this study raise fundamental questions about the nature of slavery in the United States, paternalism, the lived experience of black girls and women, and the trauma and resilience of the enslaved community. The work also speaks to wider debates on white southern culture and values, slavery as a capitalist institution, and puts sexual violence under slavery in an analysis that looks far beyond the boundaries of slavery and freedom, and into the context of sexual violence against women throughout time and place. The key foundation of the study is a quantitative base from hundreds of interviews with formerly enslaved people conducted in the 1930s. This quantitative base allows a discussion of broad patterns and questions of scale, and this is combined with valuable qualitative material from

³ Antebellum travellers to New Orleans often commented on interracial sex between white men and free women of colour. See, for example, H. Martineau, *Society in America*, Vol. 2 (London, 1837), esp. pp. 80-1. For more recent discussions see J. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans* (Chicago, 1973); J. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, 2009); Clark, E., *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, 2013).

both the interviews and from a number of longer slave narratives, mostly written in the nineteenth century.

Essential arguments

This project is important, not just for the calculations of the scale of abuse and for discussions of the nature of sexual violence in the South, but also for reflections of the white ideology that lay behind such large-scale networks of abuse. Within the historiography of slavery, previous quantitative studies have underestimated the scale of abuse. This study shows that rape was endemic, sexual slavery was common, and forced breeding occurred throughout the South.

Opportunities to recognise and engage more meaningfully with certain historic processes are often afforded by similar patterns in the present. As time progresses scholars become better equipped methodologically, morally and linguistically, to deal with certain issues. The thesis that I put forward in this study comes out of a cultural climate in which recent cases of institutionalised abuse are at the forefront of discussions around modern slavery, sex trafficking, and child sex abuse. It is clear that abuse remains embedded in certain institutions. Studies of modern day slavery also continue to highlight the scale of the trafficking of women for sex.⁴ The current

⁴ B. Meshkovska, 'Female Sex Trafficking: Conceptual Issues, Current Debates, and Future Directions', *Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 52, Issue 4 (2015), pp. 380-395. This study discusses estimates on the current scale of sex trafficking. In 2012, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime published a report stating that around 60 per cent of cases of trafficked persons involved sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation is the dominant form of human trafficking in Europe, Central Asia, and the Americas.

climate has enabled this project to recognise certain mechanisms and infrastructures that facilitate and allow for abusive behaviour, but has also provided useful the linguistic tools to name and discuss these institutions and processes. I reframe the South as a 'culture of abuse' in which the short-term and long-term sexual abuse of enslaved women was normalised and legitimised. Networks existed that would traffic women for sex throughout the South; children were prematurely sexualised as their desirability was assessed from an early age, and young domestic slaves were often abused from childhood.

Slave traders and slave owners continually assessed the reproductive potential of young enslaved girls and women. Owners saw no harm in interfering in the sexual lives of enslaved people in order to reproduce the enslaved labour force; in fact, they even used the children born of forced breeding practices as evidence of the contentedness of the slave labour force, and for their defensive rhetoric of intimate benevolent paternalism. Through the emotionless pairing of enslaved men and women under the façade of a benevolent encouragement of stable black families, slaveholders hid clear economic motive and capitalist calculations under a thin veil of paternalism.

This abusive culture was consciously, or unconsciously, reproduced through the education of young white children from an early age as to the sexual mores of their own society. Evidence of abuse was obvious in the white domestic space through the presence of sex slaves or children born of rape, and significant evidence is presented for the abuse having been part of a life cycle for young slaveholding men.

Slaveholding women were also participants (often by proxy) in the abusive culture. Some were violent and jealous tyrants who saw enslaved women as active conspirators in their own abuse but others, by bringing the enslaved children into their own house, attempted to ameliorate the conditions of slavery for the children born of rape by their white male relatives. In this manner, abuse was turned into 'benevolence', and abusive practices legitimised through the ideology of the southern family 'black and white'.⁵

Additionally, the project offers real evidence for the trauma that Nell Irvin Painter has discussed, but stops short of an outcome for enslaved people that was based on 'soul murder'.⁶ Women employed a range of personal resistance and coping strategies, and evidence is offered for a resilient slave community, and community-wide survival strategies put in place to facilitate this resilience.

While children born of rape in many societies have been ostracised and stigma has been attached to and felt by the primary rape victim, this did not happen under US slavery. Precisely because of the scale of abuse in the US South, the community had to find a way of coping with and surviving a spectrum of sexual violence. While abusers and victims often hide abuse, in the US South there was a significant tradition of discussing this traumatic experience. In other societies, there is often

⁵ The family 'black and white' was a key part of the paternalist pro-slavery defence espoused by slaveholders in the antebellum period; Eugene D. Genovese revised it in 1991 and wrote of the political economy and the grounding of the master class' worldview in the hierarchies of the plantation household. E. D. Genovese, "'Our Family White and Black": Family and Household in the Southern Slaveholders' World View', in C. Bleser (ed.) *In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South 1830-1900* (New York, 1991), pp. 69-87.

⁶ N. Irvin-Painter, *Southern History across the Color line* (Chapel Hill, 2002), pp. 15-39.

self-blame among rape victims, but enslaved women did not lose sight of who was to blame in their abuse. The strength of enslaved people and their families emerged in the community response to sexual violence. Overall, when facing sexual abuse on such a large scale, the idea of family was reconfigured but continued to thrive, and sympathy and support were rarely denied to victims of abuse and their offspring.

Source bases and methods

This study combines two essential source bases: 1930s interviews with formerly enslaved people and much longer, mainly nineteenth-century, slave narratives. The first source base comprises some eight hundred interviews with formerly enslaved people from Louisiana and Texas. This substantial sample allows me to develop a quantitative base for considering the scale of abuse. While the texts of these interviews also provides crucial evidence on the experience of abuse, the second source set -- book-length narratives -- complements these sources by giving extended accounts of lives affected by abuse. These sources together provide some of the most powerful testimony on community-wide sexual abuse that is in existence. The base of book-length narratives is necessarily skewed towards Louisiana since only one such narrative seems to have been written by a former Texas slave. The 1930s interview base is more evenly spread between Texas and Louisiana. It should be noted that while Louisiana did not participate fully in the 1930s interview scheme of the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), a large number of interviews were collected, and these interviews remain in repositories throughout Louisiana and are still relatively unknown to historians of slavery. This Louisiana sample is greatly enhanced through

the addition of testimony with formerly enslaved people from Louisiana who had moved elsewhere after emancipation and so had been interviewed in other state projects.

Criticism has been levelled at some studies that have used the 1930s interviews and the reasons for this will be discussed over Part One of this thesis. I overcome some of the criticisms by employing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, as well as looking in detail at the editing and interviewing process of the FWP. The most powerful reason for Texas' inclusion in this project was the methodological possibilities offered by the Texas collection: the collection contains a large number of interviews for which both the edited and unedited versions are still available to researchers. From a comparison of the two sets, there are special opportunities to explore the editing practices and mind-sets of white FWP employees.

Patterns of abuse in the 1930s interviews are compared to that in the longer, mainly nineteenth-century autobiographies of formerly enslaved people or fugitive slaves. In these narratives, the discussion of sexual violence is much more common for a number of reasons that include; a longer time spent under slavery, the absence of the racial dynamics relating to the Jim Crow context in the 1930s; and the longer length of the reminiscences. The combination of these source bases is valuable for analysing the themes of abuse and allows important quantitative and qualitative patterns to emerge.

Structure

This thesis is divided into two parts. Part One establishes a framework for working with white testimony of the formerly enslaved, and part two explores the testimony of the enslaved according to different forms of sexual violence. Chapter One places the present study within the historiography of slavery and sexual abuse. Chapter Two is the first of two methodological chapters and broadly investigates the nature and origins of the Louisiana and Texas Writers' projects, in addition to discussing the longer nineteenth century book-length narratives. Chapter Three focuses more closely on 1930s interviews: in this chapter, I look at factors relating to interviewer and interviewee that may have directly affected the frequency and content of references to sexual abuse. These issues, amongst others, include the age of the interviewee at emancipation, occupation of the interviewee, and the race and gender of interviewer. The chapter provides a context for the calculations of the scale of sexual abuse that are established in Chapter Four. Chapter Four sets out a clear quantitative framework with which the testimony of the formerly enslaved from both 1930s interviews and nineteenth-century narratives can be interpreted. It suggests baseline figures for exploring a range of topics in the interviews, from the incidence of white fathers and grandfathers, to rape, sexual slavery, forced breeding, and other less frequently discussed sexual issues.

Part Two begins with Chapter Five, which looks at testimony of rape, and interviewees who mentioned that they had a white father. In this chapter, the issue of consent is explored as I start to unravel some myths in the historiography of slavery that have caused some enslaved women, namely Sally Hemings the sex slave of

Thomas Jefferson, to be viewed as willing conspirators in their own abuse. I apply the concept of 'grooming' to slaveowners' relationships with certain enslaved girls: while conditions of mastery meant that there was no need to 'groom' young women for sex, there is evidence that slave-owners may well have undertaken this in order to maintain their self-image as benevolent paternalists. References to white fathers are necessarily reframed as references to the rape of the interviewee's mother, and other unspoken testimony of abuse is explored.

Chapter Six looks at sexual slavery. Sex slaves were victims of long-term sexual abuse, and while they could be of any skin colour, they were most commonly described as light-skinned domestic slaves. This chapter focuses on the presence of sexual abuse within the white domestic space, as well as the premature sexualisation of enslaved children, and the corruption of white childhood through the presence of sex slaves and their offspring in the white family home.

Chapter Seven builds on the framework established in the discussion of sex slaves in the previous chapter and explores a micro-study, that of Louisa Picquet, a light-skinned former sex slave who had lived in New Orleans, Louisiana. This unique narrative offers important insights into the trauma and mental health of sex slaves and abuse victims. It also illuminates the premature sexualisation of enslaved children, and offers indications of support networks and survival strategies that enabled enslaved people in the United States to go on to form loving families and maintain relationships in spite of the severe interference of the master in sexual and family lives.

Finally, Chapter Eight looks at forced breeding in the testimony of the enslaved, which is the most commonly cited form of sexual abuse in 1930s interviews.

Powerful themes explored in this chapter include family separations through the domestic slave trade, selective breeding, and the comparison of enslaved people to livestock. Importantly, my regional specific focus demonstrates that forced breeding was a concern not just in the Upper South, but in the deeper and westerly southern states too.

Overall, this thesis will demonstrate the endemic nature of sexual abuse in the institution of southern slavery. The sense of scale established early on in the thesis provides an important basis for the later chapters on the nature of sexual abuse. I will argue that sexual violence pervaded the lives of both blacks and whites to the extent that it became a normalised part of slaveholding for white people, and a normal but tragic part of being enslaved for black people. Despite this, community-wide resistance to sexual abuse, the support given to its victims, and the lack of stigma attached to the children born of rape revealed the strength of enslaved families and communities.

Chapter One:

Historiography

Studies of slavery in the United States have rarely failed to mention some degree of sexual contact between enslaved women and their masters. Indeed, sexual relationships, whether forced, consensual or semi-consensual, are vital for exploring the very nature of enslavement, not least because these relationships can be manifestations of a number of wider practices and beliefs in a society that have very little to do with the sexual act itself. The extent to which the slavery question hinged on sexual relationships between masters and slaves can be seen from the abolitionist era onwards. Theodore D. Weld and Lydia Maria Child, for example, intricately combined the themes of power and dominance with sexual exploitation in their critiques of slavery.¹ Even earlier than this, the scandal that revolved around the ‘relationship’ that Thomas Jefferson had with his slave Sally Hemings would have prompted contemporaries to consider the links between sexual behaviour, morals and status.²

In the antebellum period too, critical white discussion of slavery and sexual abuse often came to rest on the issue of contemporary gender norms. While the institution was being attacked by Garrisonian abolitionists, to name just one faction, such

¹ See T. D. Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839), L. M. Child, *The Quadroons* (Boston, 1842).

² In 2000 a series of seven articles were published on the controversy that surrounded Jefferson and Hemings. J. Lewis (ed.), ‘Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings Redux’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, (Vol. 57, No.1 (2000), pp. 121-210; see also A. Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York, 2008).

reformers unwittingly embraced the stereotypes of enslaved women created by enslavers. Slavery to the Garrisonians was an attack on middle-class gender norms. Enslaved women were prevented from adhering to the standard of ‘true womanhood’: piety, purity, submission and domesticity.³ As discussed in Chapter Two, white abusers turned enslaved women into ‘jezebels’, unrapeable and always available for sex with white men. This firstly ungendered black women, but also turned the focus away from the very real trauma of sexual abuse experienced by the black community as a whole, and reframed the sexual abuse of black women as a corruption of white people produced through the conditions of slaveholding.

This literature review will identify important historiographical stages through which the study of sexual abuse under slavery has passed after these early abolitionist debates. In particular, a progression of approaches will be traced from the deeply racist research of white southern historian Ulrich B. Phillips, to the late twentieth-century intersectional research of black female academics (and others).⁴ More recent approaches to specific issues will then be explored; these include sexual slavery, forced breeding, resistance, and survival. Some preliminary reflections will be made on important conceptual issues that will be encountered in more details throughout the following chapters, in particular the concept of ‘consent’ under slavery, the practice of ‘grooming’ and of trauma.

³ For a discussion of abolitionist treatment of enslaved women see K. Hoganson, ‘Garrisonian Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Gender 1850-1860’, in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 45, no.4 (1993), especially p. 563.

⁴ The notion of intersections has been common feature in scholarly work for the last two decades. This analytical tool helps researchers to imagine how certain concepts interact to shape a person’s life experience. Concepts that are commonly employed in this approach include ‘race’, gender, sexuality and class. For discussion of the use of intersectionality see E. Barkley Brown, “‘What has Happened here’: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics’, *Feminist Studies* Vol. 18, No. 2 (1992), pp. 295-312.

Ulrich B. Phillips and the white view of the Jim Crow Era

The lack of attention to black sources up until the Civil Rights Era contributed to a persistence of white-created stereotypes of enslaved people within the literature.

Ulrich B. Phillips, in the twentieth century's first major work on US slavery, *American Negro Slavery* (1918), dismissed the use of slave narratives as sources due to what he saw as their inherent biases, and used white sources as the basis for his reconstruction of enslaved lives. Phillips described slaveholders as talented and benevolent men who 'were ruled by a sense of duty, dignity and moderation'.⁵ He wrote that a rigid taboo against interracial sex was present from the start of American slavery, and was not developed in response to emancipation and the granting of political agency to black Americans (as more recent studies have claimed).⁶ Sexual exploitation, therefore, could not have existed within slavery and does not appear in Phillips' work.⁷

American Negro Slavery remained the primary reference point in the white academy until a turn in the scholarship in the 1950s when, as George Fredrickson wrote, 'liberal historians -- both white and black -- generally agreed that an emphasis on victimization was the best reply to the racist argument of innate inferiority'.⁸ Black writers and historians -- such as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, E. Franklin Frazier, and John Hope Franklin -- had always rebutted white claims of African

⁵ U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labour as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York, 1928), p. 279.

⁶ See T. Lockley, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Low Country Georgia 1750-1860* (Athens, 2001); Schafer, *Slavery, the Civil Law, and the Supreme Court of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1997); D.M. Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2004); M. Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South* (New Haven, 1997).

⁷ Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 306.

⁸ G. M. Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism and Social Inequality* (Middletown, 1989), p. 113.

inferiority, but it was not until the publication of Kenneth M. Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* in 1956 that the 'Phillips tradition' was successfully challenged by white academic historians.⁹ Stampp offered no defence for the slaveholding classes and instead argued that cruelty was endemic in all slaveholding communities.¹⁰ It was, however, the very basis of this argument that meant that the work of Stampp, and later Stanley Elkins, would be rejected by revisionist historians of the Civil Rights Era; neither historian acknowledged any real oppositional culture (or any type of culture at all) possessed by enslaved people. Most notably, Elkins described the slaves existing in a kind of 'cultural void', and though through this he wished to hold slaveholders fully accountable for the immense harm done to enslaved people, Elkins argued that the experience of slavery was psychologically infantilizing to slaves, causing them to follow what he called the 'sambo' model.¹¹

Michael Tadman has written of any given society's need to create a 'usable past'. For the white South, this included a defence of slavery that would legitimise the institution and the ensuing years of racial segregation and discrimination.¹² Phillips' close accommodationist theory of master-slave relations was shaped both by his source base, which was heavily based on plantation records, and his agenda as a white southerner.¹³ Whereas Stampp and Elkins were essentially well-intentioned in

⁹ See W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro* (Mineola, NY, 2001; originally published 1915); C. G. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History* (Washington, 1922); E. Franklin Frazier was a sociologist who wrote influential works on the black family and saw patterns in family life as being shaped more by social conditions than 'race.' See *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, 1939); J. H. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York, 1949).

¹⁰ K. B. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1956).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 364; S. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago, 1968).

¹² M. Tadman, 'The Persistent Myth of Paternalism: Historians and the Nature of Master-Slave Relations in the American South', *Race Relations Abstracts*, 23 (1998), p. 7.

¹³ Phillips was both a native white southerner and the descendent of a slaveholding family. His work was heavily influenced by his bias toward the slaveholding South and he attempted to legitimise a

their respective early works, the lack of attention to black sources ensured an approach to slavery that was still heavily shaped by the evidence left by slaveholders and their white opponents. It was not until the Civil Rights Era, with John Blassingame's *The Slave Community* (1972) and more particularly with George P. Rawick's publication of the first volumes of *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* that the history of slavery came to centre for the first time on a large significant body of evidence directly from the formerly enslaved.¹⁴

Genovese and the Civil Rights Era: Chaos and Community

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement stimulated a need to reconsider the history of slavery, and Phillips' work. In 1966 *American Negro Slavery* was reprinted with a foreword by Eugene D. Genovese, who was also one of the first to extensively make use of 1930s WPA Narratives. Genovese was critical of Phillips' racism, but praised his assertion that notion that 'slavery was less a business than a life'.¹⁵ Genovese published *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* in 1972 and portrayed slavery as a paternalistic institution in which the slaves exchanged their labour for 'protection and direction'.¹⁶ Genovese's paternalism framework drew on the work of

system which was based on white superiority and black dependency, racial attitudes which were still as strong as ever in Phillips' Jim Crow South. For further discussion see D. D. Bruce Jr, 'Slave Narratives and Historical Understanding', in J. Ernest (Ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 59-60.

¹⁴ J. W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972); G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Series One, Vols. 1-7*, (Westport, 1972), hereafter *TAS*; G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Series Two, Vols. 8-19*, (Westport, 1972), hereafter *TAS*; G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series One, Vols. 1-12*, (Westport, 1979), hereafter *TAS SSI*; G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series Two, Vols. 1-10*, (Westport, 1979), hereafter *TAS SS2*.

¹⁵ Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 281.

¹⁶ E. D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1972), p. 5.

Gilberto Freyre on slavery in Brazil, who had written that interracial intimacy emerged in the context of close relations between blacks and whites who were ‘two fraternizing halves...mutually enriched with diverse values and experiences’.¹⁷ Of course, this sentiment is controversial, not least when applied to the sexual exploitation and rape of enslaved women. Although the majority of historians have seen encounters between female slaves and their white masters as part of a larger pattern of oppression embedded in the institution of slavery, to Genovese the slave owner was essentially well intentioned and quite often fell in love with enslaved women, who then fell in love with him in return.¹⁸

Genovese attacked the abolitionist claim that the large numbers of racially mixed people in the antebellum South supplied proof of widespread sexual exploitation by owners. He argued that plantations hardly emerged ‘looking like the harems of abolitionist fantasy’.¹⁹ He acknowledged that mulattoes appeared most frequently in the slave-exporting states and in such new slave-importing states as Arkansas and Texas, although instead of attributing this to some degree of forced breeding, he pointed to the prevalence of small-scale slaveholding units and the ‘interracial intimacy’ that emerged from these, ‘in sexual and other matters’. He also pointed to the higher percentage of mulattoes amongst free-blacks over slaves as evidence that the original ‘sexual unions had been other than rape and debauchery’. This indicated that the freedom of racially mixed individuals was in some way linked to a positive relationship between a white slave-owner father and enslaved mother. Genovese

¹⁷ G. Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (Berkeley, 1986; originally published 1933), pp. 278, 349.

¹⁸ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, pp. 413-431.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

attributed a high degree of agency to enslaved women and wrote that they were ‘able to set limits by their own actions’.²⁰

Diane Miller Sommerville has described Genovese’s interpretation as ‘misogynist’ in his portrayal of plantation masters as ‘noble Casanovas’, victims of ‘a racist system’ that stood in the way of the legitimisation of love affairs between masters and slaves.²¹ Genovese’s analysis did indeed have a lasting effect on the continuation of the myth of paternalism, which was to resurface sporadically in the literature over the following decades. First of all, this theory of close accommodation was put forward by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman in *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974). Fogel and Engerman’s work was based on a skewed quantitative analysis, and this methodology led them to interpret slavery as a capitalist institution in which economic success was based on the high morale of the slaves. They wrote that because of the profitability of slavery, it was in the owners’ best interests to encourage strong and stable enslaved families.²²

While the profitability of slavery (if not its efficiency) has been widely accepted, especially since the publication of Robert Fogel’s *Without Consent or Contract* in addition to a number of recent studies on capitalism and slavery (discussed later in this chapter), studies that have focused on the slave family have strongly indicated

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 414-5, 423.

²¹ D. M. Sommerville, ‘“Moonlight, Magnolias, and Brigadoon”; or ‘Almost Like Being in Love:’ Mastery and Sexual Exploitation in E.D. Genovese’s Plantation South’, *Radical History Review*, Vol. 88 (2004), p. 70.

²² R. Fogel and S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (London, 1974), p. 127-9.

that high morale would have been impossible.²³ One such study, in 1989, was Michael Tadman's *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South*. Tadman argued that, due to the scale of the domestic slave trade, enslaved families were always at risk of separation from callous and indifferent owners, a situation that fostered a deep distrust between master and slave.²⁴

Despite Genovese's views of the sexual exploitation of women under slavery, his rediscovery of a resilient slave culture through the use of black sources such as slave narratives and folk tales encouraged further writing on the strength of enslaved families. The black historian John W. Blassingame was a crucial part of a movement in this era to make serious use of the testimony of the formerly enslaved.

Blassingame (1972) and Herbert Gutman (1976) described a strong plantation community in which slaves used cultural resources and family in order to survive and resist slavery.²⁵ These early studies paved the way for scholars such as Myers (1996), Perrin (2001), Schwartz (2006), Gordon-Reed (2008) and Dusinberre (2009); all whom discussed the different tactics deployed by enslaved women in order to resist the system of slavery and gain a measure of control over their own lives.²⁶

²³ R. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York, 1989); Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA, 2013); E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York, 2014); A. Kaye, 'The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth Century South and the Atlantic World', in *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (2009), pp. 627-650; S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, 2014); T. Rothman, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson* (Athens, 2014).

²⁴ M. Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, 1989), pp. 140, 164-65, 179-80.

²⁵ J. W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972), H. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (Oxford 1976).

²⁶ A. C. Myers, "'Sisters in Arms': Slave Women's Resistance to Slavery in the United States', in *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 5 (1996), pp. 141-174; L. M. Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Reproduction in the Old South', *Journal of American Studies*, 35:2 (2001) pp. 255-274; M. J. Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Old South* (Cambridge, 2006); Gordon-

Second wave feminism and the emergence of black female academics

While second-wave feminism can be traced back to the early 1960s, it started to have a real impact in academia in the 1970s.²⁷ With the introduction of gender into the interpretation of slavery, the rape of enslaved women became central to the way in which the white plantation mistress was portrayed too. Historians such as Catherine Clinton (1982) and Marli Frances Weiner (1998) argued that the plantation mistress herself was in a sense trapped and exploited by the rape of enslaved women and girls and by patriarchy. Deborah Gray White also described a patriarchal system that disempowered all women, even members of the master class.²⁸ While other historians do recount instances of white female aggression against black slaves, Clinton focused on the power and aggression of the masters. Weiner described the mistress as a supportive figure for enslaved women, someone to whom they could appeal when they were threatened by an experience that was uniquely female, such as childbirth or rape.²⁹

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese departed from the view of the parallel exploitation of black and white women that White, Clinton and others took. She instead put forward a theory that rested on the advantages of slavery and hierarchy enjoyed by slaveholding women. For Fox-Genovese, slaveholding women saw themselves, not as trapped and exploited by patriarchy, but victims of the ‘adultery’ that the slave

Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*; W. Dusingberre, *Strategies for Survival: Recollections of Bondage in Antebellum Virginia* (Charlottesville, 2009).

²⁷ See B. Thompson, ‘Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism’, *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 336-360.

²⁸ D.G. White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York, 1999).

²⁹ C. Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman’s World in the Old South* (New York, 1982); M. Weiner, *Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina 1830-80* (Urbana, 1998).

system allowed for. She supported this interpretation by using examples of violence between the two sets of women.³⁰ Thavolia Glymph's influential study *Out of the House of Bondage* brought further sophistication to Fox-Genovese's argument. Glymph reconceptualised the relationship between black and white women as a domestically-located, long-term, multi-faceted power struggle: though at the heart of this struggle lay the fact that plantation mistresses were slaveholders, and had almost 'unrestricted power' over the enslaved women over whom they ruled.³¹

In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, more black women started to enter the academic debate, particularly bell hooks, Deborah Gray White, Angela Davis, Brenda Stevenson, Stephanie Camp, Daina Ramey Berry and Nell Irvin Painter.³² The stereotypes of the 'mammy' and 'jezebel' were elaborated and analysed, the relationships between enslaved women and slaveholding women were probed and the scale and impact of sexual abuse could finally be taken seriously by scholars in the white academy.³³

³⁰ E. Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, 1988).

³¹ T. Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York, 2008), p. 227.

³² b. hooks, *Ain't I A Woman* (London, 1982); A. Y. Davis, 'Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', *Black Scholar*, Vol. 3 (1972); B. E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York, 1996); S. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, 2004); D. Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Urbana, 2007); Painter, *Southern History across the Color Line*.

³³ As will be argued in this thesis, the sexual abuse of enslaved women remained a significant part of the 'memory' of enslavement within the black community through into the 1930s (especially in the former slave interviews used for this project) and beyond. While sexual abuse was downplayed in the literature written by white scholars up until the second half of the twentieth century, it was always part of African-American writing and scholarship. As early as the 1890s Ida B. Wells documented cases of the sexual abuse of black females. See P. A. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001), pp. 115-17.

Angela Davis (1972), bell hooks (1981), and Nell Irvin Painter (2002) have been prominent in making claims that the rape of enslaved women by white men was part of a deliberate programme of intimidation. Firstly, Angela Davis in her 1973 article ‘Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves’, argued that the rape of enslaved women was part of a wider programme of ‘terrorism’ that asserted the white male’s sovereignty over the black woman. This terrorism damaged the enslaved woman who was a critically important figure in the slave community, but also violated and frustrated black men as they were unable to protect their female relations.³⁴ A similar analysis has been made by Norrece T. Jones who described slavery is a ‘state of war’. Evidence for as rape as a common tool of war psychological warfare can be found in the testimony of the formerly enslaved as white men sought to humiliate and degrade both enslaved men and women through sexual violence.³⁵

bell hooks further developed the discussion on the wider consequences of sexual abuse when she described patriarchy as the base of the American social structure. To hooks, the sexual exploitation of black women was part of the ‘anti-woman sexual politics of colonial patriarchal America’. Significantly, hooks introduced the idea of the triple burden into the literature with her description of the female slave’s racial and gender discrimination as ‘a labourer in the fields, a worker in the domestic household, a breeder, and an object of white male sexual assault’.³⁶

³⁴ Davis, ‘Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves’, p. 13.

³⁵ N. T. Jones, ‘Rape in Black and White’: Sexual Violence in the Testimony of Enslaved and Free African Americans’ in Winthrop D. Jordan, (ed.), *Slavery and the American South* (Jackson, Miss., 2003), pp. 93-108.

³⁶ hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman*, pp. 32, 42-3.

Nell Irvin Painter described the abuse of enslaved women and children as part of a process of ‘soul murder’.³⁷ While Painter may not have allowed sufficient room in her analysis for the resistance and survival of abuse, she did make an important contribution to the field by using psychological theory in her analysis. She wrote that ‘children and young women who are sexually abused, like children who are beaten, tend to blame themselves for the victimisation and consequently have very poor self-esteem....I doubt that slaves possessed an immunity that victims lack today’. She called for a new consideration of the extent of sexual abuse and its lasting effect on the black community and pointed out that ‘[w]hat were long termed ‘discipline’ and ‘seduction’ of the young and powerless, who were described as feckless and oversexed, we can now call by their own names: child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, battering.’³⁸ As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, as time progresses scholars become better equipped methodologically, morally and linguistically, to deal with these issues. While Nell Irvin Painter recognised the dangers associated with applying modern psychological theory to historical subjects, she did make an important advance in the field, a contribution that has opened up new possibilities for interpretation of historical sexual abuse.

While attempting to redress the lack of attention paid to the sexual abuse of enslaved women, historians such as those noted here have been criticised for the lack of attention paid to the resilience and resistance shown by the broad community of enslaved men and women. Therefore, historians whose agendas have been to

³⁷ Painter, *Southern History across the Color Line*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16, 29.

highlight black agency and resilient communities under slavery have struggled with notions of a people overwhelmed by sexual and racialised abuse.

Intersections

Catherine Clinton was one of the first historians to apply Michel Foucault's theories on sexuality and power to the antebellum South in *The Plantation Mistress* published in 1982. In her chapter, 'Foucault meets Mandingo', Clinton looked at how interracial sex under slavery had been romanticised. She wrote that 'the subtexts of sexuality added to the dynamics of race render almost any surface reading of social postures a distortion of circumstantial reality'. In the case of the slave South and in Blaxploitation novels such as the Falconhurst series (in particular Mandingo which was later made into a film in 1975), interracial sex had been romanticised as 'forbidden lust'.³⁹

A number of historians have since studied the intersection of race and sexuality, often finding that class was a significant factor too. Martha Hodes (1997), Tim Lockley (2001), Diane Miller Sommerville (2004) and Judith Schafer (2007) have demonstrated the diversity of white attitudes across colour lines.⁴⁰ Martha Hodes

³⁹ Despite a link always having existed, it was Michel Foucault in his social-constructionist analysis who first brought to prominence the links between sexual anxieties and practices, power and society. Although Foucault's work is far from universally accepted, it did raise questions for historians to ponder, and studies with increased focus on the link between sexuality and race increased from the time of its English publication in 1978. M. Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (London, 1978); Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, p. 224.

⁴⁰ Lockley, *Lines in the Sand*; J. K. Schafer, *Slavery, the Civil Law and the Supreme Court of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1997); Sommerville, *Rape and Race*; Hodes, *White Women, Black Men*.

wrote that ‘the history of racial categories is often a history of sexuality as well for it is partly as a result of the taboos against boundary crossing that such categories are invented’.⁴¹ Research has demonstrated that, contrary to Phillips’ claim, the rigid taboo against interracial sex was not present under slavery, but rather evolved over time in response to the emancipation of slaves and the granting of political agency to blacks.

Studies of intersectionality have demonstrated the flexibility of race as a concept in the antebellum South. Lockley looked at Low Country Georgia to discover that in this particular setting, it was in fact common for whites and blacks to work, trade, drink, fight, pray, and have sex together; such casual relations could almost ‘wash away’ the lines in the sand of race.⁴² Sommerville found that, right where we thought they were the strongest, the bonds of whiteness were limited. She discovered that judicial paternalism characterised the court’s response to cases of sexual violence by black men on white women. If convicted then the courts were generally lenient to defendants, especially when the women involved were members of the lower classes of Virginia society.⁴³

Elsa Barkley Brown pointed to the need to think beyond the ‘notable triumvirate’ of race, class and gender and into experiences that are rooted in time and place.⁴⁴

Chapter Seven of the present study focuses on Louisa Picquet and investigates

⁴¹ Hodes, *White Women, Black Men*, p. i.

⁴² Lockley, *Lines in the Sand*, p. 56.

⁴³ Sommerville, *Rape and Race*, see especially pp. 19-42.

⁴⁴ E. Barkley Brown, “‘What Has Happened Here’: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics”, *Feminist Studies* Vol.18, No. 2 (1992), pp. 296-300.

networks of abuse of light-skinned black women and girls. This study draws makes use of intersectionality to explore the interaction and meaning of ‘whiteness’, ‘blackness’ and slavery, and to consider how these concepts functioned in peculiar ways inside different spaces, most importantly the slave market and the white family home.⁴⁵

Rape laws, legal definitions, and a continuum of sexual violence

Sharon Block traced the evolution of ‘rape’ in early America using as her starting point the punishment of rape based upon British laws. The development of race-based slavery led to the ‘racialization’ of rape laws and a two tier system for blacks and whites where black men, enslaved or free, could be tried for the rape of white women, but no man could rape an enslaved woman. As Block rightly points out, much is missed if one only looks at cases of rape that were tried under the definition of rape prescribed by law in the early-eighteenth century as ‘unlawful and carnal knowledge of a Woman, by Force and against her Will’.⁴⁶ The present study considers a hetero-normative definition of rape, alongside a spectrum of other coercive and abusive sexual practices for which the source base provides evidence. As discussed by Thomas Foster, while enslaved men suffered sexual abuse too, their

⁴⁵ The work of Walter Johnson is of particular significance in relation to the role of ‘race’ in the slave market where the concept was both made and played out. W. Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999)

⁴⁶ S. Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp. 126-9.

suffering was largely an ‘invisible crime’, outside of legal definition and enslaved testimony due to contemporary taboo.⁴⁷

Sexual abuse throughout time has existed across a continuum. Joanne Belknap identifies four categories of intimate partner violence in a modern context – physical battering, sexual battering (including rape), psychological battering, and the destruction of pets or property. Within these different aspects of intimate partner violence lay three common features, Belknap points out that they ‘all result in harm to the victim, all are manifestations of dominance and control, and all occur in an intimate relationship’.⁴⁸ Similarly, Block discovered that early Americans ‘did not divide sexual activity into sexual/consensual versus violent/coercive acts; instead, sexual and violent acts could bleed into each other’.⁴⁹ Kelly too wrote that in the late twentieth century (when her research was conducted), it became clear that ‘the range of men’s behaviour that women defined as abusive was neither reflected in the legal codes nor in the analytic categories used in previous research’.⁵⁰ Research evidence depends much upon what is considered typical, and what is considered aberrant. The typical behaviour is less likely to be recorded in testimony, and even less likely to occur in legal cases. The sexual violence described in the present study uses the concept of a continuum in order to reflect the reality that abuse rarely fits into a discrete category.

⁴⁷ T. A. Foster, ‘The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under American Slavery’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011).

⁴⁸ J. Belknap, *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime, and Justice*, 3rd Ed. (Belmont, CA, 2007), pp. 319-22

⁴⁹ Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ L. Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Cambridge, 1988)

Grooming, consent and sexual slavery

While the age at which enslaved girls became potential victims of sexual abuse has not been closely examined by scholars, the limited number of studies which have focused on enslaved childhood indicate that the enslaved child was forced into the adult world much sooner than they would have been under different circumstances. Marie Jenkins Schwartz wrote that the move to field work for adolescents held special perils. They entered into a world of hard work, but also one in which they risked sexual exploitation; a girl entering puberty ‘attracted attention from masters, their sons, and other white men in the neighbourhood’.⁵¹

The age at which childhood ‘ended’ for the enslaved has generally been defined as somewhere between the age of twelve and sixteen, where fieldwork would begin. It was from this time that they seem to have been at special risk of sexual abuse. In 1993, some years before Nell Irvin Painter’s use of the concept of ‘soul murder,’ Anthony S. Parent Jr. and Susan Brown Wallace used this concept in particular relation to ‘Childhood and Sexual Identity under Slavery’. They wrote of the lack of knowledge of enslaved children about sexual matters, but the awareness of their owners’ delight when the enslaved women gave birth, were courting or wished to be ‘married’. While enslaved children were lacking in sexual knowledge, they were not shielded from the social realities of enslavement. Parent and Wallace wrote that the children witnessed ‘ritualized humiliation and institutionalised violence, often sexual in content’, and were particularly aware of forced breeding and its ‘intrapersonal violence’. The crux of Parent and Wallace’s argument was that the sexual violence

⁵¹ M. J. Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 154.

and control that slavery harboured was a 'stumbling block' for enslaved children in the development of a healthy sexuality and integrated personality.⁵²

With considerably more academic interest dedicated to slavery in the 1980s and 1990s, there was a move towards regional studies, which allowed historians to study particular areas and source groups more extensively. This also had an effect on the study of sexual exploitation of enslaved women, with a recent trend towards the study of enslaved women and free black women who entered into sexual relationships (consensual or non-consensual) with white men to become sex slaves. Evidence points to a specialised trade in supplying women for this purpose. Michael Tadman in his work on the domestic slave trade discovered that while the prices for light-skinned slaves were generally lower than prices for those with darker-skin, light-skinned women gained a higher price at the slave market. These women were those labeled 'fancy women', or 'fancies', and were used for explicitly sexual purposes.⁵³

Studies which have focused on legal and court documents generally argue that the existence of 'sex slaves' demonstrates some kind of leniency in racial boundaries. These studies have presented the 'sex slave' as either being in a loving relationship with a slaveholding man, or manipulating the system in order to alleviate her position and gain eventual freedom for herself and her children. Jessica Millward in 2010 wrote that 'some shrewd and deliberate enslaved women maximised their

⁵²A.S. Parent and S. Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1993), pp. 384-6.

⁵³ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 125-7.

relationships with those who owned them in order to provide a better future for themselves and their children'.⁵⁴ Judith Schafer, in her study of New Orleans Supreme Court records, looked at the hostility of 'legitimate' white heirs toward the freeing by will of enslaved mistresses and children. In such cases Schafer suggested that the relationship between the white man and the enslaved 'mistress' emerged as something other than rape.⁵⁵ The testimony of the formerly enslaved generally presents a less optimistic view of these relationships, subsequent debates will rest on the notion of 'consent' within the system of slavery and are discussed further in Chapter Five on rape and in Chapter Six on sexual slavery.

Cynthia M. Kennedy's work on enslaved women asked important questions of the very terms used to define types of sexual exploitation. She wrote that in Charleston 'the positions of housekeeper and 'sex slave' blurred, so when slave women and free women of color assumed the position of housekeeper, most understood this role to include sex and expected to derive material rewards for the extra service'. She wrote that a complex system of *plaçage* did not exist in Charleston, unlike in New Orleans. Instead, there existed a less formal system of prostitution in which slaves would be hired out to 'facilitate the provision of sex for remuneration'. Even when the hiring out of slaves was for legitimate enterprise, the enslaved women would turn to prostitution as a 'pragmatic economic choice'.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ J. Millward, "'The Relics of Slavery': Interracial Sex and Manumission in the American South', in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 31:3 (2010), p. 26.

⁵⁵ Schafer, *Slavery, the Civil Law*, pp. 90-95.

⁵⁶ Cynthia Kennedy, *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives: The Women of Charleston's Urban Slave Community* (Bloomington, 2005), pp. 113, 119.

The two most recent studies on the topic of 'sex slaves' are by Emily Clark and Brenda Stevenson. While Clark does not focus on slavery *per se*, she does direct her focus on a society in which free and unfree women of colour were both employed as housekeepers of, and in sexual relationships with, white men. Clark looks at the mythology surrounding the light-skinned enslaved woman who became known as 'a feminine seductress who submitted willingly to male control'.⁵⁷ This image was created in St Domingue and transplanted in New Orleans where the white population of the United States mentally quarantined the threat that such a woman posed to the racial order. In reality the practice of what Clark refers to as 'menagerie' -- a term imported from Haiti which describes the dual role of these women as housekeeper and sexual partner -- was in existence throughout the South.

Brenda Stevenson described a range of experiences for sex slaves (whom she describes as 'concubines') from continued rape to semi-consensual relationships and, like Clark, placed sexual slavery in an Atlantic framework. Stevenson focused on light-skinned women whom she described as having been preferred for this role. The trope of the 'tragic mulatto' underlies the article, and Stevenson describes these women as 'caught between the world of their enslaved mothers and their slave owning fathers, sometimes finding no place to really belong'. The article offers an overview and introduction to the concept of 'concubinage' as it appeared under slavery. Stevenson, like many others has viewed light-skinned enslaved women as set apart from the wider slave community in terms of appearance and occupation.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon*, p. 38.

⁵⁸ B. Stevenson, 'What's Love Got to Do With It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women,' *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 98, Issue 1 (2013), p. 120.

Loren Schweninger has recently taken a similar position on this, using evidence from divorce cases filed by wives against their husbands, cases that is where an enslaved woman has supposedly usurped the white woman as ‘mistress’.⁵⁹ Aside from the experience of individual ‘sex slaves’, further questions need to be asked about whether such special cases brought strains to the solidarity and cohesion of the ‘slave community’. There could indeed have been an alternative ‘slave community’ of light-skinned enslaved people who were united by their direct experience of sexual abuse, or by their being the children and grandchildren of sexually abused girls and women.

Light-skinned sex slaves were a common feature in abolitionist literature. In the last two decades literature has emerged which has focused on the image of the ‘mulatta’ in abolitionist texts and in fiction in the antebellum period and beyond. Rebecca Anne Ferguson (1995), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (1996), Eve Allegra Raimon (2004), Teresa C. Zackodnik (2004), and Emily Clark (2013) all discussed the peculiar position occupied by the light-skinned enslaved woman.⁶⁰ For all five writers, the ‘mulatta’ body, either in real life or in fiction was embedded with numerous meanings. Fox-Genovese saw the mulatta as a literary trope used by black women to gain sympathy for their heroines but also to remain silent about the most disturbing

⁵⁹ L. Schweninger, *Families in Crisis in the Old South: Divorce, Slavery and the Law* (Chapel Hill, 2012).

⁶⁰ R. Ferguson, ‘The Mulatta Text and the Muted Voice in ‘Louisa Picquet: The Octoroon’ Revising the Genre of the Slave Narrative’, Unpublished PhD thesis, Marquette University (1995); E. Fox-Genovese, ‘Slavery, Race, and the Figure of the Tragic Mulatta, or, The Ghost of Southern History in the Writing of African-American Women’, in *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 49, Issue 4 (1996), pp. 791-818; E. A. Raimon, *The ‘Tragic Mulatta’ Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Slavery Fiction* (New Brunswick, 2004); T. C. Zackodnik, *The Mulatta and the Politics of Race* (Jackson, 2004); E. Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, 2013).

aspects of a black woman's experience.⁶¹ The 'mulatta' is, as Zacodnik noted, a literary signifier, a parody that cultivated the sympathies of the white audience, while the black American reader recognised the critique inherent in her existence and language. For Raimon, the mulatta's 'boundary-transgressing body' functioned as a negotiating terrain for contentions about the boundaries of the nation and its slave and free territories. Through the constructed notion of 'race', the mulatta became an embodiment of the slavery debate and the similarly constructed notion of territorial boundaries. Both Raimon and Zacodnik viewed the mulatta as a central figure in discourses of 'race' and 'nation' with the mulatta, in a sense, an emblem of a 'new America' of mixed 'racial' origins.⁶²

Forced breeding

Like the rape of enslaved women, stories of forced breeding first appeared in the abolitionist press in the mid-nineteenth century. This issue was brought to the fore by Gutman and Sutch, in response to the work of Robert W. Fogel and Stanley Engerman. In *Time on the Cross*, Fogel and Engerman asserted that slave breeding was 'highly unlikely'. In this controversial work, Fogel and Engerman attempted to disprove that any form of forced breeding took place, except on the rarest occasions. They contended that planters avoided direct interference in the sexual activities of slaves, and attempted to influence fertility patterns through positive

⁶¹ Fox-Genovese, 'Slavery, Race, and the Figure of the Tragic Mulatta'.

⁶² See E. A. Raimon, *The 'Tragic Mulatta' Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Slavery Fiction* (New Brunswick, 2004), and T. C. Zackodnik, *The Mulatta and the Politics of Race* (Jackson, 2004).

economic incentives. This interpretation is problematic and in itself prompts debate on the real meaning of 'forced breeding', which has often been loosely defined.⁶³

Abolitionists often claimed that girls were forced into breeding at early ages, so the issue of age at first birth is potentially highly significant. Fogel and Engerman revisited this issue and made claims that the age of first birth (or first surviving birth) was quite late. They made this part of their thesis of benevolent capitalist slavery, with master-supported black families. Fogel and Engerman probably paid far too little attention to the poor health and diet of enslaved women, so that the women's net nutrition might have meant that their age at menarche (first period) was very late by modern standards. They also calculated the age at birth of first child simply by looking at list of enslaved people where family groups can be inferred. Such lists were created, for example, at an owner's death (when probate required lists of property). Fogel and Engerman looked at the family groups and simply subtracted the age of a woman's oldest (surviving) child from the woman's own age. In practice this issue is more complicated because of factors like age at menarche, still births, fifty per cent of infants dying before age one (and never appearing on such list as Fogel and Engerman), deaths among older children, children sold or hired away or living in other locations.⁶⁴

Gutman and Sutch, however, used demographic data presented in the census of 1850 and 1860 to argue for the existence of 'strong circumstantial evidence' of the

⁶³ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 78.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9

prevalence of inducements to childbearing, particularly in those states seen as ‘breeding’ states along the Atlantic coast. They supported the nineteenth-century abolitionist belief that the soil in these states had become unsuitable for agriculture and so turned to slave ‘breeding’ for income. Their work, however, does not consider slave breeding in the Lower South.⁶⁵ Further to this, Richard Sutch in 1975 found that among slaves exported from the Upper South, males were seven per cent more numerous than females, which he argued meant that there was a desire to maintain ‘breeding’ females. In 1989, Tadman argued against this interpretation and wrote that the male bias in the trade was explained by the special demand for males in the sugar area of Louisiana.⁶⁶

Paul D. Escott’s *Slavery Remembered: a Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* used the WPA Narratives in order to explore and quantify some of the most important questions asked about American slavery. Escott reported that just 4.1 per cent of interviewees mentioned forced breeding, which is low compared to the calculations of others on this issue.⁶⁷ Escott’s calculations are likely to be low due to a narrow definition of slave breeding, although his criteria for this are not made clear.

⁶⁵ H. Gutman and R. Sutch, ‘Victorians All? The Sexual Mores and Conduct of Slaves and Their Masters’, in *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study into the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976), pp. 134-162; R. Sutch, ‘The Breeding of Slaves for Sale and the Westward Expansion of Slavery, 1850-1860’, in S. L. Engerman and E. Genovese (eds.), *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 173-210.

⁶⁶ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 123-5.

⁶⁷ P. D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth- Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill, 1979). Thelma Jennings found 4-10 per cent of formerly slaves mentioned forced breeding, depending on the subset used, “‘Us Colored Women Had to Go Though Plenty””, p. 66.

Michael Tadman has also discussed the possibility of forced breeding. In an article published in 2000, Tadman explored the contrasting patterns of natural increase among the enslaved people of the Americas. He focused specifically on sugar, a plantation crop confined in the US to a group of parishes in southern Louisiana that employed just six per cent of North American slaves. While most of the United States slave population encountered natural increase, the Louisiana sugar parishes and the sugar-dominated Caribbean consistently experienced natural decrease. In this article Tadman argued that plantation crop was the ‘essential influence in determining patterns of natural increase and decrease’. American slaves experienced third-world patterns of infant, child and adult mortality, but this was compensated for by a very high birth rate. The high level of natural increase therefore did not indicate that US slaves were ‘especially privileged’. More importantly for the present study, he also remarked that there is no evidence that this increase came from specialist ‘child production farms’ or ‘stud farms’.⁶⁸ In addition to this, Tadman speculated that ‘on larger slaveholdings, with a fuller internal marriage market, masters usually found it convenient to leave the slaves to choose their own partners’.⁶⁹ This, it might be added, suggests that proximity to the master on smaller slaveholdings would have meant an increased risk of sexual interference through forced breeding.

In recent years, with the exception of Gregory Smithers’ work, little has been written on the topic of slave breeding aside from an acknowledgement of the practice on a smaller scale on individual slaveholding units. Daina Berry in *Swing the Sickle for*

⁶⁸ M. Tadman, ‘The Demographic Cost of Sugar: Debates on Slave Societies and Natural Increase in the Americas,’ *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 5 (2000), p. 1536.

⁶⁹ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, p. 129.

the Harvest is Ripe wrote that ‘Forced breeding represented one form of sexual abuse that adopted the machinations and mannerisms of rape because it forced people to engage in unsolicited sexual intercourse’. To Berry it was the element of ‘force’ that linked rape and slave breeding.⁷⁰

Emily West and Thomas Foster have both pointed to the complicated evidence of black male rape of enslaved women in cases of forced breeding. While Foster questions how often slave masters used enslaved men to inflict sexual punishment on enslaved women, both West and Foster concede that the consideration of such males as ‘rapists’ is problematic. In cases where the black male forced the black female to submit under instructions from the owner, the black male experience should also be placed on the continuum of sexual violence that existed under slavery.⁷¹

Gregory Smithers has written two recent studies of slave breeding. His article examined the abolitionist slave-breeding rhetoric of the mid-nineteenth century. He wrote that slave breeding was part of a wider abolitionist discourse of sexual abuse against women and of the ‘callous destruction’ of the slave family. Such claims were a head-on challenge to the paternalism argument espoused by their southern opponents. In addition, Smithers described the paternalistic mindset of Southern slave owners, to whom natural increase was a product of benevolent treatment, rather than coercive sexual practices.⁷²

⁷⁰ Berry, *Swing the Sickle*, p. 78.

⁷¹ Foster, ‘The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery’, pp. 445, 454; West, *Chains of Love*, p. 81.

⁷² G. D. Smithers, ‘American Abolitionism and Slave-Breeding Discourse: A Re-evaluation’, *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 33, No. 4, December 2012 pp. 551-570.

Smithers' monograph advanced his argument beyond abolitionist rhetoric in order to look at the memory of slave breeding. Using an ambitious chronological time frame that runs from the antebellum slavery debate to twenty-first century media accounts, he used a wide-ranging source base to look at the slave-breeding concept from numerous angles. He found slave breeding to be linked to violence, grief and commodification in the memories of former slaves and because of this he saw 'slave breeding' as a rhetorical device that was representative of all ills under slavery rather than something that was a part of the lived experience for enslaved people.⁷³ While Smithers makes an important contribution through his focus on the importance of slave breeding as a rhetorical device, he somewhat overlooks the significance of the lived experience of forced breeding for enslaved people. This thesis will offer both important quantitative data to reveal the scale of forced breeding, and a discussion of the significance of forced breeding in the day-to-day lives of enslaved people.⁷⁴

Capitalism and the 'second slavery'

The strong evidence for both forced breeding and sexual slavery that will be presented in this thesis have the potential to make a significant contribution to recent scholarly works on the role of capitalism in shaping and perpetuating slavery in the South. Although significant evidence for slavery as a capitalist institution has been offered through discussions of the spread of market relations, sophisticated methods of commerce and enslaved people as a 'mobile flexible labour force', this literature

⁷³ G. Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence and Memory in African American History* (Gainesville, 2013).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-126.

has failed to engage sufficiently with the role of *Partus Sequitur Ventrem* in the perpetuation of slavery. Neither does it account for the large-scale practice of buying and selling slaves specifically to breed slaves as modern commodities for both personal use and for the market.⁷⁵

As Scott Reynolds Nelson has recently pointed out, historians who have more recently sought to portray slavery as a capitalist institution have had their foci shaped by preconceived notions of how capitalism would manifest in the United States. Despite the differing interpretations, all historians who have made the link between economic forces (whether national or international) and the shaping of the ‘relations of production’ on slave plantations invariably speak to a system that would not only value the natural reproduction of the enslaved labour force but would have a special interest in the rate of its efficiency.⁷⁶

Walter Johnson has most recently investigated the links between American slavery and international markets. While Johnson has been criticised for employment of a ‘world-systems’ analysis that overlooks the peripheral deprivation on which older world-systems analyses have rested, this does not take away from the importance of Johnson’s consideration of how the pushes and pulls of a global market simultaneously shaped and was shaped by slavery and the productivity of its forced labour. Johnson discussed the conversion of white male rape into capital: sexual violence and sexual pleasure resulted in children born of rape who were the ‘material

⁷⁵ Kaye, ‘The Second Slavery’.

⁷⁶ See S. R. Nelson, ‘Who Put Their Capitalism in My Slavery?’, *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2015), pp. 289-310.

remainder of consumption committed to the further augmentation of capital'.⁷⁷

In 2014, Edward Baptist further articulated a point originally made in his 2001 article, 'Cuffy," "Fancy Maids," and "One-Eyed Men": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States' that the sexualised commodification of enslaved women was implicitly linked to other economic behaviours. In the 2014 monograph *The Half has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, Baptist wrote that 'financial risk-taking and the sexualized commodification of enslaved women were, by the 1830s, in the minds and behavior of white entrepreneurs, tangled in a mutual-amplification relationship'.⁷⁸ Baptist, like Johnson, while expressing what would be a disturbing increase in the purchasing of enslaved women specifically for sex that was linked to financial speculation, also fails to link this process in any way to the financial gain from forced breeding.

Anthony E. Kaye's article 'The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century South and the Atlantic World' discussed the manner in which planters integrated machines with slave labour in order to meet the demands of production, but again, does not link this to any incentives toward the reproduction of the labour force. The same can be said for other recent works by Thomas Rothman and Sven Beckert.⁷⁹ While these works fail to engage with this important theme, they do reveal a particular slaveholding ethos that overlooked the wellbeing of enslaved

⁷⁷ Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, see pp. 195-98.

⁷⁸ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, p.235.

⁷⁹ Kaye, 'The Second Slavery'; Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*; Rothman, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson*.

people in favour of material processes. Testimony of this that comes directly from people who were caught up in, or were ‘products’ of this system can be found in Chapter Six on children born of rape, and especially Chapter Eight on the very human experiences of forced breeding in Louisiana and Texas.

Existing quantitative studies of WPA interviews

From the 1970s, when George P. Rawick began the huge task of locating and publishing the thousands of WPA interviews, growing numbers of historians have made substantial use of these sources. Almost all of these historians, though, have mined the interviews for quotations and have taken a qualitative approach to this source base.⁸⁰ A minor exception to the strictly qualitative approach to the interviews is Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman. In order to support one particular claim, Fogel and Engerman, in *Time on the Cross* (1974), drew quantified evidence from the interviews.⁸¹ In *Slavery Remembered*, Paul Escott made more substantial, but not entirely rigorous, quantitative use the interviews, but by far the most serious quantitative examination of these sources came from Stephen Crawford in his

⁸⁰ E. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. For a recent qualitative study see F. Yarborough, ‘Power, Perception, and Interracial Sex: Former Slaves Recall a Multiracial South,’ *Journal of Southern History*, 71 (2005), pp. 559-89.

⁸¹ They reported that 4.5 per cent of the interviewees said that one of their parents were white, and concluded that this statistic supported their assertion that the extent of sexual exploitation had been previously over-emphasised by abolitionists and by later historians. Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 133. Fogel and Engerman’s statistic was drawn from an early version of a PhD dissertation written by Stephen Crawford and supervised by Fogel. On Crawford’s dissertation, see below. An article by David Thomas Bailey reproduced Fogel and Engerman’s statistic. See D. Bailey, ‘A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery,’ *Journal of Southern History*, 46 (1980), pp. 381-404.

important unpublished PhD, 'Quantified Memory' (1980).⁸² Escott and Crawford's studies, although they only devoted a few pages to sexual interference, still form useful reference points for the present study.

Paul Escott's *Slavery Remembered* is essentially a qualitative study of the interviews, but in order to support arguments on some key issues Escott took a quantitative approach. He reported that six per cent of slaves interviewed claimed that their father was white. Although his discussion of sexual issues was restricted to a few pages, Escott's offered figures for the percentages of slaves who showed an awareness of such issues as forced sex (5.8%), slave breeding (4.1%), and miscegenation (2.5%), but it was not always clear how his samples on these issues had been constructed.⁸³

Stephen Crawford's unpublished PhD dissertation remains the only essentially quantitative study of the interviews. For this dissertation he used the first set of the interviews that were published by Rawick (sixteen volumes of WPA interviews together with a further volume based on carried out by Fisk University students). He used these sources to quantify aspects of slave life ranging from workload and diet to family life and sexual exploitation.

⁸² Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered*; Stephen Crawford, 'Quantified Memory: A Study of the WPA and Fisk University Slave Narrative Collections,' unpublished PhD, University of Chicago (1980).

⁸³ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, pp. 44-47.

Crawford's carefully constructed study considered factors such as the differences in the responses of the interviewees when there was a black and a white interviewer. For example, Crawford found that in the overall sample, 50 per cent of the ex-slaves interviewed by blacks characterised their masters as 'good' or 'very good', compared to 71 per cent of those interviewed by whites.⁸⁴ This also applied to questions over parentage, as Crawford found that ex-slaves were often reluctant to claim white parentage when talking to white interviewers and were especially reluctant to report that their master was their father.⁸⁵ Depending on whether the ex-slave was interviewed by a white or black interviewer (with the black interviewer's gaining the higher results), Crawford's statistics tell us that six to ten per cent of the ex-slaves reported having white fathers.⁸⁶ In his analysis of single-parented, mother-headed households, 15 per cent of these were due to the ex-slave having a white father.⁸⁷ He calculated that slave women who had their first child by their master then went on to have fewer children than those women who had their first child by a black man. Therefore, Crawford reasoned, the master could suffer economically by having a sexual relationship with his enslaved people (which follows the model of Fogel and Engerman in *Time on the Cross*).⁸⁸ Although Crawford's discussion of sexual issues was restricted to a few pages, his results are important, especially since they form a broad multi-state background against which to set the Lower South-focused results that are presented in the present study.

⁸⁴ Crawford, 'Quantified Memory', p. 40.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Quantitative study has fallen out of favour in recent years. While studies such as that of Fogel and Engerman have been criticised for a number of reasons, the most powerful was a lack of sensitivity to issues of human interaction that numbers will never be full revealing of. Quantitative study alone can minimise the significance of individuals and groups in favour of larger trends that may miss certain cultural nuances. Robert Darcy and Richard C. Rohrs have written that central to criticism of quantitative history is its 'analytical' over 'narrative' style.⁸⁹ Criticisms of quantitative history, therefore, focus on a distinction between the traditional narrative, and a more dry quantitative analysis. A balance between quantitative and qualitative research methods can be revealing, not just of wider patterns in a society, but of certain exceptions. This balance thoroughly exploits sources in order to further our understanding of the past, and promotes more rigorous historical study.

Resistance and survival

Acts of resistance to sexual exploitation by enslaved women ranged from improvised contraceptive measures and abortions, to physical force. bell hooks wrote that such acts of resilience demonstrate that 'black slave girls were taught, like their white counterparts, that virtue was woman's ideal spiritual nature and virginity her ideal physical state', yet no social order existed to protect them from sexual exploitation.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ R. Darcy & R. C. Rohrs, *A Guide to Quantitative History* (Westport, CT, 1995), pp. 1-6.

⁹⁰ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, p. 52.

Brenda E. Stevenson argued that stories of resistance appeared so frequently in the lore and mythology of enslaved women that these figures must have been viewed as 'heroic' and 'ideal'. At the same time, however, the paradox also emerged that black women exhibited these actions of resistance at a time when such behaviour was deemed unfeminine for white women. Slave women therefore 'utilized aggressive, independent behaviour to protect their most fundamental claims to womanhood'.⁹¹

Hélène Lecaudey, too, wrote that stories of women who had resisted abuse forced the admiration of their peers in such a way that the stories were fixed in the memory of those who retold the stories to interviewers more than seventy years later and showed the slave's unwavering belief in their own womanhood.⁹²

Tales of physical resistance to slavery do appear occasionally in ex-slave sources, and historians have rightly argued that these stories confirmed the victim's belief that their womanhood was just as valuable as that of white women. The reality was, however, that if an enslaved woman were to resist a white man's advances, she would have risked punishment, not just for herself but of her children and family too. Though tales of heroic women who violently resisted were retained in folklore, certain women chose not to resist, doing so in order to stay with loved ones or avoid repercussions for themselves or their family.⁹³

⁹¹ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p. 236.

⁹² H. Lecaudey, 'Behind the Mask: Ex-Slave Women and Interracial Sexual Relations', in P. Morton, ed., *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past* (Athens Ga., 1996), p. 273.

⁹³ See B. Stevenson, 'Gender conventions, Ideals and Identity Among Antebellum Virginia Slave Women', in D. B. Gaspar and D. Clark Hine (eds.), *More Than Chattel* (Bloomington, 1996), pp. 169-83; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; M. Ellison, 'Resistance to Oppression: Black Women's Response to Slavery in the United States', *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 4:1 (1983), pp. 56-83

Liz Kelly, in her sociological study of modern sexual violence in the United States and the United Kingdom described a range of ways that women could resist or regain control over their sexual abuse. These ways ranged from violent resistance to opting to submit.⁹⁴ Under slavery, resistance to sexual abuse was rarely violent in nature. ‘Gynaecological resistance to slavery’ is a term that relates to women’s bodies and control of reproductive capacities and it has been touched on in recent studies from Liese M. Perrin (2001), Richard Follet (2005) and Marie Jenkins Schwartz (2008). Follet wrote that it was through gynaecological resistance that black women ‘defied white constructions of their sexuality and wove contraception through the fabric of slave oppositional culture’. He wrote that other slaves would see these women as great survivalists, although few of them would have been able to control their fertility over long periods. He estimated that women who entered Louisiana’s slave markets tended to be younger than in other markets and were pregnant more often than bondswomen elsewhere. He also calculated that while in other states in the south, women had their first child aged 20-23 (despite being capable much earlier), in Louisiana enslaved had their first child aged 17-18. This huge disparity in the ages of the mother when bearing their first child raises interesting questions for this study, especially in light of previous estimates on when the enslaved girl first fell victim to sexual exploitation or abuse.⁹⁵

Liese M. Perrin wrote that the fact that slave women used contraception suggests that they ‘not only understood that their childbearing capacity was seen in terms of

⁹⁴ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*.

⁹⁵ R. Follet, *Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana’s Cane World 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge, 2005), p.75. Abolitionists often claimed that girls were forced into breeding at early ages, so the issue of age at first birth is potentially highly significant. This issue will be further explored in the chapter on slave breeding.

producing extra capital, but that they were sufficiently opposed to this function to actually avoid conception'.⁹⁶ Marie Jenkins Schwartz's *Birthing a Slave* looks at contraceptive practices in the South. She argued that 'to admit that enslaved women could control their own reproductive destiny was to acknowledge the limits of slaveholders' power'. To the female slave, Schwartz noted, even the methods of contraception that in hindsight appear incompetent 'no doubt imparted to the women a sense that they could control this important aspect of life -- not an inconsequential achievement in a society that granted slaveholders an unbridled right to control life in the slave quarter'. The work of Schwartz therefore highlights that the sexual exploitation of slave women was viewed by the victims as, not just a form of institutionalised terror, but also that enslaved women recognised that the end result which was population growth and economic gain. This means that by the mid-nineteenth century in the minds of slaves 'forced sex, population growth and the perpetuation of slavery were inextricably linked'.⁹⁷

Understanding the impact of rape and other exploitation: new approaches

The consideration of the psychological impact of sexual abuse is extremely important. Psychological consequences can be short or long-term, and can affect the primary victims as well as their families. A number of modern studies that relate to abuse outside of enslavement can help to shed light on the real impact of abuse. These studies are important for the analysis made throughout this thesis.

⁹⁶ Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction', p.255.

⁹⁷ Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave*, pp. 105, 27.

Chapter Five in particular will make use of Elisa Van Ee and Rolf J. Kleber's study of the 'secondary trauma' of the children born of rape, an essay that demonstrates that the effect of an individual act of sexual violence can have consequences that continue for generations.⁹⁸ Brian P. Marx in a literature review of modern sexual violence research has listed 'sexually transmitted diseases, chronic pain disorders and other physical ailments, anxiety, depression, substance use, sexual problems and interpersonal difficulties' amongst the consequences of abuse.⁹⁹ Given that this study will argue that sexual violence under American slavery was more common than previously documented, it is important to consider these consequences.

In addition to looking at the impact of abuse on adults, this thesis considers a number of child victims of sexual abuse. Significantly, Anne Rogers and David Pilgrim note that child sexual abuse increases the probability of depression and anxiety in later life, moreover, the offspring of victims of childhood sexual abuse are at greater risk of mental health problems than others.¹⁰⁰

Other studies detail the developmental harm done to children who have been abused, or have been exposed to abuse at an early age. The National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) reported that, when children have greater

⁹⁸ W. Van Ee and R. J. Kleber, 'Growing Up Under the Shadow: Key Issues in Research on and Treatment of Children Born of Rape,' *Child Abuse Review*, Vol. 22, Issue 6, pp. 386-397.

⁹⁹ Brian P. Marx, 'Lessons Learned from the Last Twenty Years of Sexual Violence Research,' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20 (2005), p. 225.

¹⁰⁰ A. Rogers and David Pilgrim, *Sociology of Mental Health and Illness*, 4th ed. (Maidenhead, 2000), pp. 72, 118-9.

access to information about sex, this has had an impact on their attitudes to sex and sexual behavior both as an adolescent and into adulthood.¹⁰¹ Social and cultural factors and experiences, including abuse and peer pressure, can influence a child's sexual development and can alter his or her ideas about sexual relationships. Vizard (2007) has suggested that parental mental health or domestic violence may also have an impact on an adolescent displaying sexually harmful behavior.¹⁰² Pullman and Seto (2012) note that a child may move towards acts of harmful sexual behavior if she or he has a history of sexual abuse themselves or has had early exposure to pornography or sexual abuse. Moreover, it has been suggested that these same children may have linked problems such as a poorly developed or primitive sense of morality; exercising limited self-control and acting out their emotional experiences through negative or otherwise inappropriate behavior; having little insight into the feelings and needs of others and indeed their own mental states; and developing strong and not easily corrected cognitive distortions about others, themselves, and the world they share.¹⁰³ When children and young people, therefore, are introduced to acts of sexual aggression and sexual exploitation, these can become embedded in their peer culture. Children might then enter adulthood with a skewed impression of what is appropriate sexual behavior. Growing up in a culture in which sexual abuse was commonplace must have had an impact on children, both black and white.

¹⁰¹ NSPCC report, 'Provision for young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour', April 2013, available at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/research-and-resources/provision-young-people-displayed-harmful-sexual-behaviour/>, accessed 6 June 2015.

¹⁰² E. Vizard, et al, 'study,' *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, 18.1 (2007), pp. 59-71.

¹⁰³ L. Pullman, and M. C. Seto, 'Assessment and treatment of adolescent sexual offenders: implications of recent research on generalist versus specialist explanations,' *Child abuse and Neglect*, 36.3 (2012), pp. 203-209.

Research on the history of emotions is a maturing field that has become increasingly sophisticated since the 1980s. With this development, historians are better methodologically equipped to deal with emotions such as ‘shame, guilt, grief, disgust and sadness’. Such emotions are often overlooked in the historical literature -- especially that relating to slavery -- in favour of emotions less attributable to victims such as love, fear, anger, envy and jealousy.¹⁰⁴ With methodological tools offered by the history of emotions it is possible to delve deeper into the meaning of sexual abuse for the enslaved victims. Liz Kelly for example, is helpful in determining the scale, impact, wider context, and even the definition of ‘sexual violence’ for those who experienced it.¹⁰⁵

Kelly discussed sexual violence in terms of a range of male behaviours that are, not just a sexual crime, but also a violent political act that functions as a form of social control.¹⁰⁶ The general impact of sexual violence is fear, but this form of violence can be put on a continuum which includes ‘threat of violence’, ‘sexual harassment’, ‘pressure to have sex’, ‘sexual assault’, ‘coercive sex’, ‘flashing’, ‘rape’, and ‘incest’.¹⁰⁷ Kelly also described the inability of victims to recognise abusive behaviours when they live within a certain culture in which abuse is naturalised. In the context of antebellum slavery, the importance that Kelly places on naming abuse can be applied in order to make ‘visible what was invisible, defining as unacceptable what was acceptable and insisting that what was naturalised is problematic’.¹⁰⁸ This

¹⁰⁴ P. Stearns, ‘History of Emotions: Change and Impact’ in M. Lewis, J. M. Havilland-Jones and L. Feldman Barrett (eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (Guildford, 2008), p. 21.

¹⁰⁵ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-23.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

applies throughout this thesis, but especially in Chapter Five (where references in WPA interviewees to white fathers are reinterpreted as references to rape), in Chapter Six (where ‘concubinage’ is reframed as ‘sexual slavery’), and Chapter Eight (where various references to measures taken to encourage the natural reproduction of the slave community are recognised as sexual attacks against both enslaved men and women).

A number of ways in which women resist sexual abuse will be important for this study, but particularly important will be the concept of ‘learned helplessness’. Both Kelly and Louisa Belknap discuss the modern concept that is used to explain women’s behaviour who are in relationships where they cannot leave, they come to believe that because they have no control over their environments there is no point in trying.¹⁰⁹ The work of Nell Irvin Painter has been valuable in enlightening the field of slavery studies to an alternative lens through which to look at sexual abuse. When she delved into psychological research and wrote of her doubt that victims in the past ‘possessed an immunity that victims lack today’, Painter noticed a methodological tool still underutilised in historical research.¹¹⁰

The term ‘trauma’ has been loosely defined in studies of slavery in the United States. In psychological terms, ‘trauma’ is defined ‘a powerful psychological shock that has damaging effects’.¹¹¹ Psychological studies have discovered factors that affect whether incidents are ‘traumatic’, or alternatively, ‘distressing’. According to

¹⁰⁹ Belknap, *The Invisible Woman*, pp. 340-2.

¹¹⁰ Painter, ‘Soul Murder and Slavery’, p. 29.

¹¹¹ A. M. Coleman, *A Dictionary of Psychology*, 3rd ed (Oxford, 2014).

cognitive theories, an individual has sets of pre-existing beliefs and models of the world, of others, and of themselves, which are products of prior experiences.

Trauma occurs when the individual encounters a new and very prominent experience, incompatible with the person's established beliefs and models.¹¹² As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the abuse of enslaved women existed on a cultural level, and little stigma, if any was attached to victims of abuse. As abuse was so endemic in the southern United States, it was unlikely to be 'incompatible' with established world-views.

Recent studies by Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes (2001) and Ullman (1996) have shown that supportive and reassuring responses when a sexual abuse is reported can significantly reduce feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety or depression.¹¹³ Additionally, studies by Chivers-Wilson (2006) and Inbal Brenner and Galit Ben-Amitay in which participants did not receive adequate social support after a sexual attack have shown an increased risk of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and forming insecure detachments that can lead to increased risk of re-victimisation.¹¹⁴

¹¹² S. Veas-Gulani, *Trauma and Guilt: Literature on Wartime Bombing in Germany* (New York, 2003), p. 30.

¹¹³ R. Campbell, C. E. Ahrens, T. Sefl, S. M. Wasco, & H. E. Barnes, 'Social reactions to rape victims: Healing and hurtful effects on psychological and physical health outcomes', *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 16 (2001), pp. 287-302; S. E. Ullman, 'Social reactions, coping strategies and, self-blame attributions in adjustment to sexual assault', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 20 (1996), pp. 505-526.

¹¹⁴ K. A. Chivers-Wilson, 'Sexual assault and post-traumatic stress disorder: A review of the biological, psychological, and sociological factors and treatment', *McGill Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 9, No.2 (2006), pp. 111-18; I. Brenner and G. Ben-Amitay, 'Sexual Revictimization: The Impact of Attachment Anxiety, Accumulated Trauma, and Response to Childhood Sexual Abuse Disclosure', *Violence and Victims*, Vol.30, No. 1 (2015), pp. 49-65. Other studies that have made similar claims related to factors increasing the likelihood of a victim experiencing long-term trauma include: P. C. Alexander, 'The differential effects of abuse characteristics and attachment in the prediction of long-term effects of sexual abuse', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 346-362; P. C. Alexander and S. L. Lupfer, 'Family characteristics and long-term consequences associated with sexual abuse', *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 235-245; K. A. Brennan and P. R. Shaver, 'Dimensions of adult attachment, affect regulation, and romantic relationship functioning', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 21, (1995), pp. 267-283; A. Feeney and P. Noller,

Supportive networks that surrounded enslaved victims of abuse are likely to have contributed to the resilience of the slave community even when they faced institutionalised sexual abuse.

According to H. G. Cocks and M. Houlbrook, ‘the sexual meeting points between bodies are, simultaneously, meeting points for a diverse range of questions and discourses’, and these discourses and questions in reality have little to do with sex.¹¹⁵ Throughout this overview of the historiography it is clear that sexual relationships in the nineteenth-century South can lead us to consider a whole range of issues such as slave morale, the concept of ‘childhood’, slave agency and to question how notions of ‘race’ were formed and performed.¹¹⁶ This thesis will contribute to these debates within slavery studies and will explore how a culture of sexual abuse operated in the slave south.

‘Attachment and sexuality in close relationships’, in J. H. Harvey, A. Wenzel, and S. Sprecher (Eds.), *The Handbook of Sexuality in Close Relationships* (Mahwah, NJ, 2004), pp. 183-202.

¹¹⁵ H.G. Cocks and M. Houlbrook, ‘Introduction’, in H.G. Cocks and M. Houlbrook eds., *The Modern History of Sexuality* (Houndmills, 2006), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Idea of ‘agency’ has become increasingly contentious over recent years, this is touched on in Chapter Five, see also W. Johnson, ‘On Agency’, *Journal of Social History* (2003), pp. 113-124; W. Dusingberre, ‘Power and Agency in Antebellum Slavery’, *American Nineteenth Century History* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), pp. 139-148.

Chapter Two

Methodology I: Sources of Testimony

The aim of this chapter is to establish the nature of the source base used for this study. In addition to book-length autobiographies mainly from the nineteenth century, this project presents a quantitative analysis of over two hundred and fifty interviews with people who had experienced slavery in the state of Louisiana, and almost double that number for the state of Texas. The special nature and scale of this source base and the technique used in this study allows conclusions to be drawn about a whole series of key issues concerning the level of risk of sexual exploitation that female slaves faced in the world of southern slavery. The methodology set out in this chapter, and more in the following chapter, provides a far more detailed and systematic basis for understanding the sexual exploitation of women enslaved in the United States than is available in any previous study, and this study presents the first systematic quantitative study of any individual state.

The two sets of primary sources on which this project relies are, first, a large set of interviews that the Works Progress Administration (WPA) conducted with formerly enslaved people between 1935 and the early 1940s and, second, a smaller number of mainly nineteenth-century book-length narratives. In order to distinguish them from the interviews, the book-length narratives will be referred to as ‘autobiographies’, or ‘slave narratives,’ or simply ‘narratives’. Altogether, the WPA conducted some nine thousand interviews, spread across seventeen different states. The interviews contain biases and special skews that will be discussed later, but they provide an exceptionally rich source of rare first-hand accounts of the enslaved.

While a large number of book-length slave narratives were published throughout the nineteenth century, there are few from those enslaved in the states of Louisiana and Texas. Those that are available are vital in providing extended case studies of slave experiences but like the interviews, have their own limitations.¹

The combination of interviews and narratives offers great advantages for providing an indication of the actual level of sexual interference. The quantitative element (1930s interviews) allows perspective on and offers a framework for understanding the scale of abuse in the slave regimes. Due to the influence of white interviewers and the Jim Crow context, amongst other factors, the interviews are likely to provide a substantial undercount of abuse. The mainly nineteenth-century autobiographies

¹ Autobiographies used in this project are: J. Vance Lewis, *Out of the Ditch: A True Story of an Ex-Slave* (Houston, 1910); William Walker, *Buried Alive (Behind Prison Walls) for a Quarter of a Century: Life of William Walker* (Saginaw, MI, 1892); Col. W. Mallory, *Old Plantation Days* (Hamilton, Ontario 1902); William O'Neal, *Life and History of William O'Neal, or, The Man Who Sold His Wife* (St Louis, MO, 1896); Peter Bruner, *A Slaves Adventures Toward Freedom. Not Fiction, But the True Story of a Struggle*, (Oxford, OH, 1918); Jeff Hamilton, "My Master," *The Inside Story of Sam Houston and His Times, by His Former Slave, Jeff Hamilton, as Told to Lenoir Hunt*. (Dallas, 1940); J. Goodwin, Charlotte Brooks, Aunt Lorendo, Sallie Smith, Stephen Jordan, Uncle Cephas and Colonel Douglass Wilson, all in *The House of Bondage: Or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (New York, 1890); Louisa Picquet, *Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon, or, Inside Views of Southern Domestic Life* (New York, 1861); Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853*. (Auburn, 1853); John Joseph, *The Life and Sufferings of John Joseph, a Native of Ashantee, in Western Africa: Who Was Stolen from His Parents at the Age of 3 Years, and Sold to Mr. Johnstone, a Cotton Planter, in New Orleans, South America*, (Wellington, 1848); William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave. Written by Himself*. (Boston, 1847); Henry Watson, *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave*. (Boston, 1848); Major James Wilkerson, *Wilkerson's History of His Travels & Labors, in the United States, As a Missionary, in Particular, That of the Union Seminary, Located in Franklin Co., Ohio, Since He Purchased His Liberty in New Orleans, La* (Columbus, OH, 1861); Josiah Henson *Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*. (Boston, 1849); James Williams *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, Who Was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (Boston, 1838). All narratives with the exception of Jeff Hamilton's and the interviews of Octavia V. Rogers Albert were accessed at the 'Documenting the American South' website <http://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html>.

were able to highlight the sexual abuse of women and to provide much more detailed personal accounts than the interviews.

The present chapter is the first of two methodology chapters and will explore the origins of the source bases, especially the interviews. The Louisiana and Texas Writers' Projects were initiatives of the same Federal Writers' Project, a branch of the WPA. This New Deal Era scheme aimed to find work for out-of-work writers by putting them to work on a set of state guidebooks detailing the history, geographical landscape, culture and folklore of each state. Here, the Louisiana and Texas Writers' Projects will be individually detailed to discover the aims of the projects, their planning and guidelines, identities of WPA workers, and where the interviews were deposited when the project was closed in 1942. After this, the context of the book-length narratives will be discussed, as will their authors, editors and intended readership. The next chapter (Methodology II) takes a closer look at the challenges of working with the 1930s interviews. Issues tackled in that chapter include ways to overcome the sampling error caused by the skew toward domestic slaves and urban slaves, problems caused by the long period between emancipation and the 1930s interviews, and the biases caused by mainly white interviewers and editors in the context of the Jim Crow South.

The interview database for this study is drawn from almost eight hundred African Americans who experienced slavery in the states of Louisiana and Texas. It has been widely assumed that there are few ex-slave interview sources for Louisiana: indeed the state did not fully participate in the WPA project. It has, nevertheless been

possible to put together a large sample of 246 interviews.² In the collections of WPA interviews from states other than Louisiana, 172 interviews have been found in which the interviewee had been enslaved in Louisiana, but after freedom had moved elsewhere.³ These interviews form the bulk of the Louisiana data set.⁴ The small numbers of interviews that the Louisiana WPA did conduct were never sent to Washington, unlike those in other states.⁵ *Mother Wit*, a volume edited by Ronnie Clayton, a white researcher, reproduced 82 interviews with formerly enslaved people from Louisiana, though longer versions of 30 of these had already been found in other repositories in Louisiana, and others were so heavily edited by Clayton that just a couple of sentences were published.⁶ These have been omitted to leave 44

² In addition to the sources used for this project there are approximately 82 interviews carried out by John Brother Cade and his students in 1927-1929, which are deposited in Louisiana Southern University special collections. Unfortunately these have been in the process of digitization by the archivist at that university for the duration of this PhD project and have been inaccessible to researchers. As these interviews are slightly earlier and were carried out solely by black interviewers, they are likely to be of great importance to future research.

³ While George Rawick collected interviews from smaller state repositories for the later *Supplement Series* of his *The American Slave* volumes, he did not include the Louisiana interviews.

⁴ H. E. Potts in *A Comprehensive Name Index for the American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, 1997), lists the names of 184 formerly enslaved people who had mentioned Louisiana in their narratives. I have excluded 27 of these interviews as the interviewee had either made a brief reference to Louisiana, had been born there but sold away when just a baby (with no other mention of the state), or had been born after slavery and had no Louisiana-specific information. An additional 6 interviewees from this collection are in my Texas sample as they had spent a longer period enslaved in Texas. After reading Rawick's collection of interviews I found another 21 interviews in which the interviewee had spent a significant amount of time enslaved in Louisiana. This brings the total to 172 formerly enslaved people from WPA Writers' Projects from outside of Louisiana.

⁵ Lyle Saxon, head of the Louisiana Writers' Project (LWP) from its start in 1935 until its demise in 1943, was uncertain how long the project would be funded so adhered to the original Federal Writers' Project objective of producing guidebooks. After 1943, however, some extracts from the Louisiana interviews were published in *Gumbo Ya-Ya*, a volume compiled by Saxon. See L. Saxon, E. Dreyer and R. Tallant (eds.), *Gumbo Ya-Ya: A Collection of Louisiana Folk Tales* (Gretna, 1987).

⁶ To avoid unnecessary skews in the dataset caused by the addition of names with no other information about occupation, location of enslavement, or any meaningful data relating to slavery, a decision was made to omit these 8 interviews from my sample.

interviews from *Mother Wit*, and 30 interviews from other repositories in Louisiana.⁷ This brings the total number of ex-slave interviews for Louisiana to 246.⁸

Texas was selected for this study for two reasons: first, there are a large number of interviews available -- 591 WPA interviews alone -- and secondly, there are two versions for 275 of this number (the originals and those amended by the state editors). All the interviews for the Texas sample come from the Texas Writers' Project, though a large number of the 591 were moved into my Louisiana subset as the interviewee spent the majority of their time enslaved in Louisiana. This leaves the total number of interviews for Texas at 527. In 1972, Rawick published the first 19 volumes of *The American Slave*, two of which were solely for Texas interviews and contained interviews found only in the rare book room at the Library of Congress. In later years it became clear that for some states where a large interview project had been undertaken, only a few interviews had been sent to Washington.⁹ They were then published in *The American Slave: Supplement Series Two*, in nine volumes, and it is in these volumes that the 275 longer 'unedited' versions can be found.

⁷ R. Clayton, (ed.), *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project* (New York, 1990). At the close of the Louisiana Writers' Project, Lyle Saxon chose to make copies of many interviews and deposit these in various archives in Louisiana. No single repository holds the full-set of Louisiana Writers' Project interviews. The University of New Orleans, the State Library of Louisiana, and the Cammie G. Henry Research Center have copies or the original typescripts of certain LWP interviews.

⁸ The interviews in *Mother Wit* were gathered from state repositories in Louisiana. After the close of the LWP, the majority had been left with Cammie G. Henry, a friend of Lyle Saxon, and eventually came to rest in the Cammie G. Henry Research Centre at Northwestern University (Natchitoches, La). The thesis written by DaNean Olene Pound, 'Slave to the Ex-Slave Narratives' (Northwestern University, 2003) reproduces all but 8 interviews included in *Mother Wit*. The changes Clayton made to the punctuation, grammar and structure of interviews in *Mother Wit* went beyond his editing practices stated in the introduction. Pound's thesis reproduced the interviews exactly as they were transcribed by LWP employees.

⁹ For the Texas collection, Rawick found the remaining documents in the Metropolitan Archives in the Houston Public Library and the Barker Library at the University of Texas at Austin.

The present chapter will lastly examine Louisiana and Texas book-length narratives. Interest in enslaved women and their sexual exploitation has grown a great deal in recent years, and studies have multiplied.¹⁰ The primary-source base on which these academic studies have relied has, however, been extremely thin, with huge weight being placed on the reading of a single text, the narrative of Harriet Jacobs who was enslaved in North Carolina. That account provided detailed evidence on the sexual interference to which Jacobs was subjected, and Jacob's remarkably sustained resistance to these unwelcome advances.¹¹ This study looks at autobiographies, like Jacobs, and amanuensis-written sources for Louisiana and Texas. There are two amanuensis written sources in this project: first the narrative of Louisa Picquet, recorded by a white man, Rev. Hiram Mattison in 1860; and secondly, a collection of narratives of enslavement collected in the period 1884-1888 by Octavia V. Albert, a black woman, and published as *The House of Bondage, or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves*.¹² These sources both come from Louisiana, and are the only book-length narratives of women from either state. In this source set there are eighteen book-length narratives from Louisiana, and just one from Texas. The interviews offer a systematic body of evidence to provide a context for understanding, not just Harriet Jacob's experience, but for exploring the lives of female slaves set in a world of white mastery.

¹⁰ See, for example, White, *Ar'nt I a Woman?*; Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*; Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line*; Kennedy, *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives*; R. Fraser, *Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved in North Carolina* (Jackson, 2007); Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe*; additionally see Chapter One of present thesis.

¹¹ H. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York, 2001)

¹² O. V. Rogers Albert, *The House of Bondage, or, Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (Oxford, 1988). The book was originally serialised in the *South-Western Christian Advocate* in 1890 immediately following the death of Albert.

The Louisiana Writers' Project

The absence of Louisiana material in Rawick's published volumes of WPA interviews with the formerly enslaved has long-invited scholarly attention.¹³ While Louisiana failed to meet deadlines set by Washington for the centralisation of all Writers' Project materials, in reality the LWP employees were very productive, completing numerous book-length works about the state. In addition to this, Louisiana was one of just three states in the South to set up a separate black writers' unit. The Dillard Writers' Project employed twelve writers in the six years it was in operation, the majority being already published authors and poets. While Virginia's black writers' unit published *The Negro in Virginia*, one of the first studies of African-American life to focus on the testimony of the formerly enslaved, Louisiana's equivalent work *The Negro in Louisiana*, lies unpublished in the Special Collections at the University of New Orleans.¹⁴

Several factors led to the absence of Louisiana material from Rawick's collections of WPA interviews, and subsequently from most studies of US slavery. The most influential was the difficulty of funding the Louisiana project after 1939 when the individual state writers' projects were told to find private sponsorship in order to continue their work. Some writers, most notably the supervisor of the Dillard Writers' Project, Marcus B. Christian (an African-American poet), were continually laid off and rehired, thus disrupting work and progress. This culminated in 1942

¹³ In the introduction to the *Supplement Series* to *The American Slave*, Rawick stated that Louisiana was left out of the original sixteen volumes of narratives as they failed to send copies of their interviews to Washington, and they were overlooked for the additional volumes as they were being prepared for publication by Dr Margaret Fisher of Louisiana Southern University. For a useful introduction to the slave narrative collection in which Rawick outlines his method in gathering interviews for publication see Rawick, *TAS SSI*, Vol. 6, Part 1, pp. xx-lxvi.

¹⁴ WPA Virginia Writers' Program, *The Negro in Virginia* (New York, 1940).

when the State Director, Lyle Saxon (a white writer and administrator) was left to close the Writers' Project himself. Saxon wrote in a letter at the time,

In the mad scramble to get the Louisiana Writers' Project closed, I find myself in an office which is virtually empty, all stenographers fled, and poor old Saxon is surrounded by manuscripts which must be returned to their owners.¹⁵

In February 1943 at the close of the Writers' Projects, it was Lyle Saxon who was summoned to Washington to preside over the closing arrangements for the whole Federal Writers' Project. But while all state supervisors were directed to supply the Washington office with two copies of all notes, interviews, records, charts and unpublished manuscripts, Saxon did not supply the interviews from his own State.¹⁶ Despite this, the LWP did manage to produce three major publications the *New Orleans City Guide*, *A Guide to the State* and *Gumbo Ya-Ya*, all partly written and edited by Saxon.¹⁷

Saxon, an already successful novelist, was appointed head of the Louisiana Writers' Project in 1935. Saxon was born in Baton Rouge but lived in the French Quarter of New Orleans from 1918. Historian Laurence N. Powell has written that Saxon's 'infatuation with the romance of the Old South found plenty of scope for expression'

¹⁵ L. Saxon to Embree, 20 Dec 1942, New Orleans. Marcus Christian Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University of New Orleans (hereafter MCC, UNO).

¹⁶ Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, (Syracuse, NY, 1996), pp. 368, 370.

¹⁷ Saxon, Dreyer and Tallant, *Gumbo Ya-Ya*; WPA Writers' Project, *New Orleans City Guide* (New Orleans, 1938); Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration in the State of Louisiana, *Louisiana: A Guide to the State* (Baton Rouge, 1941). Other publications include *The New Orleans City Park: Its First Fifty Years, 1891-1941* (New Orleans, 1941); *They Saw Louisiana, 1519-1765*; *The Spanish in Louisiana* and *A Tour of the French Quarter for Service Men*. Other unpublished works include *America Eats*, *Hands That Built America*, and *The Louisiana Factbook*. Today the manuscripts are held in the Louisiana State Library, Baton Rouge.

in the New Orleans guide.¹⁸ In the chapter entitled ‘Gay times in old New Orleans,’ he describes its *‘joie de vivre’* and ‘freedom from certain types of race prejudice,’ before detailing antebellum quadroon balls of ‘distinct elegance’.¹⁹ The Louisiana Writers’ Project’s second major publication was *Louisiana: A Guide to the State*, in which the discussion of African Americans was mostly limited to a short section entitled ‘Folkways’.²⁰

Gumbo Ya-Ya, however, was a heavily edited book of folklore produced mainly from interviews with the formerly enslaved. The book covered a range of topics from Marie Laveau, Mardi Gras and ghost stories, to horrific tales of slave tortures. Edited by Saxon, alongside two other white researchers Edward Dreyer and Robert Tallant, descriptions of African-American life in New Orleans were heavily sexualised, and this despite the introduction stating that the first section (entitled ‘Kings, Baby Dolls, Zulus and Queens’) contained information mostly recorded by black writer Robert McKinney. This first section starts ‘[e]very night is like Saturday night in Perdido street, wild and fast and hot with sin’. The next two pages document black men and women ‘going through sensuous motions to music’, and ‘young black women’ who ‘tried to interest men’.²¹

It is later stated that ‘[s]laves were valuable property and the owner of any intelligence provided adequately for their physical welfare’ and while floggings

¹⁸ Saxon was one of the first to restore a French Quarter property, and encouraged other artists and writers to relocate there, see J. W. Thomas, *Lyle Saxon: A Critical Biography* (Birmingham, AL, 1991) p.31 and L. N. Powell, ‘Lyle Saxon and the WPA Guide to New Orleans’, introduction to the republished *New Orleans City Guide* (New Orleans, 2009, originally published 1938), Kindle Electronic Edition, location 5-30.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, location 5051-5057.

²⁰ See *Louisiana: A Guide to the State*, pp. 90-102.

²¹ Saxon, Dreyer, Tallant, *Gumbo Ya-Ya*, pp. 1-2.

occurred ‘all punishment of this period was more severe than it is supposed to be now’.²² While Saxon’s writing and editing decisions were marked by a racial condescension, Powell wrote that this should not overshadow the ‘willingness of a southern white man to devote serious attention to black subjects during the 1930s’.²³ Although Saxon was indeed a major driving force behind the establishment of the Dillard Writers’ Project, records show the establishment of the project was just as much a product of the persistence of black writers, as by the efforts of Saxon and head of the FWP, Henry Alsberg.

The most significant character in the story of the Dillard Writers’ Project was Marcus Christian.²⁴ Christian’s work had already been published in New Orleans and beyond. The poem ‘Toussaint’ was published in *Crisis* while W. E. B. DuBois was that journal’s editor, and ‘McDonogh Day in New Orleans’ was printed in *Opportunity*, and then reprinted in in the *New York Herald Tribune*.²⁵ Despite his calibre as a writer, his correspondence demonstrates the difficulties for black writers in gaining a place on the writers’ programme, or indeed in any arts-based employment in the context of the Jim Crow South. In 1932, when Christian wrote to New Orleans radio station *WWL*, they responded that they ‘have not been able to make any arrangements for the broadcast of colored talent’.²⁶ Christian later appealed to the racial prejudices of the white broadcasters, asking, ‘[w]ould not such

²² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

²³ Powell, *New Orleans City Guide*, location 113.

²⁴ For further information on Marcus Christian see V. Harrington Bryan, *The Myth of New Orleans in Literature: Dialogues of Race and Gender* (Knoxville, 1993), pp. 95-115; M. S. Hessler, ‘Marcus Christian: The Man and His Collection’, *Louisiana History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1987), pp. 37-55.

²⁵ W. E. B. DuBois had previously published Christian’s poem ‘Toussaint’ though he returned his other poems as, while he ‘liked them’, he already had accepted too many others. Letter from W. E. B. DuBois, to M. Christian dated 10 Feb 1933, New York, MCC, UNO; ‘McDonough Day in New Orleans’, printed in *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 June 1934.

²⁶ Letter dated 8 October 1932 from Studio Manager at WWL Radio New Orleans. MCC, UNO.

a program, with its Dusky Troubadours, Sable Serenaders, and its King Cotton Minstrels place your station in an enviable position?' He offered his own apartment as a segregated broadcasting studio and promised publicity in the *Louisiana Weekly*, edited by his future Dillard Project colleague, James LaFourche.²⁷ Christian's suggestions went ignored and his poems thereafter reflected his frustrations. In 1934, future Civil Rights activist Pauli Murray wrote to Christian that, 'I suggest you leave the South, it seems to have gotten under your skin. You have too beautiful a pen to sing 'lamentations' forever'.²⁸

Christian, though, was not to sing 'lamentations' forever, as shortly after this he made first contact with those in the FWP. In 1935, he wrote to John W. Davis (who headed an organisation to encourage the employment of African-Americans in New Deal agencies) who recommended that he contact Alsberg (national director of the FWP) in Washington. Saxon had informed Christian that the Louisiana Writers' project had its 'full quota of workers' and had no 'funds to employ others', but after reading Christian's poems nine days later, Saxon requested a meeting with Christian to make plans for the Dillard Project.²⁹

In 1936, Alsberg authorised Saxon to employ ten additional writers, five of whom could be black, to begin work on the Dillard Writers' Project.³⁰ While the Dillard

²⁷ 11 October 1932, Letter from Marcus Christian to Captain Pritchard of Radio Station WWL, New Orleans, MCC, UNO.

²⁸ Letter dated 17 July 1934, Pauli Murray to Marcus Christian. MCC, UNO.

²⁹ Saxon to Christian, New Orleans 10 Dec 1935, MCC, UNO.

³⁰ Pound, 'Slave to the Ex-Slave Narratives', p. 5. The original writers employed at Dillard were Clarence A. Laws, Octave Lilly Jr, Eugene B. Willman, Alice Ward-Smith and James Lafourche. When Marcus Christian was promoted to head of the project it expanded to include Horace Mann Bond, Elizabeth Callett, St Clair Drake, Arna Bontemps (later to join the Illinois project as a supervisor), Rudolph Moses, Benjamin Quarles and Margaret Walker. There are only two surviving interviews from the Dillard Writers' Project, both were carried out by Octave Lilly Jr.

project went ahead, Christian was not a part of it in the first instance.³¹ In a letter to Mr Paul Brooks of the Houghton Mifflin Publishing company, Saxon described Christian as a ‘Negro man who seems to have a very authentic talent’, who ‘refused to be certified for relief. He is proud and says that he is not asking the Government for help’. He continued that ‘I tried in every way to arrange to have him work on the Federal Writers’ Projects in Louisiana, but – because he refuses to be certified and because of Governmental red tape – it is impossible for me to give him the employment that he needs so much’.³²

Christian was finally accepted on the project on 6 April 1936 and was eventually made supervisor of the Dillard Project.³³ The pressure on the writers of the Dillard Project was immense, and while the writers were used to writing at their own pace, project administrators judged the writers by the volume of material produced, sending postal reminders when the quota was not met.³⁴ The primary aim of the project was to compile a manuscript on blacks in Louisiana, but although James LaFourche wrote in a letter to W.E.B. DuBois in May 1936 that he had access to white libraries ‘otherwise not frequented by Negroes’, Octave Lilly later told historian Ronnie Clayton that the Dillard Project’s writers still faced a struggle in the context of the 1930s Jim Crow South and were often refused entry to the city’s

³¹ Saxon to Christian, New Orleans, 19 February 1936. MCC, UNO.

³² Saxon to Christian, New Orleans, 6 April 1936. Letter states that Christian and Alice Ward Smith had been assigned to the Dillard Project. MCC, UNO.

³³ Stirling A. Brown, prominent African-American academic and advisor to the project, requested material from Christian during this time for a planned book on *The Negro in American Life*. Washington DC, 15 September 1937. Christian sent material in Dec 1937 and March 1938, MCC, UNO.

³⁴ Writers at the project were sent reminders when they did not produce the amount of work required of them. Christian was sent a letter from an administrator at the Dillard Project which stated that ‘no mention will be made of the necessity of doing a reasonable amount of work in connection with this project’, New Orleans, 3 Dec 1936. MCC, UNO.

public libraries.³⁵ In 1940 Christian wrote to a friend, ‘We have finished 434 pages on that book we are working on, and only have seven or eight more chapters to finish it. I never want a job exactly like that one again!’³⁶

In addition to these difficulties, the project experienced funding issues after the outbreak of World War Two. Arna Bontemps, supervisor of the black unit in Illinois, wrote to Christian in May 1941 ‘You say you are being laid off next week. How come? Let’s hope it is only temporarily, at any rate’.³⁷ Christian had already been let go 1939 and then rehired, but other employees such as Octave Lilly (who conducted the interviews) were laid off indefinitely.³⁸ In December 1941, Christian wrote to Arna Bontemps again and voiced his concern over the future of the WPA project in light of the war effort.³⁹

Bontemps’s concerns were realised when in December of 1942, President Roosevelt ordered work to stop on the Writers’ Projects due to the onset of World War Two. After this the State Directors were left with the responsibility of how to deposit these valuable materials. A decision was made to leave the writers’ project interviews with Marcus Christian in order for him to finish *The Negro in Louisiana*, but funding issues still prevailed, Saxon wrote in 1942: ‘Our book ‘The Negro in Louisiana’ is nearing completion, and Marcus Christian is the only Negro left on the Louisiana Writers’ Project. I must release him as of Dec. 31, although he has not finished

³⁵ Letter from James LaFourche to Dr W. E. B. DuBois, dated 27 May 1936, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, DuBois Papers. Ronnie W. Clayton, ‘A History of the Federal Writers’ Project in Louisiana’, Unpublished PhD thesis, Louisiana State University (1974), p. 179.

³⁶ Christian to ‘Irene’, New Orleans, 3 August 1940, MCC, UNO.

³⁷ Arna Bontemps to Christian, Chicago, 5 May 1941. MCC, UNO.

³⁸ Octave Lilly then left to work in private insurance sector. See Letter from Saxon to Christian, New Orleans, 2 November 1939. Curtis Norris was temporary supervisor in 1939 after Christian was laid off, letter from Saxon to Curtis, New Orleans, 9 November 1939. MCC, UNO.

³⁹ Bontemps to Christian, Chicago, 17 December 1941, MCC, UNO.

working on the book'. While Saxon attempted to acquire funding for the completion of the manuscript, it is unclear if this was received.⁴⁰ It is clear that the manuscript was never finished and the records were, according to Ronnie Clayton (a historian) in 1974, 'supposedly damaged in a flood' and the librarians destroyed them. Clayton commented that

speculation about the fate of the Dillard Project materials would not be necessary if the parties responsible for their deposition, Christian and Dent, would discuss what happened to them. They refuse to do so, however, and this refusal is unfortunate.⁴¹

All that survives of the research is two ex-slave interviews and a manuscript of 46 chapters, 1128 pages. Seemingly it was missing just a conclusion when Marcus Christian ceased to work on it. The manuscript is now held in the Marcus Christian Collection at the University of New Orleans.⁴²

The struggle for black writers to gain places on the Federal Writers' Project is demonstrated by the plight of Marcus Christian and his colleagues. Even when the black writers had secured employment, funding issues ensured that their positions were not stable. Nevertheless, Louisiana was able to secure places on its projects

⁴⁰ Saxon to Embree, New Orleans, 20 Dec 1942, MCC, UNO.

⁴¹ R. W. Clayton, 'The Federal Writers Project for Blacks in Louisiana', *Louisiana History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1978), p. 308.

⁴² Jerry Mangione wrote that the lack of interest in bringing this to publication reflects the lack of interest in the black units of the Writers Projects' after the firing of Henry Alsberg in 1939 and the resignation of the prominent African American academic and advisor to the project Sterling A Brown in 1940. Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, p. 262. In 1937, Alsberg wrote to the eighteen southern units of the FWP, including Louisiana, specifically requesting any information relating to slavery in the individual states. The types of documents requested ranged from State or county laws 'affecting the conduct of slaves, free Negroes, overseers, patrollers, or any person or custom affecting the institution of slavery' to slave sale advertisements and 'contemporary accounts of noteworthy occurrences among the Negroes during slavery days'— but Louisiana failed to send details of slavery within the state. Letter from Henry G. Alsberg to State Directors of the FWP, dated 9 June 1937. Reprinted in *TAS*, Vol. 1, p. 172.



Figure 2.1. Louisiana interviewees: place of residence during slavery

Note: Numbers to the right of marker indicate the number of interviewees who had lived in that location in 1865. Base map has been amended from map available at Google 'My Maps'.

for two black writers who then conducted interviews with the formerly enslaved.

The value of these interviews will be discussed later in this section.

Despite the lost Louisiana material, the present study has gathered the remaining interviews from the black and white units of the LWP, and located those who had been enslaved in Louisiana but migrated after emancipation and were interviewed for

other state collections. The LWP had its headquarters in New Orleans but had satellite offices in Alexandria, Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, Shreveport and Lafayette, though these were all were to be closed before 1936.⁴³ While New Orleans dominated the project, in reality, the locations where the interviewees had lived under slavery stretched throughout the state, with the highest numbers of migrants coming to New Orleans from the sugar parishes just south of central Louisiana, to South-Eastern Louisiana (see figure 2.1).

Fogel and Engerman calculated that around six per cent of enslaved people lived in cities and towns of one thousand or more persons.⁴⁴ Census data shows that in 1860,

Table 2.1. Occupations of interviewees by State

Number of interviewees by state	Occupation as a % of sample			
	Domestic/skilled	Domestic/field	Field	Too young to work
Louisiana (132)	44.7	1.5	48.9	5.3
Texas (401)	47.9	1.7	47.1	3.2
Total (533)	47.1	1.7	47.5	3.8

Note: 240 interviewees did not disclose their occupation as a slave. The 'skilled' category includes interviewees who had an occupation such as carpenter/blacksmith/driver etc. The 'too young to work' category only includes those who specifically stated that they had been too young to do any form of labour before emancipation. As many young enslaved children performed domestic duties before being sent to work in the field as they got older, the 'domestic' category does contain some who would have been 'field slaves' had they been emancipated later in life.

⁴³ Pound, 'Slave to the Ex-Slave Narratives', p. 4.

⁴⁴ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 38.

New Orleans had a population of 168,675 persons, whereas the second largest city, Baton Rouge had just 5000.⁴⁵ 6.6 per cent of the total slave population of Louisiana lived in these two cities, but 13.2 per cent of the sample used for this project had been enslaved there. This indicates a skew toward urban slaves.⁴⁶ This sampling error is even more significant if Fogel and Engerman's definition of 'urban slaves' is taken into consideration; this would make any slave who had lived in a town of a thousand or more persons an 'urban slave'. In 1860 the populations of Opelousas, Shreveport, Alexandria, Natchitoches, and Monroe, all exceeded one thousand persons. Taking this into account, the urban enslaved population of Louisiana would have been 12 per cent, whereas the sample used for this project would then be made up of 32 per cent of people enslaved in an urban location.⁴⁷

The second major skew in the sample is that toward domestic slaves. Table 2.1 shows that the sample contained an equal distribution of those who had undertaken field and domestic labour in both the states of Louisiana and Texas. The domestic and skilled workers' category includes any occupation other than a field labourer, including occupations such as coachmen, gardeners, stewards and house servants. Fogel and Engerman calculated that in 1850, 73 per cent of enslaved men and 80 per

⁴⁵ J.K. Schafer, 'Life and Labour in Antebellum Louisiana', in B.H. Hall and J.C. Rodrigues, *Louisiana: A History*, 6th ed. (Chichester, 2014), pp. 156-96. R. C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860* (Cary, NC, 1967), p. 326. The appendices in this volume provide useful information from nineteenth-century US censuses, including the free and enslaved population of major southern cities. See also historical census browser at <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>, accessed 7 Dec 14.

⁴⁶ The slave population of New Orleans in 1860 was 13,385 and in East Baton Rouge parish was 8,570. See Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, p. 326. The appendices in this volume provide useful information from nineteenth-century US censuses, including the free and enslaved population of major southern cities. In addition, the historical census browser, *Ibid.*, accessed 7 Dec 14.

⁴⁷ Census data for these calculations taken from the historical census browser, *Ibid.*

cent of enslaved women were field labourers. Assuming this is correct, this would that the source base used for this sample is heavily skewed toward domestic slaves.⁴⁸

Overall, the Louisiana sample, and the Texas sample discussed in the next section, are heavily skewed in the direction of the experience of enslaved people who lived in an urban setting or who worked domestically. Owing to the conditions under which these enslaved people lived and worked, this project therefore offers a special opportunity to look closely at the lives of enslaved people who lived in close proximity to slaveholding people. While insights into the experience of sexual exploitation of field slaves can still be discovered, the skew toward those living in close proximity to the slave master allow conclusions to be drawn on the effects of sexual exploitation on the white family as well as that of the enslaved.

The Texas Writers' Project

Texas became part of the United States on 29 December 1845, and it was only after this date that slavery began to expand and thrive. Under the rule of the Spanish, the territory had not relied on un-free labour, but as white slaveholders began to move Southward, Texas, like its Southern neighbours, gained a large enslaved work force.⁴⁹ The number of those enslaved in Texas dramatically increased from 58,161 in 1850 to 182,566 in 1860.⁵⁰ Slaveholders continued to move to Texas throughout

⁴⁸ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, pp. 39-40. Though historians have commented on the skew toward urban slaves in the WPA collections there has thus far been no explanation as to why this skew appears. This requires further research on the process whereby formerly enslaved people were selected for interview.

⁴⁹ A. Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas 1528-1995* (Norman, OK, 1996) p. 17.

⁵⁰ Data from US Census, available online at census.gov, accessed 26 April 2012.

the Civil War, with masters bringing their slaves with them as the union army occupied parts of Louisiana and Arkansas.⁵¹ This migration led to a large long-term settlement of black Americans in the state, and is one of the reasons for Texas' large sets of 1930s ex-slave interviews. According to George P. Rawick, the Texas Writers' Project would produce 'one of the two most powerful and useful state collections'.⁵²

Head of the Texas project was J. Frank Davis, a writer and playwright born in 1870 in Massachusetts. Davis had retired to San Antonio in 1910. Though not as widely known as Saxon, Davis had published a number of novels and had written a play that had a short and unsuccessful stint on Broadway.⁵³ His novels feature a character by the name of Almanzar Evarts, a black American house servant working in San Antonio, whose mediation between his white employers and the black community indicate that the writer, a white man, possessed a sensitivity to the dynamics of conversation between whites and blacks in this era.⁵⁴ This sensitivity was less apparent in Texas Federal Writers' Project publications.

The several regional offices involved in the Texas Writers' Project produced over one thousand publications, which ranged from small pamphlets to the Texas Guide.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Further evidence for this can be found in the 1870 census data, with the 'colored population' at that time having expanded to 253,475 people, *Ibid*.

⁵² G.P. Rawick, *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. xxxix.

⁵³ W.E. Reaves, *Texas Art and a Wildcatter's Dream: Edgar B. Davis and the San Antonio Art League* (College Station, 1998), p. 27.

⁵⁴ K.W. Mendiola 'Reading Ex-Slave Narratives: The Federal Writers' Project in Travis County, Texas', *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas*, Vol. 28 (1997), p. 40.

⁵⁵ As several regional offices operated up to the end of the Texas Writers' Project in 1942, the Texas Writers' Project records are scattered throughout archives in Texas. Two examples of this are the records of the Fort Worth and the Orange County Archives, both of which have digitised much of their TWP collections. Records for this local project are held in the Fort Worth Public Library, and many are digitised at forthworthtexasarchives.org. The correspondence relating to the *Orange City*

The state guide, the production of which was the primary aim of the Texas project, features just a few pages on black Texans, all of which are extremely positive in outlook. The book steered clear of social critique and contains numerous references to the ‘increased educational and economic development of the negro masses’ and employed the same racial stereotyping and condescension as other state guides, for example in the description of the black population’s ‘racial gift of melody’.⁵⁶

The smaller regional guides reveal more localised ideas about ‘race’. *The Guide to Dallas* reads, ‘[u]nder the veneer of civilization and custom there runs in Deep Ellum the undercurrent of jungle law; superstition, hatred, and passion’, hinting at a primitive and hyper-sexualised culture among the areas of the city primarily inhabited by black residents.⁵⁷ It is possible that the criticism of the black scholar Sterling A. Brown’s revealing chapter on ‘The Negro in Washington’ in the Washington DC guide deterred State editors from a truthful description of race relations in Texas. Brown was charged with putting insidious communist propaganda into the guides. The essay gave a history of the black presence, a description of the disappointing reality of post-emancipation, and a critique of the separate and unequal ‘democracy’ for black Americans.⁵⁸ It is perhaps for this reason that the Texas director chose to leave out the fact that in Texas between 1930 and 1941 twice as many blacks as whites faced unemployment, and between 1903

Guide is now held in Houston library, MSS1470. At the time of writing much of this is now online at digital.houstonlibrary.org.

⁵⁶ WPA, *Texas a Guide to the Lone Star State* (San Antonio, 1940), pp. 97-98.

⁵⁷ Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the City of Dallas. *The WPA Dallas Guide and History*. Dallas, Texas. UNT Digital Library. <http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc28336/>, p. 294. Accessed 15 December 2014.

⁵⁸ Sterling A. Brown, *Washington: City and Capital* (Washington, 1937), pp. 68-91, J. V. Gabbin, *Sterling A. Brown: Building the Black Aesthetic Tradition* (Charlottesville, 1985), pp. 81-3.

and 1927, Texans lynched 171 African Americans, facts that were in contrast to the celebratory tone of the guide.⁵⁹

Texas employed 81 writers, and a close reading of the Texas interviews indicates that all interviewers were white. In a PhD thesis written in 1961, Allan F. Kifer wrote that ‘Texas hired a Negro to go into the Brazos River Region to collect narratives, but most of this work was done by whites’.⁶⁰ Research undertaken for the present study has since found no evidence for a black interviewer in the Texas Writers’ Project. The guide to Dallas does state that ‘A. Maceo Smith opened up many interesting aspects of Negro life in Dallas’, but Smith does not seem to have been directly involved in collecting interviews with the formerly enslaved. It is more likely he supplied information gleaned from his time spent as an administrative aid with the Federal Housing Administration from 1937-1939.⁶¹

The interviews for Texas have been read for clues as to the race of the interviewer. While in some interviews these clues are not present, 55 out of the 77 employees of the writers’ project for which we have names can be confidently listed as ‘white’. Some of these clues came from the interviewer’s description of the formerly enslaved interviewee. Bernice Gray, Stanley H. Holm, Florence Angermiller and Felix Nixon all described their interviewee as a ‘darky’ or ‘darkey’, despite a clear instruction not to use this term in a memo sent Henry Alsberg in July 1930. The memo stated that ‘I should like to recommend that the words darky and nigger and

⁵⁹ Mendiola, ‘Reading the Ex-Slave Narratives’, p. 40.

⁶⁰ A. F. Kifer, *The Negro Under the New Deal 1933-1941*, Unpublished PhD thesis (University of Wisconsin), 1961, p. 238.

⁶¹ *WPA Dallas Guide and History* and ‘A. Maceo Smith’ at <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsm61>, accessed 15 December 2014.

such expressions such as “[a] comical little old black woman” be omitted from the editorial writing’.⁶² Other interviewers made it clear that they were not the same race as the formerly enslaved person; Letha K. Hatcher wrote that interviewee George Sells had a ‘fairly good Negro house’ and Clarence Drake who wrote that Pinkie Kelly lived in a ‘typical negro cabin’. Other interviewees made generalisations relating to black people, including Velma Savoy who wrote that La San Mire was ‘[s]inging in French, with that gusto peculiar to the race’ or William V. Ervin who wrote that Thomas John’s face ‘does not have a wizened, shrivelled appearance as is often the case with members of the colored races’. Other clues came from the words of the interviewees themselves. In an interview with Lois Osburn, Uncle Richard Carruthers said ‘[m]y skin an’ my ears have turn as white as you-uns’; or many would use deferential language, referring to white males as ‘sir’.⁶³

In a letter to Henry Alsberg in 1938, Davis (the head of the Texas Project) wrote that of his writers: ten had held important editorial posts, fourteen had a year’s experience with a newspaper, and eleven had sold articles to magazines or newspapers.⁶⁴ Forty-six, therefore, had little or no writing or publishing experience. Of those who did, Alfred E. Menn seems to have been the most qualified, and he interviewed over fifty formerly enslaved people in Travis County.⁶⁵ Born in 1903 in Travis County and the son of second-generation German immigrants, we know that he was schooled until at

⁶² G. Rawick, *TAS*, Vol.1, p. 178.

⁶³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3493; *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 253; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, p. 2702; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1966; *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 197.

⁶⁴ Letter from J. Frank Davis to H. Alsberg, San Antonio 16 May 1938, as discussed in J. Lanning and J. Lanning, *Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days* (College Station, TX, 1984), p. *xiii*.

⁶⁵ Mendiola, ‘Reading the Ex-Slave Narratives’, p. 38.

least 1920.⁶⁶ He published from 1925 until 1959.⁶⁷ His most successful book *Texas As is Today* (1925) was boastful of Texas' achievements and opportunities that aimed to 'show the native sons of Texas, the outside home-seeker, the investor what Texas was, how she grew, and what she is today, a growing and formidable Imperial State'.⁶⁸

While not revealing a great deal about Menn's racial views, this book does demonstrate that Menn was keen to present Texas in the best possible light. The only mention of the black population is just before the end of the book when he states that 'of the negro problem. The Negroes are, as a rule, of the best class, who realise good and bad, therefore no race riots are committed'.⁶⁹ Like the WPA guidebooks to Texas, his work is unjustifiably positive. The interviews conducted by Menn are discussed in Methodology II.

The Texas Writers' Project did collect a large number of interviews, and also instructed their interviewers to take photographs of those they interviewed. At least 47 photographs were sent to Washington alongside the interviews.⁷⁰ Employees in

⁶⁶ 1920 US Census, Justice Precinct 3, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625_1852; Page: 13B; Enumeration District: 93; Image: 218.

⁶⁷ Menn also published articles in *Farm and Ranch Magazine* (1925); a historical and descriptive book on Texas called *Let's go to Texas* (Houston, 1935); *The Cuero and DeWitt County Story* (Cuero, 1955) and wrote a series of history articles from the *Dallas Morning Star* throughout 1959. After the close of the Federal Writers Project in 1942, records indicate that he was unable to continue with writing as his primary source of employment. In the 1944 Austin City Directory, he was listed as a 'Collector'.

⁶⁸ A. E. Menn, *Texas As it is Today* (Austin, 1925), p. 10.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-5.

⁷⁰ There are 500 photos in the American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress. Captions accompanying the images indicate that the interviewer took the photograph. For example, James H. Martin's photograph is labelled 'James Martin, San Antonio, Texas, 30 May 1937, Alfred E. Menn, photographer'. Library of Congress.

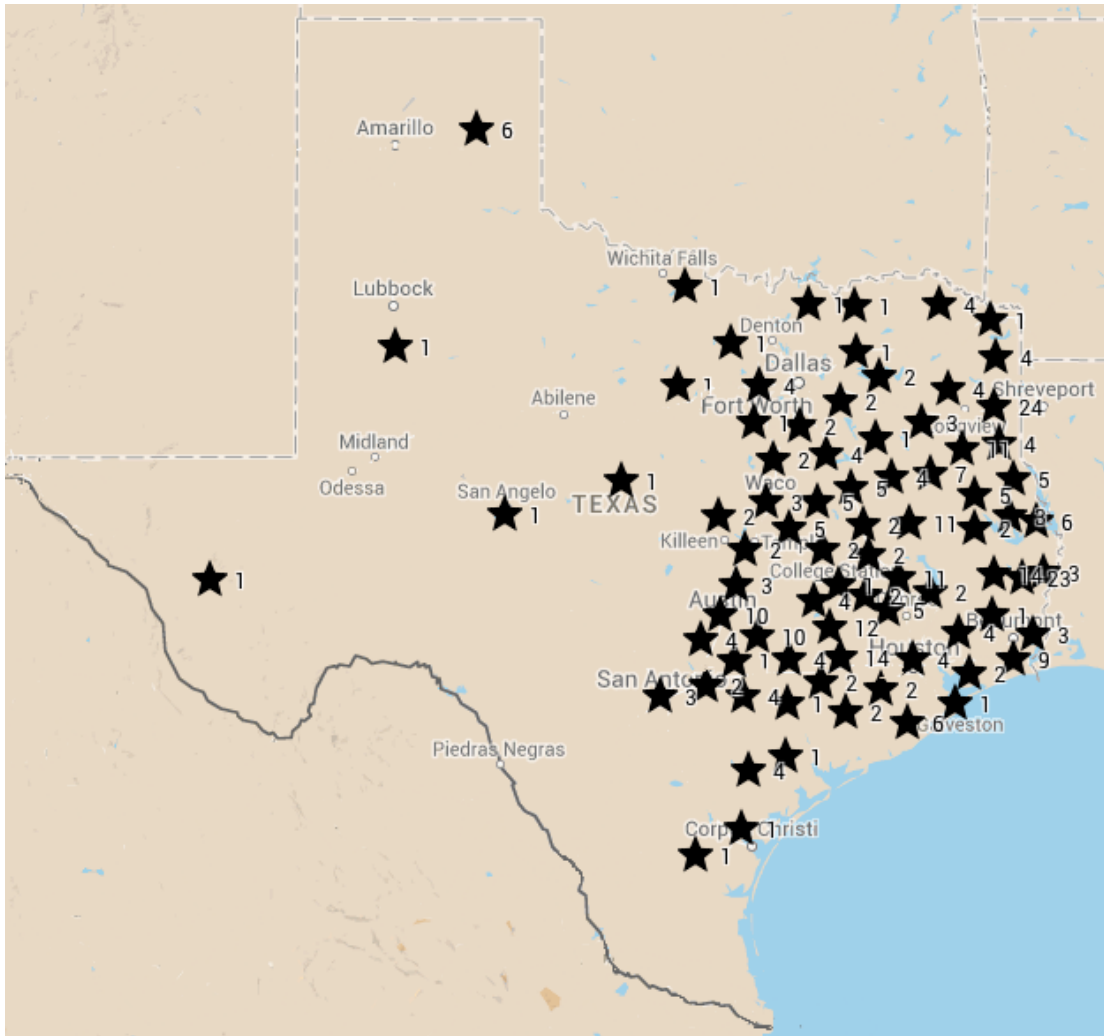


Figure 2.2. Texas interviewees: place of residence during slavery.

Note: The stars are placed at the approximate midpoint of the counties where the interviewees had lived before 1865. The numbers next to each star indicate the number of slaves who had lived in that particular location. This map was created using the information given by the interviewees. 337 of the 527 in the Texas sample disclosed where they lived as slaves. Base map has been amended from map available at Google 'My Maps'.

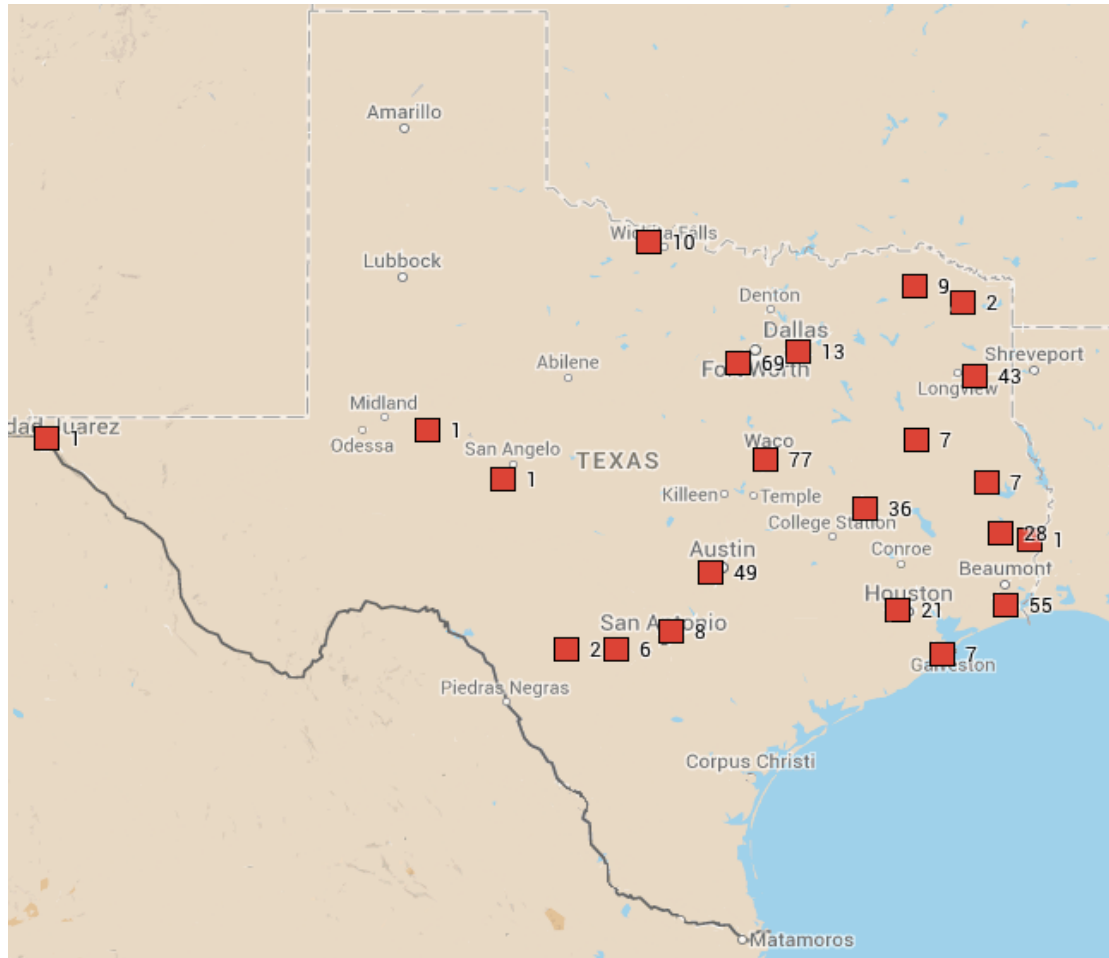


Figure 2.3. Map to show approximate location of administrative areas where the Texas interviews took place.

Note: The shaded area shows the midpoint of the administrative district. The number next to the shaded area indicates the number of interviews conducted in that area. The Texas Writers Project interviews that have been moved to the Louisiana sample are not included in the numbers on this map. The numbers are fewer than the 527 interviews conducted in Texas as not all Texas interviews contain the name of the interviewer. The administrative district has been deciphered through the name of the interviewer and where they were based. Base map has been amended from map available at Google 'My Maps'.

Marshall, Fort Worth and San Antonio collected large numbers of interviews, while fewer came in from more populous areas such as Dallas and Houston.⁷¹

Again, this reflects the lack of attention to sampling procedures in the programme, which was aimed at collecting folklore rather than studying the experience of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Norman Yetman commented that sampling procedures were mentioned nowhere in the extensive correspondence of the project.⁷²

The movement of emancipated people after the Civil War meant that, despite this lack of attention to sampling techniques, those interviewed were representative of more counties than the place of interview might suggest. Figure 2.3 shows the counties in which the interviews took place. Industrious employees in Jefferson, Tarrant and McLennan counties collected almost 100 interviews each. In Jefferson County, Fred Dibble was the principle interviewer in most of its 94 interviews.⁷³ Other prolific interviewers include Sheldon F. Gauthier who collected 67 interviews in the Fort Worth and Tarrant County Office; Alfred E. Menn who collected 57 interviews in the Travis County area; B.E. Davis who collected all of the Madison County's 41 interviews; and Ada Davis and Effie Cowan who collected almost 40 interviews each in the McLennan County area.⁷⁴ Writers in Texas, as in Louisiana,

⁷¹ R. Tyler and L. R. Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas* (Buffalo Gap, 2006), p. viii.

⁷² N. Yetman, 'Ex-Slaves Interviews and the Historiography of Slavery', in N. Yetman (ed.) *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*, 2nd edition (New York, 2000) p. 364.

⁷³ Dibble collected other interviews alongside Rheba Butler and Bernice Grey, and a close reading of the interviews suggests these were both white women. In this study, 39 of these interviews conducted close to the state border with Louisiana were with those who had been enslaved in Louisiana and so were moved to the other sample.

⁷⁴ Twelve of Gauthier's interviews, five of Menn's interviews, and eight of Davis and Cowan's interviews have been moved to the Louisiana sample.

were under constant pressure to produce material, which could account for these high numbers.⁷⁵

As is clearly demonstrated in Figure 2.2, by the Civil War slavery was still concentrated in the eastern two-fifths of the state.⁷⁶ In an effort to take advantage of the high prices for slaves, Louisiana dealers frequently advertised in Texas newspapers, hoping to encourage the Texas planters to purchase their slaves in New Orleans or Shreveport.⁷⁷ In addition to this, slaves continued to be brought into the state during the Civil War.

Louisiana has recently been depicted as ‘an epicenter of a wartime process of emancipation’. Caleb McDaniel has written that after the fall of New Orleans in the spring of 1862, ‘slavery crumbled in the face of slave resistance, military campaigns, and a mass exodus from plantations by enslavers and the enslaved alike’.⁷⁸ Many of those formerly enslaved in Louisiana ended up in Texas, but after taking the Louisiana interviewees out of the Texas sample, just 99 Texan interviewees spent their time enslaved in a state other than Texas or Louisiana.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Correspondence relating to the Orange City Guide reveals that certain writers had to mail their work daily, whether it was information copied from an article or a piece of original writing. Letter from Mary O. Simpson, local supervisor, Houston to Juanita Bean, 10 July 1939, Orange City Guide Correspondence, MSS 1470, Houston Library.

⁷⁶ See R.R. Barkley and M.F. Odintz (eds.), *The Portable Handbook of Texas* (Denton, 2000), p. 39.

⁷⁷ Tyler and Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, p. xxv.

⁷⁸ W. C. McDaniel, ‘Remembering Henry: Refugee Slaves in Civil War Texas’, unpublished conference paper given at the Organization of American Historians conference, Atlanta GA, April 13 2014.

⁷⁹ These include: Georgia (18), Alabama (16), Tennessee (16), Mississippi (13), Virginia (11), Arkansas (6), South Carolina (5), Kentucky (5), North Carolina (4), and Maryland (1). Sir Arthur James Lyon Fremantle, a British Army Officer present in the southern states in 1863 described the movement of planters with slaves into Texas *Three Months in the Southern States April-June 1863* (London, 1863), pp. 79-80, 84.

As discussed in the previous section, urban slaves were over-represented in the Louisiana sample. While Louisiana's largest city in the antebellum period had a population of 168,675, no urban area in Texas exceeded a population of 10,000 in the antebellum years.⁸⁰ Considering this, it seems natural that a smaller proportion of those who had been enslaved in an urban environment were to be interviewed in Texas.

While only the cotton districts of eastern Texas were highly populated in this period, the overall population was still large, 604,215 in 1860; and thirty per cent of this were enslaved people. The largest city in Texas was San Antonio, with a population of 8,235 in 1860. Other than this Houston, Galveston, Dallas and Austin were all emerging cities with populations well over the 1000 person definition of an urban space, set by Fogel and Engerman.⁸¹ Based on these five cities, the proportion of urban slaves in Texas was 5.87% in 1860. As the relative proportion of interviewees from these areas in my Texas sample is 9.1%, another significant sampling skew toward urban slaves is indicated.⁸²

The clear policy of the Texas Writers' Project for depositing the interviews at the end of the project is in stark contrast to that in Louisiana. In 1939 confusion over the future of the Writers Projects existed on both a local and national level as projects had to find private sponsors for at least 25 per cent of the cost of the programme.

⁸⁰ Barkley and Odintz, *Handbook of Texas*, p. 39.

⁸¹ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 38.

⁸² In the absence of available data on the numbers of enslaved people in smaller urban areas, figures are based on the numbers in the US census of 1860 for each county. This indicates that the sampling error may not be as significant as stated here as, while each town would have contained a large number of enslaved people, it was likely to be surrounded by at least some plantations or small farms with slaves.

Additionally, project directors had to deal with opposition from influential Congressman Martin Dies, amongst others, who in October 1939 charged that the writers were ‘doing more to spread communist propaganda than the Communist Party itself’.⁸³ The funding for the Texas project was much more stable than that for Louisiana. For Texas, this came from the Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin.

The comparison between the interviews of the Louisiana and Texas Writers’ Projects is an interesting one. The Texas Writers’ Project was well funded, and its various state offices conducted a large number of interviews. The Louisiana Writers’ Project experienced constant turmoil and funding issues from the outset, and its local offices were closed very early. Both interview sets are valuable. The Texas set offers a unique insight into the attitudes of white writers and editors through the two versions of edited interviews that are available. Louisiana, however, provides special insight into the real level of abuse through the inclusion of interviews conducted by black interviewers. This latter sub-set of Louisiana interviews reveals especially high levels of abuse, levels which approach the scale of abuse mentioned in the nineteenth-century narratives

Narratives of the formerly enslaved

Nineteenth-century narratives of formerly enslaved people provide extended evidence of sexual violence. The authors of these narratives were old enough to be able to recount direct personal experiences of sexual abuse. These people were all

⁸³ G.D. Saxon, new introduction to the *Dallas Guide*, p. x.

born between 1814 and 1840. They had experienced more years in slavery than the 1930s interviewees who had mostly just been children at the end of the Civil War, and their memories of enslavement were recorded much sooner than those who were interviewed in the 1930s. There was a higher proportion of light-skinned domestic slaves in the narratives than was representative of the actual slave community, and these formerly enslaved people would have been in a position to witness at close quarters the culture of abuse under slavery.⁸⁴

Apart from the 1930s interviews, this study uses the narratives of twenty-one formerly enslaved people. These twenty-one testimonies comprise fourteen book-length or pamphlet-length individual autobiographies (mostly from the nineteenth century but some published in the 1920s) as well the testimony of seven former Louisiana slaves who were interviewed in the 1880s by Octavia V. Rogers Albert. Few women produced book-length autobiographies in the antebellum period, and for Louisiana there is just one, the exceptional narrative of Louisa Picquet. Octavia V. Rogers Albert's volume, including interviews with three women, provides important additional female testimony for Louisiana. With the exception of one narrative from Texas, all of the 21 narratives used in this study are from Louisiana.

Across the South only 12 per cent of narratives are written by women, nevertheless those written by men frequently discussed the rape and sexual exploitation of black

⁸⁴ Key works on autobiographies of the formerly enslaved include: F. Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives*, (Madison, 1987); W. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography 1760-1865*, (Chicago, 1986); D. Bailey, 'A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery,' *Journal of Southern History*, 46 (1980), pp. 381-404; J.W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977); J. Ernest (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford, 2014).

women.⁸⁵ Ephraim Peabody, in the earliest critical review of the slave narrative genre, documented the themes present in many ex-slave autobiographies, one of which was the miseries ‘peculiar’ to the enslaved woman: ‘if they possess any attractiveness of person, they are too often exposed to the...corrupting urgencies of the white males around them’.⁸⁶

Just four out of the twenty-one narratives in this project were authored by women (Picquet’s narrative and three interviews by Albert). Yet twelve of these contain at least one, if not several of the following themes: desire of enslaved women to retain virtue; rape of dark and light-skinned enslaved women; white adultery with enslaved women and girls; institutionalised sexual slavery; selling of the enslaved offspring of a white father; and the humiliation of white woman through the actions of their husbands, brothers or fathers. These sexual abuses are discussed in addition to other abuse, non-sexual in nature, such as the lack of consideration for pregnant and nursing mothers, and the mother’s inability to perform her maternal role alongside the pressures of slavery, and the frequency of family separations through sale.

The narratives presented black women as the ultimate victims of slavery, bearing the additional burdens that childbearing and sexual abuse brought to their gender. The frequency with which abuse was mentioned has, however, brought the authenticity of the narratives into question. Abolitionist agendas were certainly served by focus on the abuse of the enslaved woman who was unprotected by enslaved men and by the law. The evidence within the narratives is, however, powerful. Abolitionist agendas

⁸⁵ Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, p. xxii.

⁸⁶ E. Peabody, ‘Narratives of Fugitive Slaves’, reproduced in C. T. Davis and H. L. Gates Jr. (eds.), *The Slave’s Narrative* (New York, 1985), p. 71.

aside, the similar themes encountered in the 1930s and the nineteenth century do ‘suggest another kind of truth’: that the abuse of enslaved women was such a key part of the experience of enslavement that it had to be included in narratives.⁸⁷ The graphic descriptions of the abuse of enslaved women can help to shed light on the incidents hinted at in the shorter 1930s interviews, in which the interviewee, in the context of the 1930s Jim Crow South, was most often unable (or unwilling) to give their white interviewer a full account of her or his experience.

According to Francis Smith Foster, ‘[o]ne of the most vital characteristics of slave narratives has been their claim to authenticity’.⁸⁸ Narratives even protested their authenticity in their title, for example in the *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1847) [emphasis added]. Challenges to authenticity have been largely made due to the presence and influence of white editors and amanuenses. This project looks at two accounts of enslavement recorded by amanuenses, the first *Louisa Picquet: The Octoroon*, whose life story was recorded by the abolitionist and Methodist minister Reverend Hiram Mattison in 1860, and secondly the collection of life stories recorded by Octavia V. Rogers Albert.

This project has offered a special opportunity to look at autobiographical sources produced by formerly enslaved women. Francis Smith Foster wrote that it was one of the great limitations of her study of US slave narratives that just one narrative, that of Harriet Jacobs, was written by a woman. To a predominantly white readership in

⁸⁷ Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, p. xix.

⁸⁸ Foster, ‘Ultimate Victims’, p. 845.

the mid-nineteenth century, female narrators such as Harriet Jacobs and Louisa Picquet, had to negotiate their narratives in a special way to emphasise their repeated attempts to preserve their virtue, even when it was taken by force.

The narratives recorded by Octavia V. Albert are of particular interest as they were recorded by a formerly enslaved and university-educated black woman, and with people from her own community. In addition, they were recorded for a primarily African-American readership. Albert was born a slave in Macon, Georgia in 1853. She attended Atlanta University and taught in a school until she married Rev. A. E. P. Albert in 1874 and she relocated with him to Houma, Louisiana. In 1878, she began interviewing the formerly enslaved, and after her death these interviews were published in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.⁸⁹ Albert recorded the stories of four men and three women enslaved in Louisiana, and although short narratives of just a few pages each, five of the seven mention some form of sexual abuse.

The Albert narratives are particularly useful to compare to the narrative of Louisa Picquet. Picquet's amanuensis was a white abolitionist male. The narrative has been largely overlooked in the literature, perhaps because Mattison recorded her story.⁹⁰ Doveanna Fulton in her exploration of language used by formerly enslaved females argued for the value of studying narratives written by an amanuensis. She described a particular type of language use that allowed an oral narrator to convey their message in the same way that a writer would. This is described as 'oral literacy'. Both literate and non-literate freedwomen employed verbal communication and

⁸⁹ Octavia V. Albert is discussed in J. W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977), p. lxi.

⁹⁰ F. Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery* (Madison, 1979), pp. xxi-xxii.

‘black feminist orality’ to exert authorial control within a discourse that would normally exclude them. Therefore, for Fulton, these narrators demonstrated a speaking subject’s ability to theorise concepts and language within a writing environment that could silence non-writers.⁹¹ Oral traditions that were inherited from African cultures and perpetuated in slave communities were continued and put into use by these women. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, ‘The Typical Case of Louisa Picquet’, Picquet was certainly able to demonstrate a degree of authorial control in the discourse recorded by Mattison, and the themes and structure of the narrative are similar to those in the Albert collection, recorded by a black female who had been born into slavery.

A prominent feature of the book-length narratives, which will be discussed at length in Chapter Six, is the abolitionist interest in light-skinned women kept in sexual slavery by southern masters. As light skinned ‘fancy-girls’ were commonly associated with the New Orleans slave market, there is the opportunity to access information on the experience of this specific form of enslavement in New Orleans in many of these sources. Louisa Picquet, in particular, allows access to the mind-sets and the white and black people entangled in this trade.

While there was the opportunity for many of the nineteenth-century narratives to discuss sexual abuse, those published in the early twentieth century were often shaped by the same constraints of the 1930s interviews. While Peter Bruner, born in

⁹¹ D. Fulton, *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery* (Albany, 2006), pp. 22, 26.



Figure 2.4. Photograph of Peter Bruner with his own son and the son of a faculty member of Miami University

Note: Image from 'Documenting the American South'
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bruner/bruner.html>.

1845 was keen to discuss punishment under slavery, his narrative contains 'disclaimers' testifying to the good nature of certain slave-owners:

Some of the white people were good to their slaves and desired them to have whatever they had to eat, and would never sell them to a slave buyer. If they had more slaves than they could find employment for they would hire them out by the year to some good man who would deal justly with them.⁹²

In addition, Peter Bruner fails to mention any white ancestors despite the photographs showing him to be very light-skinned.⁹³ While of course it is possible that Bruner was unaware of any white ancestry, it is also possible that he viewed it as inappropriate to mention in the context of the early twentieth century. As will be discussed in Chapter Five the discussion of white fathers and grandfathers was common in autobiographies written earlier in the nineteenth century.⁹⁴

Bruner's narrative was recorded around 1900 by his daughter, but slightly amended and published in 1918 while he was working as a janitor at Miami University.

Although the narrative indicates no role of university staff in bringing the autobiography to publication, the photographs indicate a close relationship with Miami University Faculty members, one photograph in particular (Figure 2.4) shows Peter Bruner 'With His Two "Shadows," One of His Own Race, the Other the Small Son of a Faculty Member'.⁹⁵

⁹²Peter Bruner, *A Slave's Adventures Toward Freedom. Not Fiction, But the True Story of a Struggle*, (Oxford, OH, 1918), p. 12.

⁹³ Some biographical sketches state that Bruner's father was his master. See <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bruner/summary.html>, accessed 1 January 2015.

⁹⁴ See narratives of William O'Neal, Stephen Jordan, Louisa Picquet, James Williams, Charlotte Brooks and William Wells Brown.

⁹⁵ Bruner, *A Slave's Adventures Toward Freedom*, p. 51. The close relationship of Bruner with university students or faculty is echoed in the autobiography of Lewis M. Killian, *Black and white: reflections of a white southern sociologist* (New York, 1994). Killian, a white southerner discussed his experiences among white southern university students and comments on students and their fraternity houses' black 'butlers' (c. 1936) at the University of Georgia. Killian wrote that the butlers, houseboys

Jeff Hamilton, who had been enslaved to Sam Houston Governor of Texas, was the only autobiographer to have spent time in Texas. His narrative, *My Master, the Inside Story of Sam Houston and His Times, by His Former Slave, Jeff Hamilton, as Told to Lenoir Hunt* is an unrealistically positive representative of enslavement.⁹⁶ He apparently described his punishment by Sam Houston to his white editor as ‘a great honor after all, for there are not many boys who have the distinction of being whipped by one of the great men of history.’⁹⁷ In addition, the white amanuensis, Lenoir Hunt, wrote that

[s]ociologists may write learned treatises on slavery and on master and servant during ante-bellum days and a decade or two thereafter. Yet, only persons like Jeff and the numerous ‘chillun’ of a host of dear Old Black Mammies are able to appreciate the bonds of loyalty and affection that bound together the whites and the blacks of the Old South.⁹⁸

In the nineteenth century, there was a definite freedom to discuss the sexual abuse of women that did not exist into the twentieth century. Stories of white ancestry and the abuse of women were acceptable topics within the genre of the slave narrative, and while the (recorded) presence of a white amanuensis or editor in the twentieth-century significantly restricted Jeff Hamilton’s autobiography, the presence of a white editor or amanuensis had the opposite effect in the nineteenth-century. Arthur

and cooks were ‘part of the community.’ The black workers were ‘intensely loyal to the “boys” who employed them....Loyalty flowed the other way, too’ (p. 25). This could indicate that Bruner may have been more conservative in his narrative in order that he did not alienate the white faculty members. Bruner’s story appeared as part of the Kentucky WPA material. The information given differs little from his longer autobiography, though emphasises Bruner’s punishment. It is unclear whether the interviewer, Evelyn McLemore, interviewed Bruner, or gleaned this information from his narrative. *TAS*, Vol. 16 (Kentucky Narratives), p. 88.

⁹⁶ L. Hunt, *My Master: The Inside Story of Sam Houston and His Times by His Former Slave Jeff Hamilton* (Abilene, 1992, originally published 1940).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

D. Phelps (Josiah Henson), Thomas S. Gaines (William Walker), Hiram Mattison (Louisa Picquet), and David Wilson (Solomon Northup) all either encouraged the formerly enslaved people to discuss their experiences with sexual abuse, or at least made the decision not to omit the information they had been given.

The scale of sexual abuse in the narratives seems high when compared to the 1930s interviews with white interviewers. A comparison between 1930s interviews conducted by *black interviewers*, and the nineteenth century narratives indicates, however, that the scale may not be unrealistic after all. This will be explored further in the following chapters.

Chapter Three

Methodology II: Working with 1930s interview testimony

The previous chapter hinted at some of the potential biases, inconsistencies and other issues related to the WPA interviews. Comer Vann Woodward, Charles L. Perdue, and more recently Sharon Ann Musher have agreed that while the interviews should be approached with caution, no more caution is needed than for any other sources. Vann Woodward asked ‘shall historians discard the interviews as worthless?’ The answer was ‘not while they still use newspapers as sources, or, for that matter, diaries and letters and politicians’ speeches and the congressional record and all those neatly printed official documents and the solemnly sworn testimony of high officials’.

Perdue adopted a similar strategy in the introduction to his collection of Federal Writers’ Project interviews with those formerly enslaved in Virginia. To Perdue the interviews are ‘as reliable as most other historical documents’.¹ While the sources have problems as will be discussed in this chapter, they do contain valuable information from those who had experienced slavery first-hand. Moreover, the biases that will be noted in this chapter point with real persistence towards an undercount, rather than an over count of the extent of sexual interference by whites into the lives of the enslaved.

¹ C. Vann Woodward, ‘History from Slave Sources’, *The American Historical Review* Vol. 79, No. 2 (1974), pp. 470-481; C. L. Perdue, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville, 1992), p. *xliv*; S. A. Musher, ‘Contesting "The Way the Almighty Wants It": Crafting Memories of Ex-Slaves in the Slave Narrative Collection’, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No.1 (2001), pp. 1-31 and S. A. Musher, ‘The Other Slave Narratives: The Works Progress Administration Interviews’, in J. Ernest (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* Oxford, 2014), pp. 101-18.

The aim of this chapter is to look more deeply at issues that have to be considered when working with these valuable sources, and to establish a framework for doing so. First, the advanced age of the interviewees is considered. All the interviews in my sample were conducted 65 to 71 years after the end of the Civil War, which means that either the interviewee was very young at the time of emancipation, or well into their eighties or older when interviewed. In addition to this, they had years of discussing their experiences with members of the wider community resulting in some accounts that can be seen as offering a cultural rather than an individual or personal memory. Secondly, in order to use these sources more meaningfully it is necessary to discover the identity of those conducting the interviews, their background, skin colour, and common patterns occurring in with particular interviewees, patterns that would indicate some degree of directed questioning. Lastly, the state-level editing process is analysed to discover some direct evidence on white attitudes to sexual abuse and slavery in this period. This allows reflections to be made on the level of undercount in the source group as a whole.

Age of interviewees

Harriet Jacobs recalled her fifteenth birthday as ‘a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl’, when her master began to whisper ‘foul words’ in her ear. In her narrative, she marked this as an age when enslaved girls could no longer be protected from abuse.² The table below (3.1) shows the young average age at emancipation of those interviewed in Louisiana and Texas: column 1 shows that the mean was just 12.9 years, and column 2 reveals that almost half of the sample was under the age of 12

² Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, p. 26.

Table 3.1. Average ages of Louisiana and Texas interviewees in 1865 by subsample

Sample	Average of sample in 1865		
	1 Mean	2 Median	3 Mode
Mentioned sexual issue	12.8	13	17
No mention of sexual issue	11.9	10	10
Texas			
Mentioned sexual issue	13.4	12	12
Did not mention sexual issue	13.3	13	15
Louisiana and Texas Combined			
Mentioned sexual issue	13.2	12	14
Did not mention sexual issue	12.9	12	15
Total sample	12.9	12	15

when emancipated. This will have implications for the level of detail regarding sexual abuse that the interviewee would have been able to provide. The historian Deborah Gray White wrote that enslaved mothers were vigilant in their attempts to protect enslaved daughters from knowing about such subjects as conception and childbirth. The mothers' task was, however, 'difficult'.³

Louisiana interviewee Lydia Jefferson told of how there was an attempt by the enslaved community to protect the younger slaves from knowing about sexual abuse. Jefferson who was enslaved in Avoyelles parish, told her interviewer that

dere wasn't any purity for de young girls in de slave quarters, 'cause de overseers was always sending for de young Negro girls to be with 'em, and

³ D. G. White, 'Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 8 (1983), p. 257.

some girl was always finding a baby for him. ‘Course I wasn’t s’pposed to know nothing ‘bout anything like ‘dis, but I hears older folks talk when dey don’t know I’s listening.⁴

While Jefferson clearly knew about such subjects before the age of fifteen, there was a clear attempt by older enslaved people to protect those younger than them from knowing about the rape of young women. Evidence in Table 3.1 is consistent with this. Throughout the samples, the mean average age of the informants who mentioned some form of sexual exploitation was slightly higher than for those who did not.

Chapters throughout this thesis will take stock of the powerful undercounting factor that came from the young average age of the FWP interviewees at emancipation. The formerly enslaved were not just more likely to mention sexual abuse when they had been slightly older at emancipation, but they would have been able to give much more detail having been more likely to have experienced it first-hand. They could have themselves been a victim, or as part of the adult enslaved community, they were unlikely to have been shielded from the details by older friends and relatives. The importance of age at emancipation is more powerfully indicated through the subset of interviews in which sexual slavery is mentioned. The mean age at emancipation for those who discussed sexual slavery was sixteen, more than three years older than the mean age at emancipation for the combined Texas and Louisiana sample. Significantly, forty per cent of interviewees who discussed sexual slavery were over 25 at the time of their emancipation. They therefore experienced slavery as adults and were able to talk about the issues in more detail. J. W. Terrill, Victor

⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1939.

Duhon and Mary Reynolds, all enslaved in Louisiana and aged 25-28 at emancipation, gave their interviewers detailed information regarding sex slaves and family members who had endured some form of sexual abuse. Terrill was aware that his mother was made to be the master's 'mistress' one night a week; Victor Duhon, enslaved in Louisiana, told white interviewer Fred Dibble that his mother was a sex-slave until his white father married a white woman; and Mary Reynolds, twenty-eight at the time of her emancipation and interviewed by Heloise Foreman, a white female, discussed her aunt's experience of abuse by 'Dr Kilpatrick'. While her aunt bore children to Dr Kilpatrick, the doctor also had white children and had other enslaved children with a lighter skinned 'seamstress' whom the doctor purchased for his sex slave.⁵

Interviewees who were slightly younger at emancipation remembered the practice of sexual slavery quite differently. Mrs Thomas Johns, born during the Civil War, remembered a woman by the name of 'Aunt Phullis', who was 'half-white' and 'had some childrun by' the master, whereas Sarah Ford, into her teenage years by the time of her emancipation remembered how 'Marster Kit has an African woman from Kentucky for his wife'. This enslaved woman was described as 'uppity' over the other slaves but did 'try an' teach' the children manners.⁶ Both interviewees gave minimal details and remembered details relevant to them when they were children, rather than the abusive nature of the relationship between a master and his sex slave.

⁵ *TAS SS2* Vol. 9, Part 8, pp. 3772-7; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1238-41; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3292-96.

⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1360; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, pp. 1973-6.

Paul Escott has cited psychologists to the effect that elderly people often have very sharp memories of distant experience, and argued that critical events or experiences can have a special place in elderly people's memories and can therefore be recalled with special vividness and clarity. Aging does not routinely impair the recollection of the elderly, despite society's assumption that it does.⁷ Portelli has suggested that oral sources might compensate chronological distance with a much closer personal involvement.⁸ Older interviewees, therefore, could have had a lifetime of recalling their memories of slavery to those in their community, something that could have helped to preserve their version of slavery.

Other historians have disagreed. In direct reference to the WPA narratives, Donna J. Spindel wrote that 'historians need to be more realistic about the reliability of these documents. They must come to terms with the fact that the research into memory provides only a weak empirical basis for trusting the interviews'.⁹ She dissented from Escott, arguing that 'psychologists generally agree that an age deficit does exist with respect to memory, but have not been able to restrict it to a single process or mechanism'.¹⁰

Some historians have argued for alternative readings of the sources. Walter Johnson wrote of the need to read the published book-length slave narratives for 'symbolic truths that stretch beyond the facticity of specific events'.¹¹ Here he acknowledged

⁷ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, p. 7.

⁸ A. Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different' in R. Perks and A. Thomson, (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998), p. 68.

⁹ D. J. Spindel, 'Assessing Memory: Twentieth Century Slave Narratives Reconsidered', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 27 (1996), p. 260.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹¹ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 11.

that personal testimony does not always contain an accurate narrative: respondents discussed occurrences or themes that had become a significant 'truth' in their history or culture. Portelli has also asserted that 'the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "wrong" statements are still psychologically "true" and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts'.¹² Some incidents appeared so often in the narratives that Johnson argued that it seems certain that they are 'stock figures' drawn from other narratives rather than from the author's own experience. Yet as Johnson has written, these stock figures have 'a truth of their own' to tell. They gestured at the way the world looked to people.¹³

As part of the Federal Writers' Project, a small number of interviews were carried out with interviewees who were born after 1865, and therefore never experienced enslavement first-hand. According to Rawick these people were 'tapping an oral tradition about slavery among black people as well as the 'memories' of those who were born as slaves'.¹⁴ Such accounts are still important as they contain memories of enslaved people who were no longer alive to tell their version of slavery, but had told their stories to descendants or close friends.

Other social factors could have also led to an undercount. The elderly interviewees would often mistake the interviewer for a government worker who was there to discuss their poor relief. They might have played down the worst aspects of slavery, sexual exploitation for example, in order to gain favour. Moreover, in the context of the great depression, they may have looked upon slavery as a time when they were at

¹² Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', p. 68.

¹³ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 11.

¹⁴ Rawick, *TAS*, Vol.1, p. 20.

least granted a ration of food. The interviewees also often appear to have been suspicious that the government had ulterior motives in conducting these interviews and this would have made them even more cautious with their answers. According to Martin Jackson of Texas,

Lots of old slaves closes the door before they tell the truth about their days of slavery. When the door is open, they tell you how kind their masters was and how rosy it all was. You can't blame them for this, because they had plenty of early discipline, making them cautious about saying anything uncomplimentary about their masters.¹⁵

Harriet Jacobs put a similar point across in her autobiography, 'Some poor creatures have been so brutalized by the lash that they will sneak out of the way to give their masters free access to their wives and daughters'.¹⁶ Some formerly enslaved people under these circumstances were unlikely to have discussed sexual abuse that had happened such a long time ago. It is therefore highly unlikely that an interviewee would have seen it fitting to mention sexual abuse unless it was a highly significant part of their enslaved experience. Furthermore, a high number of interviewees give the names of those involved in the sexual abuse and places of residence; this information can be verified through census records. Sexual abuse was far more likely to be hidden under these circumstances rather than 'composed' or exaggerated.¹⁷

¹⁵ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 189.

¹⁶ Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, p. 39.

¹⁷ The term 'composure' is used by historians working with oral history to describe the process of memory making. Alastair Thompson has written that a person composes or constructs memories using the public language and meanings of their culture. See A. Thomson, 'Oral History', in A. Green and K. Troup, (eds), *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory* (Manchester, 1999), p. 241.

The frequency of references to sexual abuse in the interviews, despite the limiting factors of the context and the interviewer bias (discussed in the next section), demonstrate the significance of sexual exploitation under slavery for the formerly enslaved.

The interviewers

Chapter Two touched upon the backgrounds of some of the writers employed by the Federal Writers' Project. The aim of this section is to look at the effect that the writers had on the interviews. While historians have reflected on the lack of expertise of the writers employed on the project, some employees had been previously published and university educated, especially black writers who had to demonstrate an expertise in order to gain employment with the FWP. Alsberg had issued a statement in order to try to recruit recent university graduates, calling for 'near writers' and 'occasional writers'.¹⁸ Musher has commented that many of the writers were 'down-and-out' local whites who were 'literate but certainly not unemployed professional writers'.¹⁹

In reality, the calibre of the writers was not quite so uniform: many did, however, allow their white southern racial views to emerge through the interviews. Some writers, like Alfred E. Menn of Texas, had publishing backgrounds; but as the WPA project was a federal relief programme, government regulations required that 90 per

¹⁸ Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, pp. 47-8.

¹⁹ Musher, 'Contesting "The Way the Almighty Wants It"', p. 12. Research for this project has found that Alfred E. Menn, a writer for the Texas Writers' Project published *Texas As it is Today* and was previously a *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reporter. It is possible that other writers had similar backgrounds.

cent of federal writers participating were on relief and were local residents for two to three years. In addition to this, many of the more capable writers would leave for more permanent posts at newspapers and publishing houses, meaning that there was a steady loss of the more capable personnel throughout the project.²⁰ According to Yetman, especially in the early stages of the project, the more competent writers were most often assigned to the state guide projects, while the less skilled writers were involved in other activities.²¹

Writers received little training except a few written guidelines set out by the project directors. This led to inconsistencies in the interviewing technique and in the recording of the interviews. Interviews were usually taken down in pen after the interview, or were compiled from shorthand or scattered field notes, meaning that the recording of the interviews was at the mercy of the field worker's memory.²² Interviewers often failed to ask sufficient questions, did not pursue important subjects thoroughly, and seldom asked a uniform set of questions, and while Alsberg gave issued guidance against using stereotyped dialect, these were often ignored.²³ Some, like Alfred Menn did follow the interview procedure. Interviews that Menn conducted followed a similar pattern with responses to certain questions appearing in a similar order throughout his interviews. Others ignored procedure and asked leading and insulting questions. There are no set rules to follow when working with the FWP sources, and this demonstrates the need to create a workable framework by studying the background and methods of the individual interviewers more closely.

²⁰ Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, p. 152.

²¹ Yetman, 'The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection', p. 545.

²² Rawick, *TAS*, Vol.1, p. 17.

²³ Bailey, 'A Divided Prism', p. 403.

Directed questioning would have increased the chances of an interviewee discussing a more sensitive topic that they would not have strayed onto otherwise. Had sexual issues been on the list of questions devised by Lomax, then the response rate would have been much higher.²⁴ According to Musher, the questions that were sent to the writers ‘did not standardize the slave narrative collection’ and it is clear from these statistics that some, if not all, writers followed their own agenda and discussed (and of course chose not to discuss) particular topics according to their personal choice and interest.²⁵

Hortense Powdermaker, in 1939, wrote that the inter-racial climate in the South at that time was ‘not a separate phenomenon but a social climate, pervading every aspect of life for every individual in the community’.²⁶ Insight into this can be gained both from the information that the writer cared to ask for and record, and then the information that the editor in the state office chose to amend or delete. The legacy of slavery that ‘women were regarded as lascivious and therefore always consenting’ continued into the twentieth-century with the myth of the unrapeability of the black woman.²⁷ As highlighted through the work of U. B. Phillips (1918, 1929), racism was mainstream in the academy during this period.²⁸

²⁴ For list of questions given to interviewers see, *TAS*, Vol. 1, pp. 173-6.

²⁵ Musher, ‘Contesting the Way the Almighty Wants It’, p. 11.

²⁶ H. Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York, 1939) p. x.

²⁷ Even the Florida Supreme Court in 1918 decreed that ‘[w]hat has been said by some of our courts about an unchaste female being a rare exception is no doubt true where the population is composed largely of the Caucasian race, but we would blind ourselves to actual conditions if we adopted this rule where another race that is largely immoral constitutes an appreciable part of the population’, quoted in J. Bourke, *Rape: Sex, Violence, History* (Berkeley, 2007), p. 77.

²⁸ Yetman, ‘The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection’, p. 535.

Table 3.2. Sexual issues recorded by selected Texas interviewers

Name of interviewer	Race and gender of interviewer	Number of interviews conducted by interviewer	Sexual issue discussed	Number of interviews in which a particular issue was mentioned
B. E. Davis	White male	36	Master was father	1
			Forced breeding	14
			Rape	1
			Opposition to intermarriage	2
Sheldon Gauthier	White male	57	Forced breeding	7
			Rape	2
			Master was father	2
			Other white ancestor	1
Alfred E. Menn	White male	49	Father was other white man	7
			Forced breeding	3
			Master was father	1
Clarence Drake	White male	19	Forced breeding	6
			Sexual slavery	3
Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey	White male and white female	35	Forced breeding	3
			Master was father	1
			Master was grandfather	1

Note: This sample includes only interviews from the Texas sample and not interviews conducted in Texas with Louisiana former slaves. In the case of Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey, Dibble had also conducted interviews individually (and he conducted them with another white female, Rheebea Beehler).

Like the WPA writers, the white anthropologist, Hortense Powdermaker, studied black communities in the 1930s but even as a trained writer she exhibited an academic racism reminiscent of the WPA workers.²⁹ Powdermaker offered a highly sexualised view of black Americans. To her, the black woman lacked the morals and virtue she readily attributed to those of the white 'race' and wrote that for black people in the United States, '[s]ex "morality" took on a 'secondary, display value'. It is clear then how untrained white writers went into the interviews with ideas of black American hyper-sexuality clouding their judgements, questions and interpretations.³⁰

Individual beliefs shaped the issues that particular Writers' Project interviewers chose to ask about and record. Table 3.2 shows the unusual frequency with which some Texas interviewers recorded certain sexual issues. For example, B. E. Davis (a white male) recorded 'forced breeding' in fourteen of his thirty-four interviews. This is far higher than the percentage of interviews in the full Texas sample that mention forced breeding (9.6%), and also significantly higher than the writer who reported the second-highest number of 'forced breeding' cases, Sheldon Gauthier. Gauthier conducted 58 interviews, seven of which mentioned forced breeding.

Similarly, Alfred E. Menn recorded that seven of his interviewees had a white father, but would not reveal his identity. Menn recorded half of all interviews in which the formerly enslaved person had a white father who was not identified as the master or overseer. While it seems clear that Menn, like Davis, was using some form of directed questioning in his interviews, the interviewees obviously did not feel

²⁹ Powdermaker, *After Freedom*, pp. ix, 62.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

comfortable informing Menn of their father's identity. This is evident in the interview with James Burlison, who told Menn 'I just know one thing about my pappy, he was a white man. No-o-o I don't know his name'. Indeed Menn recognised this as a possible evasion, recording in the introduction '[h]e doesn't know or won't tell his name'.³¹ Menn seemingly did not have the trust of the interviewees. In other cases, however, writers could have deliberately left out references to white fathers.

Lomax, the head of the project, and a white Southerner, instructed that 'the Federal Writers' Project is not interested in taking sides on any question. The worker should not censor any materials collected regardless of its nature.' Despite this, the interviews would have been shaped by the weight of the writers' experience as southerners, and their assumptions about racial characteristics.³²

Further reflections on white interviewers: the case of Fred Dibble

While the interviewers had a set list of questions to ask, many of the interviewees who gave more detailed information were interviewed in Texas by a white man, Fred Dibble, who judging by the frequency of the issue in his interviews, was particularly interested in the parentage of former slaves.

³¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 527.

³² Quoted in Yetman, 'The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection', p. 550

Table 3.3. Selected interviewers and references to white fathers

Name of interviewer	Number of interviews conducted	Number of interviews that mention a white father	Percentage of interviews conducted by each interviewer that mention a white father
Fred Dibble	35	6	17.1
Fred Dibble <i>with</i> Bernice Grey	58	3	5.2
Alfred E. Menn	57	6	10.5
B.E. Davis	42	3	7.1
Ada Davis	40	2	5
Sheldon Gauthier	67	2	3
Alex Hampton	48	1	2.1

Note: Interviewers in this table are those who both mention white fathers *and* conducted more than 30 interviews of the total sample of 773 interviews used for this thesis. Other interviewers had white fathers mentioned in a higher percentage of their interviews, but conducted relatively few interviews. For example the interviewer 'W.E. Smith' conducted just two interviews; one of these mentioned a white father.

Table 3.3 shows that in the interviews conducted by Dibble, almost twenty percent mentioned a white father: all of these references, except one, specifically indicated that their father was the master. While others such as Alfred E. Menn found significant numbers of interviewees who mentioned a white father, almost all of his interviewees did not divulge or refused to tell Menn the identity of their father, despite him asking. The difference in the frequency of references to white fathers when Dibble conducted the interviews with the white female interviewer, Bernice Grey, is significant, and perhaps indicates a specific policy of the Texas Writers'

Project leaders to keep Dibble's directed questioning at bay. George P. Rawick in his introduction to the Texas volumes of *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series 2* wrote that there was a file in the Houston Metropolitan Archives containing correspondence about Dibble's work: the main issues seemed to be his use of black dialect and the content of some of his interviews. Dibble, Rawick wrote, had remained faithful to what his interviewees had said, though state editors rewrote many of Dibble's interviews.³³

It is worth noting, therefore, how much opens up when there was an interviewer who was closely interested in finding out about issues that are central to study. If there had been many more like Dibble who were closely interested in the issue of white fathers, the calculation of risk is likely to have been much higher.

Race of interviewers

The WPA interviews were recorded at a time when the South was still segregated and the Jim Crow laws still prevailed. Jim Crow etiquette and white supremacist attitudes prevailed virtually unchallenged in those years. According to C. Vann Woodward, '[s]egregation was at its fully developed height, lynchings were still numerous in spite of a decline and peonage sustained by force and terror was still a way of life known to millions of blacks'.³⁴ Few black writers were able to gain

³³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, pp. xxx-xxxi. After I contacted Houston Metropolitan Archives in April 2015 during the preparation of this thesis, archivists there stated that they are unaware of such a file on Dibble's work.

³⁴ Woodward, 'History from Slave Sources', p. 473.

Table 3.4. Louisiana: Correlation between the race and gender of interviewer and discussion of sexual issue

Race and gender of interviewer or pair of interviewers	Number of interviews conducted by	Number of interviews mentioning sexual issue	% of interviews mentioning sexual issue
Black male	16	8	50
Black male with white female	3	1	33.3
Black female	5	0	0
White female	120	26	21.7
White male	61	25	41
White male and white female	24	4	16.7
Total	229	64	

Note: 17 interviews in the Louisiana sample did not include the name of interviewer. Only the Louisiana sample is taken into consideration in this table as Texas did not have any black interviewers.

employment on WPA projects, and states such as New York and Missouri employed officials who had ‘prejudice against negroes’.³⁵ When the interviewer was black, the testimony they recorded represents, however, some of the most powerful that historians have to work with.

Crawford, in his quantitative analysis, found that in the overall sample, 50 per cent of the ex-slaves interviewed by blacks characterised their masters as ‘good’ or ‘very

³⁵ Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, pp. 161, 194.

good', compared to 71 per cent of those interviewed by whites.³⁶ This demonstrates how the interracial dynamic of the interviews affected interview testimony.

Crawford and Rawick found that the interviewees seem to have been reluctant to claim white parentage and that the interviewers were reluctant to record that particular respondents had a white parent.³⁷ In both states, interviewees were least likely to discuss sexual issues with a white woman, and because women conducted almost half of the Texas interviews, this indicates a significant undercount of sexual abuse in this sample.

Historians James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle found compelling evidence of a significant calculated deception within 1930s interviews. Susan Hamilton, interviewed in South Carolina was interviewed twice, once by a white woman (Jessie Butler) who allowed the interviewee to believe that she was from the welfare office, and a second time by a black man (Augustus Ladson) who told her that he was there to hear about her experiences of slavery. The first interviewer also asked leading questions; Hamilton was asked if it was fair that the master should have received the seven dollars a month she earned as she was hired out to mind children. 'Course it been fair', was the response. This was far from the information given to the black interviewer who was told of the 'brazen white race' who hung women 'frum de ceilin' of buildin's an' whipped with only supin tied 'round her lower part of de body' and people who would die 'frum a broken heart' when loved ones were sold away.³⁸ Davidson and Lytle described a society where enslaved

³⁶ Crawford, *Quantified Memory*, p. 40.

³⁷ Rawick, *TAS*, Vol.1, p. 20.

³⁸ J. W. Davidson & M. H. Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York, 1992), pp. 159-68.

people would commonly use deception as a means of survival. Emily West has similarly described the benefits that a ‘hesitant, quiet front’ would have for the enslaved, ‘who were less likely to feel the wrath of their owners or other whites if they did nothing to antagonize them’.³⁹

In the sample of interviews used for this project, there are two black writers for the state of Louisiana who conducted interviews: Octave Lilly (DWP) and Watt McKinney (LWP). As the sample is partially composed from those who had lived in Louisiana under slavery but interviewed elsewhere in the South, there are black interviewers from other states in the WPA collection. These include Anna Pritchett (Indiana), Grace E. White (Missouri), Ethel L. Fleming (Mississippi), Rogers (first name unknown, Maryland), and Samuel S. Taylor (Arkansas). Table 3.4 shows that the presence of a black man at the interview significantly increased the likelihood of the discussion of sexual issues. This is despite John Lomax steering the black writers away from the topics that had previously interested them, ‘racial uplift, slave resistance, and attitudes towards freedom’.⁴⁰

The interviewer’s voice is not often present in the transcript, but one Louisiana interview conducted by Zoe Posey, the daughter of a confederate general, shows a clear manipulation. Posey interviewed elderly formerly enslaved woman, Mary Harris. Harris discussed the cruel treatment of slaves but was met with Posey’s defensive attitude. Posey responded (and recorded in the typescript):

³⁹ E. West, ‘Dolly, Lavinia, Maria, and Susan: Enslaved Women in Antebellum South Carolina, *South Carolina Women, Volume 1: Their Lives and Times* (Athens, 2009), p. 133.

⁴⁰ Musher, ‘Contesting the Way the Almighty Wants It’, p. 6.

We admitted that slavery was a most unfortunate thing – but that all masters were not cruel. Old slaves still tell of their love for ‘ole Miss’ and ‘ole Marse’, and the loyalty and love that still exists them could never have been created in rancous hearts

Immediately Harris retracted her statement and clarified that it was the foreign slave-owners that were cruel, rather than the American slave-owners. Posey had manipulated the interview significantly. When she returned to Harris’ house a second time, Harris’ son was waiting ‘as if standing guard’ to tell Posey:

Yes’m I’m bitter and the more I think about it the madder I get. Look at me they say I could pass for white. My mother is bright too. And why? Because the man who owned and sold my mother was her father. But that’s not all. That man I hate with every fibre of my body and why? A brute like that who could sell his own child into unprincipled hands is a beast- the power, just because he had the power, and thirst for money

Posey left the interview and made light of the situation at the end of the typescript, writing that ‘it was our first experience with a madman’.⁴¹

Another white interviewer, Irene Robertson of the Arkansas Writers’ Project, who also conducted interviews with a small number of people who had lived in Louisiana under slavery, showed clear disrespect toward the interviewee, Betty Krump:

This old woman lives in among the white population and rents the house next to her to a white family...she tells white people, the younger ones, to call her Mrs. Krump. She didn’t pull that one on me. She once told this white lady

⁴¹ Zoe Posey interview with Mary Harris, WPA-Ex-Slave Narrative Project Collection at Louisiana Southern University.

storekeeper to call her Mrs.they all know she is impudent talking. She is old, black, wealthy, and arrogant.⁴²

The distrust of white interviewers by the formerly enslaved people, and the disrespect shown towards the formerly enslaved people by the interviewers is in extreme contrast to an account of an interview with ‘Mrs Martin’ conducted by black poet Octave Lilly Jr who worked for the Dillard Writers’ Project. Lilly gave a two-page analysis of Martin’s testimony and described Martin as a ‘stubborn independent spirit uncompromisingly bent on the purpose of exposing a mad era of debauchery and moral decadence in the South, which had its genesis in the enslavement of the Negro’.

Lilly had a strategy in gaining the trust of his interviewees. He disclosed that the interview with Mrs Martin was aided by two of Mrs Martin’s grandchildren, who assured their grandmother that the interviewer was interested in her claims of a pension for her father...they insisted that their grandmother would not talk unless [unless] she thought something was being done for her....Ethical values aside, the deception proved an “open sesame” to the door of her memory and there flowed therefrom a remarkable tale.⁴³

The confidence in Lilly’s good intentions led the grandchildren to help him with his interview, and the relationship he built was very unlike the hostile relationship of Zoe Posey with Mary Harris and her son. While Irene Robertson was dismissive of the testimony of the formerly enslaved woman, Lilly encouraged the reader to reserve judgement of the interview that he described as a ‘significant’ document:

⁴² *TAS*, Vol. 2, Part 4, p. 216.

⁴³ Octave Lilly interview with Louisa Sidney Martin, 17 February 1938, MCC, UNO.

let those who have eyes to read and ears to hear decide for themselves whether the record is a true one or a mere imaginative creation. And if the latter instance be their decision, they pronounce a brilliant commentary upon the intellectual discernment of an unlettered Negro ex-slave⁴⁴

A poem published soon after the end of the writers' project also demonstrated the respect that Lilly had for the interviewees:

Old people sitting down on broken chairs—
 Black, brown and yellow bright against the gray
 Of kneeling houses praying for repairs...
 Houses condemned, but still allowed to stay.
 I never see these wisened faces, sense
 Their chatter (spoken in a low rambling tones)
 But that my heart is bowed in reverence
 Before the shrine of wise old men and crones.
 But reverence from me is powerless
 To soothe the sorrow that within them lives.
 They go through life, unable to suppress
 The sufferings that memory revives.
 For these old folk there is no freedom save
 Forgetfulness – fast in some welcome grave.⁴⁵

Lilly clearly embraced his role on the project, and was able to gain detailed accounts of enslavement from the few interviewees whom he was able to interview.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Letter from O. Lilly, Jr to editor of *Esquire*, New Orleans, 12 April 1938. Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

For some interviewees, however, the identity of the interviewer was unlikely to have affected their willingness to discuss the trauma of enslavement. Sarah Ford told her interviewer that she believed ‘de bad things what has gone past ought to be buried way down deep an’ let rot.⁴⁶ If Ford’s interviewer had been properly trained in oral history and had maintained contact with the interviewee after the original interview, additional information might have been gained.

In her important study concerned with surviving sexual violence in modern Britain, Liz Kelly wrote that women would actively ‘forget’ traumatic sexual violence. This important coping strategy may have been employed by the formerly enslaved too. After Kelly’s original contact, interviewees often made contact with her to let her know that they had remembered details that they had failed to mention in the original meeting.⁴⁷ While Alsberg, in his instructions to WPA interviewers, wrote that the more ‘interesting’ interviewees should be revisited, he left the topics that may be of ‘interest’ up to the individual writer. Before Mrs Elizabeth Ross Hite, of the Louisiana Writers’ project told her university-educated black interviewer, Watt McKinney, about her experiences as a slave, she informed him of her ‘nervous condition’ which ‘prevents her from recalling everything that she knows happened during slavery’.⁴⁸ Other women would have been almost certain to hide any trace of a traumatic past of sexual violence, instead presenting a veneer – similar to the calculated deception referred to earlier – that would have masked their association with the oppressive culture of sexual violation. Dalene Clark Hine referred to this as the ‘culture of dissemblance’ that existed far into the twentieth century, a behaviour

⁴⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1360; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, pp. 1973-6.

⁴⁷ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, pp. 8-9, 145,

⁴⁸ Interview with Mrs Elizabeth Ross Hite by Watt McKinney. <http://www.state.lib.la.us>, accessed 20 May 2014.

and attitude exhibited by black women that ‘created the appearance of openness and disclosure but actually shielded the truth of their inner lives and selves’.⁴⁹ The long-term psychological effects of sexual violence on the US black community has been touched on by Cathy McDaniels-Wilson, though remains an area much in need of further study. McDaniels-Wilson does, however, comment on ‘racism’s historic impact’ which is partly made up of ‘disassociative behaviour’, rather than ‘dissemblance’ which is a conscious façade of calmness and ‘pulling it together’, disassociation is an unconscious method of coping that involves forgetting oppression and abuse.⁵⁰

While this thesis exclusively comments on the rape of enslaved women by white men, there is significant evidence for the rape of enslaved women by enslaved black men too, and this issue will be touched on in Chapter Eight on forced breeding.⁵¹ In cases that involve the rape of a black woman by a black man, the increased trust in black male interviewers is complicated. Liz Kelly wrote that one of the effects of sexual violence is decreased trust, and her own study relied on numerous meetings with victims, establishing and maintain trust being of the utmost importance in sociological research.⁵² The 1930s interviewees were born into an antebellum society in which, Rothman has written, the ‘forced silence of slaves and their families in regard to interracial sexual abuse generally contributed to the overall

⁴⁹ D. Clark Hine ‘Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West’, *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1989), pp. 912-20.

⁵⁰ C. McDaniels-Wilson, ‘The Psychological Aftereffects of Racialized Sexual Violence’, in M. E. Fredrickson, D. M. Walters & D. Clark Hine (eds.) *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana, 2013), pp. 191-206.

⁵¹ For a recent discussion of this see W. King, “‘Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things’: The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls and Young Women in Slavery and Freedom”, *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 99, No.3, pp. 173-96.

⁵² Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 9.

stability of the racial and gender orders'.⁵³ Formerly enslaved women were clearly reluctant to tell all about certain aspects of their enslavement to interviewers whom they had met once or twice, even if they too were black members of a society that operated under the laws of Jim Crow.

State-level editing

The second stage of the editing process was at the state level. This process followed no set guidelines. In fact after 1939 when the local sponsors were found to cover the costs of the programme, Jerre Mangione wrote that state sponsors 'little experienced in editorial matters, acquired more influence than was healthy for the Project'.⁵⁴

Rawick, in the introduction to the Texas volumes of *Supplement Series Two* points to a high-degree of 'whitewashing' and 'cover-up' in the editing process.⁵⁵ An example of this can be found in the interview with Elvira Boles, a field worker born in 1843 who moved to Texas from Mississippi during the Civil War. In the version sent to Washington, state editors removed the line, 'I's a child of the master... Ray, his wife, she sold me'.⁵⁶ References to sexual exploitation, the Ku Klux Klan, punishment, and even examples of a higher degree of social contact between blacks and whites than was expected in the 1930s Jim Crow South were all left out of interviews to be sent to the capital. From the comparison between the two available sets of Texas interviews, one less edited than the other, it is possible to get closer to the real words of the ex-slave interviewed, their experiences under slavery and also

⁵³ Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighbourhood*, p. 136

⁵⁴ J. Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Rawick, *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. xxviii.

⁵⁶ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 105.

learn a lot about the period in which the interviews were recorded and the writers themselves.

Sharon Ann Musher wrote that the interviews were shaped by three unstated principles, 'paternalism, authenticity, and readability'. These findings, according to Musher, 'indicate the ways in which biases inherent in the collection have shaped past scholarly work, in particular in Genovese's *Roll Jordan Roll*, but also suggest a new approach to the sources for future research'.⁵⁷ Information from the edited interviews has been used throughout the historiography of slavery in the United States, inevitably leading historians to portray a more sympathetic system than they would have, had they had looked at the original transcripts. This project moves forward with the advice of Musher by finding more meaningful ways to work with these interviews. As Louisiana interviews were not sent to Washington, the state-level of editing process was unlikely to have been completed.

The few remaining copies of the Louisiana interviews are original typescripts and so are likely to have only been edited by the interviewer themselves as they copied up their handwritten notes ready to be sent to the state office. One interview is available in the handwritten format and is in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center at Northwestern University. This archive possesses the original handwritten interview with formerly enslaved man Ceceil George, conducted by Maude Wallace; the

⁵⁷ Musher, 'Contesting the Way the Almighty Wants It', p.5; Sommerville in 'Moonlight, Magnolias, and Brigadoon; or, "Almost Like Being in Love"', pp. 68-82 wrote that Genovese's portrait of interracial sex between master and slave ignored 'voluminous evidence that slaves endured unspeakable horrors and degradation at the hands of their masters', but it should be remembered that *Roll, Jordan, Roll* was published in 1976 before the supplemental volumes of *The American Slave* were released. Studies conducted between these dates therefore could have used the edited versions of the interviews in their analysis without full knowledge of the implications.

paragraphs had been torn apart and taped down onto a sheet of paper.⁵⁸ Of course, it is not possible to know what information (if any) was omitted, or why the editor (either Wallace or a state editor) chose to rearrange the interview. We do, however, have a large number of interviews for Texas for which we have the edited and unedited versions. Texas state editors revised a large number of the interviews, 275 out of 591.⁵⁹ Rawick believed that Davis had a pool of editors, possibly drawn from the pool of interviewers who worked together to edit the narratives consistently.⁶⁰

There were four distinct types of editing: first, the changing of details to alter the meaning or severity of critique of slavery; secondly, the omitting of sections or names to minimise embarrassment to living relatives of abusive slave-owners; thirdly, the complete fabrication of events; or finally, the withholding the interview from the Washington headquarters. When Rawick was collecting the WPA interviews for publication he found that some interviews were held back in state archives because they were ‘too hot’ to handle. In Mississippi, he found a very conscious effort to sabotage the interview sample, and in Alabama, some were held back because they did not meet the required format. Georgia just sent off a selection of their interviews and in Texas over 4,000 pages of slave narratives were held back.⁶¹ This final section will discuss firstly the editing principles of Texas offices before moving on to analyse the editorial practices when it came to sexual issues.

⁵⁸ For further discussion see Pound thesis, ‘Slave to the Ex-Slave Narratives’, p. 23.

⁵⁹ As discussed previously, because of the sampling method used to create the Louisiana database of interviews in which interviews from other state projects with people who had been enslaved in Louisiana were used, the number of interviews in my Texas sample is 527. Some interviews in the Texas volumes of *The American Slave* had already been used for the Louisiana state study.

⁶⁰ Mendiola, ‘Reading Ex-Slave Narratives’, p. 45.

⁶¹ Rawick, *TAS*, Vol. 1, pp. 4-8.

Even the omission of small details can change the meaning of an interview. For example, the unedited version of the interview that the white man Wm. V. Ervin carried out with Mrs Thomas Johns contains interviewer notes revealing that Ervin knew the former overseer of the plantation on which Mrs Johns was enslaved. While the editor in the state office may not have wanted to change the meaning of the interview, omitting this detail changes the reader's interpretation of the narrative. Mrs Johns was unlikely to have given a harsh critique of life on this plantation to a friend of her former white overseer but she may have spoken more honestly to someone from outside her community. The editorial decision to omit this detail meant that the reader of the edited interview is not able to make this judgement. Similar small omissions by those untrained in oral history were made in the majority of Texas interviews.

While there is no information on Texan editing principles, Alsberg told the 'Dies Committee' that some of the material he received from the state offices was calculated to promote class hatred and reassured the committee that this would be removed from guides before publication.⁶² In addition, one of Washington's copyreaders had to speak to the Dies Committee regarding the changes she had been making to guides that discussed the black American presence. She told the committee that she had been taking out references to 'the struggle between capital and labour; that the Negro had been downtrodden' and descriptions of black

⁶² The Dies committee investigated the WPA projects, including the Federal Writers' Project and the Federal Theatre Project for alleged 'un-American' activity and suspicion of ties to communism. See K. Dossett, Gender and the Dies Committee Hearings on the Federal Theatre Project, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2013), pp. 993-1017.

Americans as ‘underprivileged’.⁶³ The editing decisions made on personal beliefs are revealing of the impact of individual white editors on the interview collection.

A comparison of the edited and unedited interviews reveals significant racial stereotyping by the state editors. A memorandum sent to all states in 1937 with ‘suggestions to interviewers’ stated that ‘the details of the interview should be reported as accurately as possible in the language of the original statement’; ‘readers are repelled by pages sprinkled with misspellings, commas and apostrophes’, and that ‘truth to idiom’ over pronunciation was paramount. These guidelines were frequently overlooked by the state editors, even when adhered to by the interviewers.⁶⁴ Correct spellings and grammar in the original interview typescript were commonly changed to dialect in the edited versions. The words ‘educated’ and ‘girls’ in Mary Reynolds’s interview by the white woman Heloise Foreman were changed to ‘edicated’ and ‘gals’ by the state editors.⁶⁵ Victor Duhon, a ‘polished gentleman’, was interviewed in French, but the state editor translated it into an English patois.⁶⁶ Menn’s interview with Rosina Slaughter read ‘When I was a girl, I was Rosina Slaughter’, the state editors changed this to ‘When I’s a gal, I’s Rosina Slaughter’. In another interview ‘John Crawford is my name’ was changed to ‘John Crawford am me’. These changes all served to make the interviewee sound less educated.⁶⁷

⁶³ Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal*, pp. 287, 304.

⁶⁴ Memorandum to the state directors of Federal Writers’ Project from Henry G. Alsberg, 30 July 1937. Printed in *TAS*, Vol. 1 pp. 173-8.

⁶⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 8, p. 3289.

⁶⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1238-1241, edited version *TAS*, Vol. 4, Parts 1 & 2. pp. 307-8.

⁶⁷ Mendiola, ‘Reading the Ex-Slave Narratives’, p. 46.

Complete fabrication of interview material occurred in the narrative of John Crawford. Crawford's discussion of the Ku Klux Klan included their breaking up a religious meeting. This was completely omitted from the copy sent to Washington, and in its place read 'De Ku Klux made a lot of devilment round-about dat county. Dey allus chasin' some nigger and beatin' him up. But some dem niggars sh' serve it. When dey gits free. Dey gits wild. Dey won't work or do nothin' and thinks dey don't have to'.⁶⁸

A similar editorial deletion was made in the interview with Mary Reynolds; her statement that her 'white folks' were 'in hell' was deleted. In Sarah Ford's interview, references to forced breeding, 'sexual slavery' and a description of slavery as 'bad times' were all deleted too.⁶⁹ The state editors censored information that was deemed too critical of slave owners.

The editorial changes in the interview with Gabriel Gilbert of Texas are particularly interesting as the references to the Ku Klux Klan were deleted, as were references to white boys fighting and to Gilbert's upbringing in the slave-owner's house. References that indicated intimate relations between the 'races' were seemingly unwelcome. In the same interview, details of young white men on the plantation who fathered children by enslaved women was retained, yet a reference to the outright rape of women in the field was deleted. The editorial changes were geared

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶⁹ Unedited Mary Reynolds interview, *TAS SS2*, Vol.7, Part 8, p. 3289. Unedited Sarah Ford interview, *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1358-69.

Table 3.5. Issues omitted from Texas interview sample

Issues	Number of Interviews (19)*
Forced breeding/Forced breeding	10
White father	3
Other white heritage	3
Birth control	2
Mother was part-white (part of master's family)	1
Inter-racial sex	1
Name of master when forced breeding was mentioned	1

Note: Number of issues edited out is actually 21 as two of the interviews mentioned two separate 'sexual issues'

toward making sexual relationships between white men and enslaved women seem consensual.

While there are no recognisable editorial decisions for Louisiana interviews, the tendency of Texas editors to portray any interracial sex as consensual is echoed in the Louisiana State Guide. In this guide they describe 'colonies of mulattoes, dating from antebellum days, ...living apart from the white planters and negroes around them', thus geographically and ideologically distancing the presence of light-skinned black people from the institution of slavery. Similarly, the guide states that the 'intermixture of negroes and whites was not regarded with any great degree of social abhorrence; in fact, during the first half of the nineteenth-century quadroon females

lived in open concubinage with highly-regarded young men of the city'.⁷⁰ The guide acknowledges the institution of plaçage, but elevated the status of the men involved and removed any suspicion of immoral behaviour from the 'highly-regarded' young men.

In the sample of 102 Texas interviews that mention sexual exploitation, 56 were edited. Of these 56, 19 had a sexual issue edited out. An interview had a higher chance of being edited if it did mention a sexual issue.⁷¹ Table 3.5 shows that discussion of 'forced breeding' was the most common reference to sexual abuse to be edited out of interviews. More than half of the subset of edited interviews that mentioned sexual issues contained references to this, whereas interviews with those who claimed to have a white father were edited less frequently. Forced breeding appears to have been a particular source of shame for those in the South.

Social mores could have also dictated the editing of sexual issues; certain issues were deemed unsuitable for their imagined readership. Potential incest was deleted from the narrative of Cato Carter. His interview retained the information that his master's brother was his father (perhaps because Cato revealed that his father put up money for him to go to school, casting him in a more favourable light). The fact that his mother was part of his white family (though it is unclear how she is related to them) was, however, deleted.⁷²

⁷⁰ Louisiana Writers' Project, *Louisiana Guide to the State*, p. 88.

⁷¹ 54.9% of interviews mentioning sexual exploitation were edited, whereas 47.9% of interviews in which sexual exploitation was not mentioned were edited.

⁷² *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 202.

Tucker Smith discussed the frequency of interracial sex in the 1930s, which was entirely edited out of his interview. This must have been deemed wholly unsuitable for a white readership in an era of Jim Crow:

Child, I'se never want to go away from this here old south no more long as I lives cause them there northern negroes who has white women for their wives and white men has negro women for their wives, they sure so not care how hungry and cold you gets. That is awful for the people to mix their blood that way, 'cause their children are neither white nor black, just a mixed race of people that will soon run out to where they will not be any account.⁷³

The information that Ben Simpson's sister had been raped was left in his interview, but the following was edited out: '[m]y mother was all the negro women he have until sister Emma get big enough to take care [of] all them [seven] negro men, cause she was the wife of all seven negro slaves boss.' Sarah Allen's mother told her '[d]on' you let dem chillen call you niggah. Dey's jus' a little colored blood in you.' The editors, however, chose to leave this out of the interview, thus obscuring the fact that this formerly enslaved person was the product of interracial sex across many generations.⁷⁴

This analysis has suggested that the writers and editors of the Texas Writers' Project did not attempt to remove interracial sex completely from the narratives, but the interviews were edited in a way that would minimise references to sexual issues. Editors were quite accepting of individual instances of white fathers or ancestors, but wanted to leave out references to widespread inter-racial sex or information that

⁷³ *TAS*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3671.

⁷⁴ *TAS*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 44.

would lead the reader to think that forced breeding and sexual abuse were endemic in the system of slavery.

Rawick reminds us that where the interviewee mentioned cruel treatment, the narratives are systematically and heavily biased in the direction of grossly exaggerating the humaneness of the institution.⁷⁵ For this reason, we have issues relating to under-representation which must be taken into account alongside the final analysis. This chapter has additionally found significant undercounting factors that relate to the age of interviewees and the race of interviewers. A more systematic calculation of undercount factors is included in the next chapter.

⁷⁵ *TAS*, Vol. 1, p. 15.

Chapter Four

Quantitative Results of 1930s Interviews

The aim of this chapter is to provide a quantitative framework for understanding the extent and nature of the sexual interference that slaveholders and other white men imposed upon enslaved women and girls. The previous chapter investigated the contextual issues surrounding the collection of ex-slave interviews and concluded that unless adjustments are made for a series of skews, the quantitative analysis of 1930s ex-slave interviews is extremely likely to provide an undercount of all sexual issues.

Considering this undercount, this chapter will present data on the rape of black women, and the percentage of interviews in which an enslaved person disclosed that their mother was black and their father was white. Certain issues will be investigated further, such as the identity of the white father (slave's owner, overseer, or another white man), and the type of slaveholding unit (large or small). The chapter presents data on the extent and level of awareness of slave breeding for economic gain, as well as evidence on sexual slavery and the small numbers of interviews that mention prostitution or consensual sex, or which mention resistance to sexual exploitation.

Issues trailed in the previous chapter affect the interpretation of quantitative data and the way it is presented in this chapter. Indications are that the slightly lower percentage of interviews that mention sexual abuse in the Texas sample compared with Louisiana can be attributed to three main factors. The first is lower average age at emancipation of the Texas interviewees when compared to interviewees from

Louisiana (see table 4.1); the second factor is the absence of any black interviewers in the Texas sample; and thirdly, female interviewees were more likely (than male interviewees) to discuss sexual abuse than male interviewees and the Texas sample contained a lower proportion of female interviewees than the sample from Louisiana. All three of these issues are revisited later in this chapter.

For these reasons, close attention will be paid to the individual Texas and Louisiana samples wherever possible and appropriate. Data will be presented in tables that reflect the different state subsets, and in the final section of this chapter the skews discussed above will be studied in more detail and the real levels of sexual abuse that may have been reported had these skews not been a factor will be estimated. Though any percentage adjustment that takes into account these skews will be no more than a rough estimate, it is likely to give a clearer indication of the real scale of sexual exploitation in the South.

While numbers presented in tables often seem small, it can be useful to imagine the significance of these statistics against an overall slave population. For example, if approximately 7.3 per cent of former slaves in Louisiana (see Table 4.1) mentioned that they had a white father, this could potentially mean that around 24,000 of Louisiana's slave population of 330,000 were fathered by white men (if the base figure of 7.3 per cent is taken as an undercount as this study suggests that it should, the number increases beyond 24,000). If it is assumed that these former slaves were products of rape, or at the very best semi-consensual sex, then this number would undoubtedly be enough to create a climate of trauma and fear in any slave

community.¹ In addition to this, not every rape would produce a pregnancy so more rapes occurred than the number of white fathers suggest.

Existing quantitative studies

From the 1970s, when George P. Rawick began the huge task of locating and publishing the thousands of WPA interviews, growing numbers of historians have made substantial use of these narratives.² Almost all of these historians, however, have -- like Eugene Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (1975) -- mined the interviews for quotations and have taken a qualitative approach to this source base.³ A minor exception to the strictly qualitative approach to the interviews is Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, whose work was touched upon in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. These writers concluded that the extent of sexual exploitation had previously been over emphasised. In order to support this claim, Fogel and Engerman, in *Time on the Cross* (1974), drew quantified evidence from the interviews.⁴ In his 1979 book, *Slavery Remembered: a Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives*, Paul Escott made more substantial, but not entirely rigorous, quantitative use of the interviews. By far the most serious quantitative

¹ Sexual abuse existed on a continuum under slavery and while some enslaved women may have received parctical material benefits through sexual relationships with white men this is difficult to reconcile with the realities of the coercive nature of the majority (or all) of these relationships. See Chapter Five and Chapter Six for discussions of the concept of 'consent' under slavery.

² A large core of interviews had been deposited in the National Archives in Washington, but thousands of others were scattered across various state repositories. For Rawick's published volume, see the aforementioned Rawick (ed.), *TAS I, II, SSI & SS2*.

³ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. For a more recent qualitative study see F. Yarborough, 'Power, Perception, and Interracial Sex: Former Slaves Recall a Multiracial South,' *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 71 (2005), pp. 559-89.

⁴ Fogel and Engerman reported that 4.5 per cent of the interviewees said that one of their parents was white, and concluded that this statistic supported their assertion that the extent of sexual exploitation had been previously over-emphasised by abolitionists and by later historians. Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 133. An article by David Thomas Bailey reproduced Fogel and Engerman's statistic. See Bailey, 'A Divided Prism'.

examination of these sources came, however, from Stephen Crawford in his important unpublished PhD, 'Quantified Memory' (1980).⁵ Escott and Crawford's studies, although they only devoted a few pages to the issues that are central to the present project form useful reference points for the present study.

Paul Escott's *Slavery Remembered* is essentially a qualitative study of the interviews, but in order to support arguments on some key issues Escott took a quantitative approach. He reported that six per cent of slaves interviewed claimed that their father was white. Although his discussion of sexual issues was restricted to a few pages, he offered interesting findings in regard to slave breeding and created a table listing the different ways in which the slave master interfered with the pairings on the plantation. Escott offered figures for the percentages of slaves who showed an awareness of such issues as forced sex (5.8%), slave breeding (4.1%), and miscegenation (2.5%), but it was not always clear how his samples on these issues had been constructed.⁶

Stephen Crawford's unpublished PhD dissertation remains the only essentially quantitative study of the interviews. For his dissertation he used the first set of the interviews that were published by Rawick (sixteen volumes of WPA interviews together with a further volume based on interviews carried out by Fisk University students). He used these sources to quantify aspects of slave life ranging from workload and diet to family life and sexual exploitation. Crawford's carefully constructed study considered factors such as the differences in the responses of the

⁵ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*; Crawford, 'Quantified Memory'

⁶ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, pp. 44-47.

interviewees when there was a black and a white interviewer. For example, Crawford found that in the overall sample, 50 per cent of the ex-slaves interviewed by blacks characterised their masters as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, compared to 71 per cent of those interviewed by whites.⁷

The colour of interviewer also showed up as important in questions over parentage, as Crawford found that ex-slaves were often reluctant to claim white parentage when talking to white interviewers and were especially reluctant to report that their master was their father.⁸ Depending on whether the formerly enslaved person was interviewed by a white or black interviewer (with the black interviewers gaining the higher results), Crawford’s statistics tell us that six to ten per cent of the interviewees reported having white fathers.⁹ He found that 15 per cent of single-parent, mother-headed households were due to the ex-slave having a white father.¹⁰ He calculated that slave women who had their first child by their master then went on have fewer children than those women who had their first child by a black man.¹¹ He therefore found that the master could suffer economically by having a sexual relationship with his slaves (a result which follows the model of Fogel and Engerman in *Time on the Cross*). Although Crawford’s discussion of sexual issues was restricted to a few pages, his results are important, especially since they form a broad multi-state background against which to set the much more detailed Louisiana and Texas results that are presented in this chapter.

⁷ Crawford, ‘Quantified Memory’, p. 40.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

This project is the first systematic state study to use all available interviews for a particular state. Whereas Thelma Jennings found interracial sex mentioned in 12.26% of interviews, her sample consisted only of female interviewees.¹² The present study uses all available interviews, male as well as female, for the states of Louisiana and Texas and even so has obtained a slightly higher percentage of interviews (13.4 per cent) which mention some form of interracial sex (including rape/white fathers/white grandfathers/other white ancestors). While Jennings does not provide her definition of ‘interracial sex’, as her sample comprised solely of women who were over the age of 12 at emancipation, this figure is surprisingly low. The percentage of ‘slave breeding’ references in Jennings sample (4.86 per cent) is also very low. Again, as ‘slave breeding’ is not defined, it is possible that Jennings interpreted this practice differently than the interpretation used in the present study. The final section of this chapter demonstrates that female interviewees were much more likely to mention a sexual issue than male interviewees, and even more likely to mention a sexual issue when interviewed by a black interviewer. A sample consisting solely of female interviewees from the sample used in this study would have indicated a much higher level of sexual abuse.

Initial Indications of the Scale of Sexual Abuse

Table 4.1 provides a preliminary overview of the various sexual issues discussed in the 1930s interviews. The most commonly mentioned sexual issue was ‘forced breeding’ (10.5 per cent of interviews), followed by the percentages for white fathers

¹² T. Jennings, “‘Us Colored Women Had to Go Though A Plenty’: Sexual Exploitation of African-American Slave Women”, *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1990), pp. 45-74.

Table 4.1. Louisiana and Texas: Frequency with which sexual issues were mentioned in 1930s interviews

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Louisiana		Texas		Total (Louisiana and Texas combined)	
	Number of interviews	% of LA interviews	Number of interviews	% of TX interviews	Number of interviews	% of interviews
Forced breeding	28	11.4	53	10.1	81	10.5
Rape	18	7.3	8	1.5	26	3.4
White Father	18	7.3	28	5.3	46	6
White Grandfather	7	2.8	9	1.7	16	2.1
Other white ancestor (e.g. white great-grandfather)	3	1.2	7	1.4	10	1.3
Sexual slavery	8	3.3	6	1.1	14	1.8
Consensual relationship	3	1.2	0	0	3	0.4
Resistance	1	0.4	3	0.6	4	0.5
Prostitution	2	0.8	0	0	2	0.3
Any sexual issue (combined total of column above)	66	26.8	100	19	202	21.5

Note: The total number of interviews in the Louisiana and Texas samples were respectively, 246 and 527. The numbers listed in columns 1, 3 and 5 total more than the numbers in the final row as some interviews contained more than one sexual issue. The number in the final row is the total of interviews that contained any reference to a sexual issue.

(6 per cent) and ‘rape’ (3.4 per cent). Other issues included in Table 4.1 are white grandfathers (2.1 per cent) and sexual slavery (1.8 per cent). It should be noted that the percentages listed in columns 2, 4 and 6 (which could be considered a level of ‘risk’ for sexual abuse) are likely to provide an undercount. This undercounting is due to issues relating to sampling, race of interviewer, young age of interviewees at emancipation, and the limited discussion of sexual issues by male interviewees. Significantly though, the numbers in Table 4.1 still provide a much higher baseline figure than has been indicated in any other quantitative study.

As Table 4.1 shows, the overall frequency of reports of sexual exploitation in the Texas WPA interviews is 19%. Although this is slightly lower than the Louisiana results (26.8%), it is still high when we compare it to the results of other historians (such Fogel and Engerman, Escott, Crawford and Thelma Jennings) using quantitative methods to explore this issue.¹³ It is important to note that any special factors associated with New Orleans have had very little, if any, influence on my high baseline figure for sexual abuse in Louisiana.¹⁴ As discussed in Chapter Two, very few interviewees in the Louisiana sample lived as slaves in New Orleans,

¹³ Fogel & Engerman, *Time on the Cross*; Escott, *Slavery Remembered*; S. Crawford, ‘Quantified Memory’; Jennings, “‘Us Colored Women...’”.

¹⁴ According to Blassingame in *Black New Orleans*, the most noticeable feature of New Orleans in the antebellum period was the ‘pervasiveness of miscegenation’, whereas Texas never acquired such a reputation., Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*, p. 17. Other studies have indicated that because New Orleans passed through French and Spanish control before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, manumission was far more common (than in the Anglo societies), free people of colour were more numerous, and racially exogamous relationships were more publicly acknowledged. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, p. 20. Emily Clark has recently written that America had imposed an imagined geographical boundary on enslaved people with lighter skin to associate them with New Orleans, whereas in fact interracial sex was common throughout the South. Studies by Annette Gordon-Reed, Thomas Joshua Rothman, and Cynthia M. Kennedy all support this assertion. Clark, *The American Quadroon*, p. 9; Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, T. J. Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighbourhood: sex and families across the color line in Virginia, 1787-1861* (Chapel Hill, 2003); Kennedy, *Braided relations*.

while significant numbers of interviews were conducted in New Orleans, the interviewees had, in almost every case, relocated there after emancipation.

Three important factors are likely to account for the higher percentages of interviews in Louisiana that mention sexual abuse or exploitation. The first is the presence of black interviewers in Louisiana and their absence in Texas. Later in this chapter, I discuss the massive impact that the overwhelming dominance of white interviewers had on the levels of sexual abuse mentioned in the interview sample. The presence of black interviewers in the Louisiana sample certainly contributed to the greater proportion of interviews in Louisiana that mentioned a sexual issue. Secondly, as seen in Table 4.1, the average age of interviewees in Louisiana was higher. As discussed in Chapter Three, the older the former slave at the time of emancipation, the more likely they were to discuss a sexual issue when interviewed in the 1930s. This can be attributed in part to an attempt by close friends or family members to hide such issues from the enslaved child. In addition, as girls moved out of early childhood, they were probably increasingly likely to become the direct targets of abusers. The final factor contributing to the higher level of sexual abuse reported in Louisiana is the greater proportion of female interviewees in the Louisiana sample. As discussed later in this chapter, female interviewees were more likely to discuss sexual abuse than male interviewees, and the Louisiana sample contained a greater percentage of female interviewees than the Texas sample.

The small number of references to consensual relationships, resistance to sexual abuse, and 'prostitution' will be discussed further in Chapter Five on white fathers and rape and Chapter Eight on forced breeding. The following sections will look in

more detail at the type of references to white fathers and grandfathers, rape, sexual slavery and slave breeding, before moving on to investigate the various skew factors.

White fathers

Table 4.1 gives some indication of the scale of various aspects of sexual abuse mentioned in the 1930s interviews. As we have already noted, the sexual issues most often discussed in the interviews are those that can be brought under the category of 'interracial sexual relationships'. This was mentioned in the context of white fathers (6% of interviews reporting that their father was white), white grandfathers (2.1%), the rape of black women by white men (3.4%), other white ancestors (1.3%) and possible consensual relationships (0.3%). This section will focus on the references to white fathers and grandfathers. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis and later in Chapter Five, sexual violence exists on a continuum. It is because of the complex nature of sexual violence that some of the sexual relationships resulting in the birth of the interviewee (or their parent) could have blurred the boundaries between consent and coerced sex. While some sexual relationships offered practical material benefits to enslaved women, the conditions of enslavement that led to the perceived need to enter into a sexual relationship for material benefit underscored the fact that these relationships were ultimately abusive in nature. This is supported by the fact that slave testimony shows that such relationships were most often abusive and coercive in nature. This section will identify the conditions under which these abusive sexual relationships were most likely to occur.

Table 4.2. Size of slaveholding on which interviewees with white fathers lived

Size of holding	Louisiana		Texas		Combined	
	Number of former slaves	% of sub sample	Number of former slaves	% of sub sample	Number of former slaves	% of sub sample
1-19 slaves	5	27.8	12	42.9	17	37
20 or more slaves	5	27.8	7	25	12	26
Unknown size	8	44.4	9	32.1	17	37
Total	18	100	28	100	46	100

Note: This table uses the subset of 46 interviewees who were known to have a white father

Table 4.3. Size of slaveholding in which interviewees without white fathers lived

	Number of former slaves	% of sub sample
1-19 slaves	161	22.1
20 or more slaves	339	46.6
Unknown	227	31.2
Total	727	100

Factors considered in this section include the size of the slaveholding unit (large or small) and the identity of the white father or grandfather (master, overseer or ‘other’). Secondly, the section will explore the occupations of the former slaves who mentioned a white father, and will look in special detail at interviews in which a white father *and* white grandfather are mentioned. In these special cases, evidence points to cycles of abuse especially for those who were light-skinned and lived in

Table 4.4. Race and occupation of fathers of Louisiana and Texas interviewees by the size of the slaveholding unit where interviewee lived before emancipation

Identity of father	Slaveholding of 1-19		Slaveholding of 20 or more		Slaveholding of unknown size		Total	
	Number of former slaves	%	Number of former slaves	%	Number of former slaves	%	Number of former slaves	%
	Master	7	31.8	9	40.9	6	27.3	22
Overseer	0	0	3	100	0	0	3	6.5
White man other than the interviewee's owner or overseer	5	23.8	6	28.6	10	47.6	21	45.7

Note: Combined results for Louisiana and Texas shown in the table as no significant differences emerged between the results of these states. Percentages shown reflect the percentage of the subset of interviewees with a master, overseer or 'other' white man as father, on that size of unit. For example, out of the 22 interviewees with a master as their father, 7 (31.8%) lived on a slaveholding unit of 1-19 slaves.

close proximity to the master, either on a small slaveholding unit or as a domestic slave. Despite this, and while the risk of sexual abuse was higher for certain women (domestic slaves on a small plantation), the figures below will demonstrate that in reality, all enslaved women were at risk of sexual abuse from any white man, regardless of the size of the plantation or their designated occupation.

The analysis in this chapter makes a broad distinction between plantations (which are taken to have had twenty or more slaves) and small slaveholdings.¹⁵ This context

¹⁵ Studies by Fogel and Engerman, and Stephen Crawford have both to some extent, studied the effect that the size of the slaveholding unit had on the experience of enslaved people in the United States. Both studies have considered a small unit to be one of up to fifty people. For this study it was decided that a slaveholding unit with over 20 enslaved people constituted a large plantation. Enslaved people

reveals important aspects of the experience of enslavement and exploitation on small slaveholdings units on which the master would have lived (or worked) in close proximity to his slaves. He would have been more likely to know the slaves individually, had day-to-day contact with them and would have been unlikely to have employed an overseer, instead undertaking such duties himself. On the large units it was likely that there was an overseer employed and the master was more likely to have been absent or to have had less contact with his slaves. Significantly for a typical young female slave, smaller slaveholdings seem to have heightened risks of sexual abuse.

Table 4.2 suggests that the typical young slave was more likely to have had a white father if he or she had lived on a small slaveholding rather than if on a plantation. Table 4.3 provides context by showing larger slaveholding predominated in the overall interview sample. It is worth adding that this does not suggest that planters were less inclined than smaller owners to abuse female slaves. Instead, it suggests simply that, on plantations, a larger number of enslaved people meant a lower risk to each individual slave. Crawford found that those who were enslaved on smaller slaveholding units were twice as likely to mention a white father as those on large units, and found additionally that conventional family structure was under greater pressure on smaller units.¹⁶ His results show that mother-headed families were 50 per cent more frequent on plantations with fifteen or fewer slaves than on large ones:

who lived on plantations (rather than small units) often seem to have exaggerated the size of the slaveholding. This does not raise substantial problems for this study since it is simply concerned with the distinction between small slaveholders and holdings of 20 or more enslaved people (these being defined as plantations).

¹⁶ Care has been taken not to compare Crawford's results with the results from this quantitative analysis as Crawford's definition of 'small slaveholding unit' is 1-49 slaves, with large defined as '50 or more' slaves. This demonstrates a serious flaw in Crawford's methodology as it is generally accepted that a slaveholding unit with twenty or more slaves was a large unit and the owner a wealthy man.

while holdings with 15 or fewer slaves made up 43 per cent of the slave population in 1850, they consisted of two-thirds of all slaves living on divided residences.¹⁷

Both this study and that of Crawford have indicated that there was higher risk of abuse for enslaved women who lived on small plantations.

It should be noted that overseers were cited only rarely as fathers of the interviewees.

If Fogel and Engerman's count of overseers is reliable, this result makes sense since they claim that only a small minority of slaveholding units would have actually employed a white overseer.¹⁸ As we shall see in more detail below, some 46 per cent of white fathers came from a composite group of white men who were neither identified as the enslaved person's owner, nor the overseer.

Over half of those interviewees with a white father disclosed his identity as their master. Crawford calculated that sexual relationships with slaves were not in the slaveholders' best interest as when an enslaved woman had her first child by a white man, she then went on to have fewer children in the future than those who had their

¹⁷S. Crawford, 'The Slave Family: A View from the Slave Narratives', in C. Goldin and H. Rockoff (eds.) *Strategic Factors in Nineteenth Century American Economic History: A Volume to Honor Robert W. Fogel*, (Chicago, 2008), pp. 331-350.

¹⁸Fogel and Engerman calculated that among moderate-sized holdings (16-50 slaves) less than one out of every six plantations used a white overseer. They suggested that on large slaveholdings (over fifty slaves) only one out of every four owners used white overseers, and even on estates with more than one hundred slaves, the proportion of white overseers was just 30 per cent, *Time on the Cross*, pp. 200-1. This usage of overseers does appear to be very low. Fogel and Engerman wanted to suggest that enslaved people had positive incentives to aspire to domestic and skilled roles, and they therefore assumed that black drivers managed plantations unless the census specifically attributed a named white overseer for any given plantation listed in the census. If the number of overseers was as low as Fogel and Engerman suggest, then this would indicate that very few of the 800 slaves in the sample are likely to have had contact with an overseer, so that these small numbers are more significant than they would initially seem. In reality there were probably more white overseers than were listed on the census record. Although overseers would still have been fewer in number than slaveowners, nevertheless former slaves who discussed rape and slave breeding (in addition to those who were fathered by such men) did still demonstrate a strong awareness of the sexual abuse of enslaved women by white overseers.

first child by a black man.¹⁹ It might be objected, however, that value was potentially gained in the short term, considering that light-skinned slaves often brought a higher price in the market (either because they were often trained as domestics or skilled, or if they were to be sold as a ‘fancy’).²⁰ While cost calculations can be taken into account, and while former slaves did comment on white fathers selling their enslaved children (see Chapter Five of the present study), sexual relationships between black women and white masters were unlikely to have

Table 4.5. Types of references to white fathers who were identified as neither master nor overseer

Row number	Type of reference	Number of interviewees
1	Disclosed that father was white, no other information given	12
2	Name given of white father, but no other information given	4
3	White carpenter on plantation	1
4	Son of a neighbouring planter	1
5	Master’s brother	1
6	Stated that they ‘won’t tell his name’	1
7	Knew father but he ‘never bothered’ with interviewee	1

Note: Interviews containing above references are taken from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample

¹⁹ Crawford, *Quantified Memory*, p. 167.

²⁰ On prices of light-skinned enslaved women see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 125-27.

been based on profitability. The forces of lust and power were far more likely to be at work than any immediate consideration of economics.

Results for former slaves who stated that a white man other than the master or overseer was their father show approximately an equal risk for women who lived on small or large slaveholding units. Proximity to the master would not, therefore, have protected the enslaved black woman from sexual abuse by an outsider. The master may have even known about such encounters.

Table 4.5 lists the different types of references made to white fathers who were identified as neither the master nor the overseer. The relationships involved here vary from those which seem semi-consensual, where an enslaved woman had chosen to live with a white man (the most likely case of this is listed in the table above as ‘white carpenter on plantation’), to outright rape (master’s brother). In row number 1, cases where the only information given was that the interviewee’s father was white, there was no indication that the former slave knew their father’s real identity. With rows numbered 2-7 the former slave knew their father, although the interviewees rarely indicated that they had a relationship with their white fathers.

Considering that almost half of interviewees whose fathers were listed under the ‘other’ white category had lived on small plantations whilst enslaved, it would have been unlikely that these sexual encounters would have been happening without the

Table 4.6. Correlation between gender and occupation of interviewees under slavery and mentioning of a white father.

	1	2	3	4
	Interviewees who mentioned a white father		Interviewees who <i>did not</i> mention a white father	
	Number of interviewees	% of subsample	Number of interviewees	% of subsample
<u>Occupation</u>				
Domestic/skilled slave	16	34.7	235	32.3
Field slave	11	23.9	242	33.3
Domestic and field work	0	0	9	1.2
Too young to work	1	2.2	19	2.6
Unknown	18	39.1	222	30.5
Total (by occupation)	46	100	727	100
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	25	54.3	390	53.9
Female	21	45.7	334	46.1
Total (by gender)	46	100	724	100

Note: Interviews taken from combined Louisiana and Texas sample. The number of interviewees taken into account for the gender column of subset of interviewees who made no mention of a white father is 724 rather than the 727 listed slightly above for occupation, this is because the gender of 3 interviewees is unclear in these interviews. Either no name, or only a surname listed in these 3 cases.

Table 4.7. Correlation between occupation of mother of interviewee and race of interviewee's grandfather

Occupation of mother of interviewee	Interviewees who mentioned a white grandfather		Interviewees who <i>did not</i> mention a white grandfather	
	Number of interviewees (Total subsample =16)	% of interviewees who mentioned a white grandfather	Number of interviewees (Total subsample =757)	% of interviewees who <i>did not</i> mention a white grandfather
Domestic/skilled slave	9	56.3	242	32
Field slave	4	25	249	32.9
Domestic and field work	0	0	9	1.2
Too young to work	0	0	20	2.6
Unknown	3	18.8	237	31.3
Total	16	100	757	100

Note: These figures are from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample

slave-owner having some knowledge -- and especially if this led to pregnancy.

Adrienne D. Davis wrote that the physical geography of plantations, vast spaces, often isolated from each other, and with large black populations 'was ideal for those who sought to control the entire lives of their workforce', Walter Johnson too, has recently described slavery in the Deep South as a 'carceral landscape' in which the

enslaved were subject to close surveillance.²¹ By virtue of this geographical situation, the slaveowner could control who could come and go in his considerable workplace. It is therefore highly likely that the owner knew exactly who the white men were who had forced or semi-consensual sexual relationships with his female slaves, and knew exactly what was happening on the plantation. It is even possible that he would turn a blind eye, knowing well that he could profit financially from any offspring.²²

Table 4.6 correlates occupation and gender with former slaves who mentioned a white father. Occupation is divided into ‘domestic’ and ‘field’ slaves. Included in the domestic category are those who are sometimes known as ‘skilled’ slaves. These people had been specifically trained for a job such as a carpenter, blacksmith or domestic. Also included in this are those who worked in ‘saloons’. The results show that the percentage of former domestic slaves is higher in the subsample of interviews who mention a white father (column 2), than those who did not mention that they had a white father (column 4). If those with a known occupation were considered without those who failed to indicate their occupation, the differences in these percentages would be more pronounced. As can also be seen in this table, male interviewees were slightly more likely to mention a white father, than female interviewees. The subsection on the effect of the gender of interviewees later in this

²¹ A. D. Davis, ‘Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment’, available at http://www.law.fsu.edu/faculty/2003-2004workshops/davis_bckgrd.Pdf, accessed 05 May 2012; W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), pp. 209-43.

²² Deborah Gray White asserted ‘the perpetuation of the institution of slavery, as nineteenth century southerners knew it, rested on the slave woman’s reproductive capacity’. See White, *Ar’n’t I a woman?* (New York, 1987), pp. 79-80.

chapter will show that this is the only sexual issue that male interviewees are as likely, or more likely, to mention as female interviewees.

Table 4.7 investigates the results from older generations, by looking at the occupation of the interviewees' mother where it was mentioned that the interviewees' grandfather was white. The statistics suggest that the enslaved female offspring of these white grandfathers were much more likely to become domestics rather than field slaves. Both Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 therefore indicate that the enslaved children of white men were significantly far more likely to undertake domestic rather than field work. Hortense Powdermaker in the 1930s declared that of the African-Americans she spoke to, 'descendants of house slaves' had a 'higher percentage of white blood than those whose ancestors were field slaves. These results uphold Powdermaker's statement.²³

Of the small number of former slaves (who stated their own occupation and that of their parent) and who also disclosed that their grandfather was the master, 5 out of the 7 select cases (71% of those who mentioned such details) revealed that both they and their parents were domestics. James D. Johnson, interviewed in Texas told his interviewer that both his parents had been fathered by their (different) masters, and that he and both of his parents worked as domestics.²⁴ Results strongly indicate that the children of such unions were seen as especially suitable for the role of house slave.

²³ Powdermaker, *After Freedom*, p. 6.

²⁴ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 216.

Out of the 16 interviewees who mentioned a white grandfather, four interviewees disclose that their father was also white. This means that 25 % of interviewees who mentioned a white grandfather also had a white father. Out of those interviewees with black grandfathers (757 interviewees), 42 had white fathers -- just 5.5%. Former slaves were therefore almost 20% more likely to have a white father, if they also had a white grandfather. This is also highly likely to be an undercount as interviewees were even less likely to mention white grandparents than they were to mention their white parents. This figure thus indicates an intergenerational pattern of abuse for light-skinned enslaved people.

Of the eleven interviewees, who reported that their father was an 'other' white man, almost half of the sample (10 out of 21 interviewees) had a mother who performed domestic duties: the others did not state occupation of their mother. This suggests that relationships, consensual or otherwise, with men from outside the plantation were taking place close to the gaze of the white slaveholder. This issue will be discussed in length in Chapter Seven, 'The Typical Case of Louisa Picquet', in which a light-skinned domestic slave 'Lucy' had several children who were fathered by several white men, none of whom (as far as the reader is told) was her master.

Former domestic slaves are overrepresented in this study which could have skewed results to emphasise numbers of white fathers. This issue is discussed in the final section of this chapter, although it is worth stating initially that the sample of those who both stated their occupation and that they had a white father is small. Secondly, the numbers do not actually suggest a huge skew and do point to substantial numbers of field slaves with white fathers. Finally the overall nature of the interviews suggest

that all sexual issues -- including the numbers of white fathers -- would have been greatly under-reported in these records.

Notably, none of the cases in this study mentioned that their white father freed them. Recent scholarship on sexual relationships between enslaved women and white men has sought to demonstrate that an enslaved woman could use the situation, marginally, to her advantage by securing freedom for herself or her children. This has been explored in the *The Hemingses of Monticello* where Annette Gordon-Reed argues for the ‘agency’ of Sally Hemings as a ‘maternal emancipator’.²⁵ Although stories of resistance to rape and forced breeding are shared in the Texas narratives (though none were found in the Louisiana subset), the formerly enslaved people did not tell of any enslaved women who were able to take advantage of their sexual role in the way described by Gordon-Reed. The contentious issue of ‘consent’ in sexual relationships between white men and enslaved black women is discussed further in Chapter Five of the present study.

Rape

In Table 4.1 and generally in this chapter, references to rape represent only those testimonies where an interviewee explicitly referred to rape. In reality references to white fathers and grandfathers would also have in many cases reflected circumstances of rape. For the moment, however, white fathers and grandfathers are separated from our discussion of rape. There are 26 instances of explicit discussions of rape in the sample, 3.4% of all interviews. In reality, this figure is likely to be

²⁵ A. Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American family* (New York, 2008).

Table 4.8. Types of references to rape: subset of 26 interviews mentioning rape

Type of reference	Number of interviews that reference issue	% frequency with which particular types of references were made
General awareness of the rape of enslaved women	14	53.8
Family member raped	8	30.8
Economic incentive to rape	4	15.4
Rape of young girls	2	7.7
Violent force used to rape	2	7.7
Interviewee raped	2	7.7
Rape by visitor to slaveholding unit	1	3.8

Note: Interviews come from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample. While 26 individual interviews mentioned rape, some interviews contained more than one of the issues listed above, which explains the 35 references in the second column above. With regard to the 'violent force' category, while all sexual assaults are likely to contain violence, this category is reserved for interviewees who, like Louisa Sidney Martin, claimed that their masters would 'beat and knock you out to make you have them' (*TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, p. 324.)

much higher, first, because many of the references to a white father would constitute a reference to rape (see Chapter Five of this thesis), and secondly, as 'rape' was not on the list of questions that the interviewer was supposed to ask, the black interviewees were very unlikely to initiate discussion of this topic and would have had to tread very carefully when discussing it (see Chapter Three).

Table 4.8 shows the various types of references used in discussion of the rape of enslaved women. The majority of the references were of a general awareness of rape. This category included statements such as that of Louis Evans, a former domestic slave born in 1853 in Grand Coteau, Louisiana who told his white

Table 4.9. Rape references: Identity of rapist

Identity of rapist	Number of references	Percentage of subsample of 26 interviews mentioning rape
Master	20	76.9
Overseer	4	15.4
Slave trader	1	3.8
Other	1	3.8

Note: References above are from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample

Table 4.10. Rape references: Size of unit where rape occurred

Size of unit	Number of references in subsample of interviews mentioning rape	Percentage of interviews in subsample of 26 interviews mentioning rape
Small (1-19 slaves)	6	23.1
Large (20 or more slaves)	12	46.2
Unknown	8	30.8

Note: References above are from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample

interviewer Fred Dibble that ‘master has children by slave women’.²⁶ Eight interviewees directly stated that they had an immediate family member (grandmother, aunt or sister) who had been raped by a white man, and one testified that they had been a rape victim themselves. Ella Wilson, a former Louisiana domestic slave born in 1849 and interviewed in Arkansas by black interviewer,

²⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, p. 1306.

Samuel Taylor was raped by a white visitor to the slaveholding. She stated that she was ‘ruined by a white man’ who was then ‘run out of town’.²⁷ Elvira Boles, interviewed in Texas by a white man (‘Elliot’), was the daughter of her white master, Levi Ray, and was then sold and raped by her next master while still a young girl.²⁸

When rape was mentioned, as Table 4.9 shows, in 76.9% of cases the master was the rapist. The small sample documented in Table 4.10 suggests that the majority of rapes occurred on large units (where of course most slaves lived). Eight of the twelve interviewees who mentioned rape and lived on large units told the interviewer that they had lived on a plantation with over fifty slaves (30.7% of total subsample of 26 interviews that mentioned rape). Of these, one stated they lived on a plantation of 100 slaves, one interviewee mentioned they had lived on a plantation of 125 slaves and two commented they lived on a plantation of 300 slaves. On these large plantations, the master could more easily hide the rape of enslaved women from his white family and from outsiders.

Almost equal numbers of former field slaves and former domestic slaves reported instances of rape. Overall, the results for references to rape in this study reveal that field slaves were just as likely to be aware of rape as domestic slaves were, and from the information available, those who lived on a large unit were twice as likely to mention rape as those who lived on a small unit. The general awareness of rape was much higher among former field hands than disclosures of white fathers. This could

²⁷ *TAS*, Vol. 2, Part 7, p. 201.

²⁸ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part.1, p. 105.

be explained through the higher probability that children of white men would have been made to undertake domestic work.

Forced breeding

After those who mentioned having a white father or grandfather, forced breeding (slave breeding) was the aspect of sexual abuse mentioned most frequently: 81 interviewees, that is more than ten per cent of all interviewees, demonstrated some kind of awareness of the forced breeding of slaves. This contrasts with the results of Paul Escott who wrote that just 4.1 per cent of his sample mentioned slave breeding.²⁹ Types of references could include forced marriage, the master or overseer having raped and impregnated women on the plantation for economic gain and strong inducements to childbearing, including rewards for parents of large number of children. Some interviewees said that their parents had been ‘put together’ by their master, other interviewees reported that they themselves had been forced to marry a man on their slaveholding unit, and others demonstrated a general awareness of the profit to be made from the reproduction of slaves. Chapter Eight this thesis describes forced breeding as a ‘secondary rape’ of enslaved men and women by white men, but can also include elements of the rape of enslaved women by enslaved men.

Forced breeding has been subject to intense speculation originating with the abolitionists who claimed that, in the exporting states, agriculture was exhausted and that those states survived economically only through a deliberate system of breeding

²⁹ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, pp. 44-5.

Table 4.11. Correlation between the size of slaveholding unit with mention of forced breeding

Size of slaveholding unit	Interviews which mention forced breeding (total = 68 interviews)		Interviews which <i>do not</i> mention forced breeding (total = 461 interviews)	
	Number of interviews	Percentage of sample of 68 interviews	Number of interviews	Percentage of sample of 461 interviews
Large (20 or more slaves)	50	73.5	306	66.4
Small (1-19 slaves)	18	26.5	155	33.6

Note: Interviews which do not disclose the size of the slaveholding unit have been omitted from this table. Figures listed above are taken from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample.

slaves for sale.³⁰ While scholarship has moved away from the abolitionist myth of the ‘stud farm’, recent scholarship, most notably that of Gregory D. Smithers, has argued for the significant cultural ‘memory’ of slave breeding. For Smithers, slave breeding was a ‘rhetorical device’ that represented a manner of exploitation and abuses of the enslaved body. In Chapter Eight of this thesis it is argued that slave breeding, on a varying scale, was a very real aspect of enslavement, with many of the interviewees having known somebody who had been a ‘breeder’, and some having been made to have children at a very young age themselves.³¹

³⁰ For examples of abolitionist discussion of slave breeding see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves* pp. 121-22. Gutman and Sutch define slavebreeding as the use of ‘rewards’ for childbearing, the encouragement of early marriage and short lactation periods, and the provision of both pre- and post-natal care out of line with nineteenth-century standards. Gutman and Sutch, ‘Victorians All?’ p. 154. Fogel and Engerman defined slavebreeding as involving the two interrelated concepts of interference in the normal sexual habits of slaves and the raising of slaves with sale as the main objective. Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 78.

³¹ Smithers, *Slave Breeding*.

Table 4.11 compares the subset of interviews in which the interviewee mentioned some form of slave breeding with the subset where the issue was not discussed. Results in the table show that slave breeding was more commonly mentioned by people who had lived on a large slaveholding unit, but a significant number of interviewees lived on a small slaveholding unit. As is discussed in Chapter Eight of this thesis, there was an awareness of the profit to be made from the reproductive potential of slaves on all slaveholding units, large or small.

Sex Slaves and Sexual Slavery

Table 4.1 showed that sex slaves were mentioned in just 1.8 per cent of the interviews in the sample, with 8 references in the Louisiana sample, and 6 in Texas. A reference to sexual slavery was identified by the mention of a woman whose primary role on the plantation was as the victim of the master's continued sexual abuse. The various types of references are shown in table 4.12. The number of interviews referring to 'sexual slavery' is low when compared to my sample of Louisiana and Texas book-length narratives, where almost 30 per cent mention a woman who was undoubtedly being kept in sexual slavery.³² The numbers of interviews referring to sex slaves is small but still some interesting patterns are hinted at from this limited sample. In cases where interviewees reveal their age, the mean age at emancipation for those who discuss sexual slavery is sixteen, three years older than the overall average age for the Texas and Louisiana sample. Significantly, forty per cent of the sexual slavery sample were over 25 at the time of their emancipation and therefore experienced slavery as adults and were able to talk about

³² See Chapter Six for list of book length narratives that mention a sex slave.

Table 4.12. Types of reference to sex slaves and sexual slavery

Type of reference to sexual slavery	Number of interviews that mention issue
There was a sex slave on their slaveholding	6
Mother was a sex slave	3
Master had two families	2
Sister was a sex slave	1
Sons of master had sex slaves	1
General reference to sexual slavery	1
Total number of interviews that mention sexual slavery	14

Note: Some interviews refer to more than one of the issues listed above. References above are from the combined Louisiana and Texas sample.

the issues in some detail. The different ways in which sexual slavery is referred to by those who were older and younger at emancipation is explored in Chapter Six on ‘sexual slavery’.

Hints of two other patterns emerge from the very small numbers in the interview sample on sex slaves. We know the size of slaveholding for only ten of the interviewees who discussed sex slaves, and of these, seven lived on plantations of twenty slaves or more and three on smaller farms. We know the occupations of only seven interviewees who mentioned sex slaves and of these interviewees four were domestics and three were field slaves. It should be noted too that the interviews referring to sexual slavery were not vague claims but were references to named individuals who were known to the interviewees. Despite the fact that interviewers

were extremely unlikely to have raised the subject of sex slaves and sexual slavery, field as well as domestic slaves and people on slaveholdings large and small referred to people they knew as having been used as sex slaves.

Unpacking a fuller understanding of the scale of abuse

As my methodology chapter emphasised, there are several skews that tend to under-represent levels of exploitation documented in the interview materials used in this chapter. Some skew factors are especially hard to make specific adjustments for, such skews include the fact that the interviews were short and were not designed to focus on sexual issues and the likelihood that interviewees would have been uneasy about discussing sexual issues. Additionally, editing of interviews (see Chapter Two and Three) exacerbates this problem. With factors such as these it is hard to know what specific percentage adjustments to make. With some factors, however, reasonable adjustments can be made. For example, the impact of white racism can to some extent be glimpsed by taking special note of the significantly different results produced when the interviewer was black. Similarly, a focus on the results produced when the interviewee was female unpacks further insights into scale. Finally, because most interviewees were young when slavery ended, their young age meant that they were probably not exposed to the full traumas of abuse, so their personal accounts were very different from what might have been provided by those with a lifetime under slavery. Still, some direct evidence on youth and underrepresenting of abuse can be noted and the overall results are highly significant, even from a sample skewed so much towards those who were still young in the slavery era.

i. Overrepresentation of former domestic slaves

Table 3.1 showed that there are roughly equal numbers of domestic and field slaves in the sample used for this study. Compared to the overall slave population this would represent a strong overrepresentation of domestic slaves. A contemporary estimate in the 1850s put domestics at 14% of the overall enslaved population.³³ In the 1970s Fogel and Engerman produced new estimates that 25 % of male slaves

Table 4.13. Correlation between the occupation of the interviewee and the mention of a sexual issue

	1	2	3	4
	Interviewees who mentioned sexual exploitation		Interviewees who <i>did not</i> mention sexual exploitation	
	Number of interviewees	% of subsample stated above	Number of interviewees	% of subsample stated above
Occupation				
Domestic/skilled slave	53	31.9	198	32.6
Field slave	42	25.3	211	34.7
Domestic and field work	0	0	9	1.5
Too young to work	5	3	15	2.5
Unknown	66	39.8	174	28.7
Total	166	100	607	100

Note: Occupations listed above are for Louisiana and Texas combined

³³ See Anonymous, *The American Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*, Vol. 2 (Montgomery, 1858), pp. 160-6

were skilled and 20% of female were domestics, but these are likely to be overestimated.³⁴

Nevertheless, by comparison to either of these estimates, domestics are heavily overrepresented in this study. Table 4.13, columns 2 and 4 show that domestics were more likely to mention sexual abuse compared with those who were made to perform fieldwork under slavery. Significantly, however, the occupation of the interviewee made almost no difference to the references to white parentage and on issues other than white parentage there were no great differences between data for domestics and field slaves. The average age of the interview sample at emancipation was around 13 years old and as Marie Jenkins Schwartz has noted, young enslaved children would very often undertake domestic duties before reaching the age of ten or twelve when they could join adults in the field.³⁵ The evidence analysis above in connection with domestics and white fathers suggests, however, that most of those who are taken in this study to have been domestics were indeed people picked out for lives as domestic slaves. An overrepresentation of domestics operates to exaggerate the percentage of enslaved people with white fathers. Against this, however, a series of important skews seem to have done far more to under-represent the levels of sexual exploitation.

³⁴ Fogel and Engerman, *Time On The Cross*, Vol. 1, pp. 38-43; Vol. 2, pp. 37-43 (esp. Table B.5) claim that 25% of male slaves were skilled and 20% of females were domestics. See also Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract*, Chapter Two. H. Gutman, *Slavery and the numbers game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana, 1975), pp. 48-81, esp. 61-63, found these numbers to be far too high. See also P. A. David et al., *Reckoning with slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976), pp. 74-93.

³⁵ Schwartz wrote that slaveholders would have children live or work in the owner's home before they progressed to field work in order that they learn the social hierarchy and learn to serve whites as part of an everyday routine. Children as young as five or six could perform tasks of tangible economic benefit for the slaveholders even though they would not be classified as working 'hands' until around the age of eleven, to 'provide a comfortable home for the owning family and its guests included scores of jobs within the capability of children'. Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, pp. 93, 108, 131-32.

ii. Gender of interviewee

As women were much likely to be victims of sexual exploitation than enslaved men, it can be assumed that instances of sexual abuse were better known among the female enslaved population. If they were not the victim of abuse themselves, they

Table 4.14: Proportion of male and female interviewees in Louisiana and Texas interview samples

	Louisiana		Texas	
	Number of interviewees	Percentage of Louisiana sample	Number of interviewees	Percentage of Texas sample
Male	122	50	293	55.8
Female	122	50	232	44.2
Total	244	100	525	100

Note: 4 interviews in total sample do not indicate the gender of the interviewee.

Table 4.15. Mention of sexual issues by gender in Louisiana and Texas combined

Sexual Issues mentioned	Female		Male	
	Number of female interviewees	Percentage of sample of female interviewees	Number of male interviewees	Percentage of sample of male interviewees
Yes	86	24.3	78	18.8
No	268	75.7	337	81.2
Total	354	100	415	100

Note: 4 interviews in the total sample do not indicate the gender of the interviewee.

Table 4.16: Various sexual issues mentioned by the gender of interviewee in combined Louisiana and Texas interview sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Female (Total =354)		Male (Total = 415)		Total (all interviewees including interviews with no clear indication of gender)	
	Number of interviewees	% of female interviewees	Number of interviewees	% of male interviewees	Number of interviewees	% of interviewees
Forced breeding	51	14.5	29	7	81	10.5
Rape	14	3.9	11	2.65	26	3.4
White father/white grandfather/more distant white relative	28	8.9	44	10.6	72	9.3
Sexual slavery	7	1.9	6	1.4	14	1.8
Total	352		415		773	

Note: The number of interviews in column 5 does not equal the number of interviews in columns 1 and 3 combined as 4 interviews in the total sample gave no indication of the interviewee's gender.

would have been likely to have a close female relative or friend who had been abused or sought to warn them of the dangers of sexual abuse (see Chapter Seven and Conclusion for discussion of close female friendships based on support through sexual abuse). Therefore, when considering skew factors it is important to consider gender as female interviewees are likely to provide a baseline figure that is much closer to the real level of abuse than male interviewees.

In the first section of this chapter that explored overall indications of the scale of abuse, I pointed to the higher percentage of Louisiana interviews that mention sexual abuse when compared to Texas. The gender mix in the two state subsamples can partially explain the gulf. Table 4.14 shows that there were a higher number of females in the Louisiana sample than in the Texas sample, 50% of the Louisiana sample was female, compared to 44% in Texas. Table 4.15 shows that a much higher percentage of women discussed sexual exploitation than men.

Table 4.17 shows that there were certain issues that women were more likely to discuss than males. Predictably, these are the more sensitive issues such as forced breeding and rape. The figures suggest that females were twice more likely to discuss forced breeding than males. Males were (only slightly) more likely to mention a white father/grandfather/more distant white ancestor, than female interviewees. The gender mix in the Louisiana sample means that, overall, this sample gives a fuller representation of sexual abuse than the Texas sample.

Consideration of additional factors allows us to get closer still to an understanding of the real levels of abuse.

iii. Race of interviewer

The previous chapter (Methodology II) pointed to the special role of black interviewers in revealing the scale of sexual abuse. Some white interviewers were patronising, racist and clearly tried to lead the former slave into portraying a more positive image of enslavement. However, even interviews with black interviewers had certain limiting factors. Former slaves might still have been confused as to why the government worker was there, and in any case may not have not thought it

Table 4.17. Issues of sexual abuse in interviews conducted by black interviewers

Interviews with black interviewers	Number of interviews	Percentage of interviews
With sexual issues	10	43.5
No sexual issues	13	56.5
Total	23	100

Note: All interviews from Louisiana sample.

Table 4.18. Sexual issues recorded by black interviewers

Issue recorded	Number of times issue mentioned	Percentage of interviews with black interviewers mentioning issue
Forced breeding	6	26.08
Rape	4	17.4
White father	2	9
White grandfather	3	13
Resistance to sexual abuse	1	4.3

Note: Some interviews mentioned more than one sexual issue

appropriate to discuss matters of sexual abuse. In addition to these factors, sexual issues were still not on the list of questions that the black interviewers were to ask. Despite this, black interviewers still recorded proportionately more references to sexual abuse and exploitation than white interviewers. Table 4.17 shows that 43.5 per cent of interviews conducted by black interviewers contain a reference to sexual

abuse, more than double the overall percentage of the Texas sample of interviews. For Texas, where interviews were conducted by white interviewers only, 21.7 per cent of interviews contained references to sexual issues. If interviews that were conducted by black interviewers are excluded from the Louisiana sample, 33.2 per cent of Louisiana's interviews conducted by white interviewers contained a reference to some sexual issue. This was still much higher than the result for Texas and reflects the underlying gender mix in the interview samples in these states.³⁶

The issues recorded by black interviewers in Table 4.18 show a rough correlation with the issues recorded in the overall sample. The absence of consensual sex, prostitution, and sexual slavery are more likely to be a reflection of the small sample size of black interviewers, than a reflection of the unwillingness of a former slave to discuss such issues with a black interviewer. Forced breeding was the most commonly mentioned sexual issue, with an increase of 16.3 per cent over the percentage of references in the overall sample conducted by both black and white interviewers (see Table 4.1). Additionally, the mention of rape increased by 14.1 per cent.

Table 4.19 lists the various black interviewers and the percentages of their interviews that mentioned some form of sexual abuse. All interviewers who recorded a sexual issue were men (although there were no black female interviewers in Louisiana, and those in other states interviewed few Louisiana slaves). Interestingly, as shown in

³⁶ 223 out of the 246 interviews in the Louisiana subsample were collected by white interviewers, of these interviews 74 contained a reference to at least one sexual issue.

4.19. Sexual issues recorded by each individual black interviewer Table 4.19.

Sexual issues recorded by each individual black interviewer

Name of black interviewer	Number of interviews conducted	Number of interviews mentioning sexual issues	Percentage mentioning sexual issues
Samuel S. Taylor	11	5	45.5
Robert McKinney	3	2	66.7
Edmund Burke	2	1	50
Octave Lilly	2	1	50
Rogers	1	1	100
Bertha Tipton	1	0	0
Ethel C. Fleming	1	0	0
Grace E. White	1	0	0
Total	23	10	43.5

Note: All interviewers except Robert McKinney and Octave Lilly conducted interviews in states other than Louisiana, the numbers in this table reflect only those interviewees with former Louisiana interviewees.

Table 4.20 below, female interviewers accounted for 90 per cent of those who mentioned a sexual issue in an interview conducted by a black male interviewer. The figures above suggest firstly, that black women were more likely to mention a sexual issue than black men, and secondly, the likelihood of a black woman mentioning a sexual issue increased greatly when she was interviewed by a black man. These figures again suggest a significant undercount in the interviews

Table 4.20 . Number of male and female interviewees in subsets of interviewees who did, and did not, mention a sexual issue.

	Male		Female	
	Number of interviewees	Percentage of sample	Number of interviewees	Percentage of sample
Interviews containing a sexual issue	78	46.4	88	52.3
Interviews that <i>do not</i> contain a sexual issue	337	55.7	266	44
Total (La and Tx)	415	53.7	354	45.8
Interviews conducted by black interviewers				
Interviews containing a sexual issue	1	10	9	90
Interviews that <i>do not</i> contain a sexual issue	5	38.5	8	61.5
Total	6	26.1	17	73.9

Note: The percentages in this table do not equal 100 as 3 interviews from the overall sample do not reveal the name or gender of the interviewee.

conducted by white interviewers. They also point to the great potential value of interview sets conducted solely by black interviewers. From such interviews we can get much closer to the actual level of sexual abuse and exploitation that was occurring in the South.³⁷

³⁷ See p. 4 of Chapter Three (Methodology I), for a footnote that discusses the potential of Cade interviews.

The consideration of gender of interviewee and race of interviewer allows us then first to explain why results were higher for Louisiana than for Texas, and second to establish that Louisiana results were closer to the real levels of exploitation than those of Texas. Consideration of these factors also shows, however, that even Louisiana's results must greatly undercount true exploitation rates.

iv. Age of interviewee

The young age of interviewees at the time when slavery ended also means that interviews tend to underrepresent the scale of abuse. Those who were emancipated

Table 4.21. Table to show correlation between age of interviewee at emancipation and the discussion of sexual issues (Louisiana and Texas)

	Interviews mentioning sexual issues	Interviews that do not mention sexual issues
	Cumulative % of subsample	Cumulative % of subsample
% born after 1865	2.1	4.1
% aged 5 and under in 1865	18.5	19.3
% aged 10 and under in 1865	35.6	42.5
% aged 15 and under in 1865	65.8	68.9
% aged 20 and under in 1865	82.2	84.8
% aged 25 and under in 1865	93.2	91
% over 25 in 1865	100	100

Note: The year of birth for 93 interviewees was not stated in the interviews of the interview sample. The subsamples of interviews that mention, and do not mention some form of sexual abuse follow the same overall pattern, the most common age range in 1865 in both samples was those who were aged 10-14 in 1865.

in their early teens would not have been exposed to the many years of enslavement under which they may have become a victim of sexual exploitation. In addition to this, there would have been a relatively low risk of rape for enslaved children.

With these factors to take into account, it is telling of the importance and real risk of sexual abuse that women faced that 1930s interviews can still reveal so much about the world of slavery and sexual exploitation. Table 4.21 shows the age range

The sample overall directly reflects the fact that those in the interviews who talk about sexual issues tend to be slightly older. While Table 4.21 shows that there were few interviewees of adult age when slavery ended, when we look more qualitatively at the accounts of abuse in these, they tend to be the most extensive.

Another factor to take into account here is the accuracy of the year of birth given by the former slave. Many interviewees revealed that they did not know what year they had been born, and take a guess at how old they were. Some interviewees certainly overestimated their age, with almost ten per cent of interviewees in the sample having claimed to have been over one hundred years of age, and six individuals having claimed to have been over 125. Significantly, five of the interviewees claiming to be over 125 are in the sample that did not mention sexual abuse. While a miscalculation of age does not affect the value of the interview, it is a skew that works against the trend of former slaves who were more advanced in age having been more likely to mention some form of sexual abuse.

Had we access to those who had lived an entire life under slavery, the overall reported numbers of sexual abuse would surely have been much higher. The young age of the sample used for this project must have been a very big factor in

underrepresenting levels of abuse. The few years spent enslaved would have both limited exposure to abuse and awareness of abuse. The memories and understanding of slavery and abuse would have been partly formed through personal experience and partly through discussions with other people, including older family members, during and after slavery.

v. Consideration of skew factors

The four main skew factors listed above suggest a powerful under-representation of sexual abuse within any WPA sample that does not take into account these factors. We have noted that taken on its own, the over representation of domestic slaves tends to exaggerate the numbers of white fathers. Other factors, however, tended to hide white fathers. On issues other than white fathers, domestics were generally no more likely to mention sexual abuse than were field slaves. From the consideration of the skew factors relating to the gender of the interviewee, the race of the interviewer and the ages of the sample, it is clear that the most accurate level of sexual abuse, with the most extensive detail given of the abuse would come from a sample of female interviewees, from which women who had entered adulthood when emancipated, and who were interviewed by a black interviewer. The present dataset is far from being such an ideal sample: still, however, it provides powerful results.

Conclusions

The ex-slave interviews as a source group present substantial methodological and interpretative challenges, as noted earlier in previous chapters and further scrutinised above. Yet the evidence from these interviews has led to a quantitative core around

which to shape this study. While numbers on many issues in the sample are small, the combination of evidence fits together to give a basis for a better understanding of the slave experience. Results show a high percentage chance of a slave having a white father. Proximity was a major risk factor for female slaves, with women on small plantations and domestics facing the highest risk of some kind of sexual exploitation or interference by the white master.

Forced breeding was accepted and endemic in the system, mentioned in 10.5 per cent of interviews. Whilst this project is essentially a study of the sexual exploitation of enslaved women, the majority of the references to ‘slave breeding’ or ‘forced breeding’ refer to the master using males as ‘studs’ or pairing slaves on the plantation. This means that a large number of male slaves underwent some form of sexual exploitation by being forced to have sex in order to increase the workforce of the master or for the master’s financial gain. Whilst the rape and sexual abuse of male slaves is understudied in the historiography of U.S. slavery, this result indicates that their reproductive capacity was exploited alongside that of women.³⁸

All figures obtained from this sample indicate higher levels of abuse than other studies, and additionally, figures listed are only low baseline figures. A series of skew factors has been investigated above, but the effects of some skew factors are more difficult to calculate. The standard run of WPA questions asked about owners, views on emancipation, the Ku Klux Klan, ghosts and other superstitions, but sexual exploitation was not part of such formats, and evidence on such issues was rarely if

³⁸ See work of T. A. Foster, ‘The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011), pp. 445-464.

at all directly sought. In addition the interviews were of varying length, and shorter interviews were less likely to mention sexual abuse.

Especially after taking such factors into account, the results in this chapter are grim, and suggest the commonplace nature of sexual interference in the lives of enslaved people as well as in the white world view. This chapter has grouped together enslaved experiences in order to identify trends but the following chapters will draw together closely detailed testimony on a great many individual experiences.

PART TWO

Chapter Five

Testimony on Rape: Evidence Spoken and Unspoken

Victor Duhon, an elderly former slave from Louisiana, was described as ‘showing the white strain in his blood very definitely’. As if to instruct the reader of the interview in visual recognition of sexual abuse, the white Texan interviewer, Fred Dibble, continued to outline Duhon’s blue eyes and fairness in ‘the skin of his body’, before recording Duhon’s account of the rape of his mother.¹ This layering of visual and verbal testimony of abuse can be recognised throughout the WPA interviews, in which the testimony was rarely quite as clear as that recounted by Victor Duhon. References were obscured by the sensitive nature of the topic, the insensitivity of interviewers, and other social realities inherent in the context of Jim Crow.

White fathers and grandfathers, rape, and sexual slavery are discussed in around 15 per cent of interviews with those enslaved in Louisiana and Texas, and they are written about in two-thirds of longer nineteenth-century autobiographies from these same states. References to these issues are, in reality, all discussions of a continuum of sexual violence against enslaved women. Due to the conditions of enslavement, the women involved were in no position to offer consent or non-consent to a white man. While some historians, including Eugene Genovese, have seen sexual slavery as resting on something other than coercion and rape, the evidence for ‘romantic’ and consensual unions between master and slave is severely lacking in former-slave

¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1238

testimony.² This same testimony does, however, point to huge amount of sexual violence in the form of rape and a high number of references to white fathers: such references are the focus of this chapter.

While colonial America discussed rape as a ‘heinous act’, unworthy of civilised society, Sharon Block has written that this rarely played out in the colonial and early nineteenth-century courtroom. Rape, even against white women, was subject to intense judicial speculation and often hinged on the ‘believability’ of the woman who was the accuser. This, of course, excluded enslaved women, the rape of whom was a social, if not legal impossibility. Block has found that ‘no rape conviction against a white man...for raping an enslaved woman has been found between at least 1700 and the Civil War’. Rape cases in which the accused was a black man and the victim a black female were also rare.³

Only in 2012 did the FBI extend its definition of rape to include ‘any form of forced sexual penetration of a man or woman as well as “non-forcible rape”’. Before this, the FBI in 1927 had defined ‘rape’ as ‘the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will’. This definition had been used in law courts for centuries.⁴ The rape of black men under slavery has received little attention, precisely on account of the invisibility of the crime. Thomas Foster has found that the sexual assault of

² For a romantic view of these relationships, see for example Genovese’s interpretation on concubines. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, pp. 87-97. This is discussed in Chapter One of the present study.

³ S. Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp.1-2, 65; M. Stutzman, ‘Rape in the American Civil War: Race, Class and Gender in the Case of Harriet McKinley and Perry Pierson’, *Transcending Silence...*[e-journal] (2004).

⁴ E. B. Freedman, *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), pp. 1-2.

enslaved men took a wide variety of forms ‘including outright physical penetrative assault, forced reproduction, sexual coercion and manipulation, and psychic abuse’.⁵ Evidence presented in this chapter reflects the nature of the nineteenth century and early twentieth-century sources on rape, though the largely hetero-normative cases presented here are likely to represent just one part of a spectrum of abuses that transcend this hetero-normative boundary.

The idea of the promiscuous black family was fundamental to pro-slavery ideology; though at the same time as abolitionists condemned the white South’s sexual abuse of black women and girls, some also accepted and reinforced the white South’s stereotype of the ‘jezebel’, a black woman who was lascivious and always consenting to sex. James Redpath, an antislavery writer informed his readers that mulatto women were ‘gratified by the criminal advances of Saxons’, and described slavery as the ‘foul Mother of Harlots’.⁶ In appealing to the readership in the northern states to turn against slavery on account of its sexual corruption, some anti-slavery writers unintentionally entrenched the stereotype created by the white male rapist.⁷

⁵ T. A. Foster, ‘The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011), pp. 445-464

⁶ J. Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, p. 127.

⁷ The Jezebel stereotype continued into the twentieth-century and is particularly visible in the 1965 Moynihan Report on *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, which perpetuated the ‘Jezebel’ stereotype with the portrayal of black women as uncontrollable breeders. For discussion of the continued effect of the Jezebel stereotype in welfare policy post-1965 see, D. Benson Smith, ‘Jezebels, Matriarchs and Welfare Queens: The Moynihan Report of 1965 and the Social Construction of African-American Women in Welfare policy’, in A. L. Schneider and H. M. Ingram (eds.), *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy* (New York, 2005), pp. 243-60.

Later works by black female academics were vital in confronting and deconstructing the Jezebel stereotype as being, not just a convenient image used to absolve the white male of blame in his rape of any black woman, but also as a product of the racialised and gendered norms of US slavery.⁸ These academics, through a new attention to gender under slavery, revealed the rape of enslaved women as one of a range of violent behaviours that were sexual and non-sexual in nature. Feminist scholars, such as White, Davis, hooks and Painter have, since the 1970s, re-characterised slavery as a system of gender supremacy; it has since become commonplace to consider slavery as an institution based at a crossroads where race, gender and sex interacted to exert political control over not just all women, but all men too.⁹

Adrienne Davis recast the rape of enslaved women as part of the ‘sexual economy’ of slavery. This was a way of describing the peculiar placement of black women’s sexuality and sexual potential in a system in which the sexual labour of black women was two-fold: first they had to reproduce the labour force for the continuation of the institution by having sex with men of all races, secondly they were forced to have sex for the white man’s pleasure. For Davis, the ‘sexual political economy’ was an early and particularly virulent strain of institutionalised sexual harassment.¹⁰ Finally,

⁸ Deborah Grey White described some of these norms as ‘nudity in the slave market, semi-clad black women at work in the house and field, nude-whippings’. *Ar’n’t I a Woman*, pp. 27-46. The present study has found these racial and gender norms to include: the ‘fancy-trade’, the sale of ‘single’ black women together with their lighter-skinned progeny, and a high birth rate which was used as evidence of the black woman’s high sexual appetite, rather than as the reproductive exploitation of the enslaved woman for profit. Thelma Jennings wrote that ‘Since associations were made between promiscuity and reproduction, the desired increase of the slave population seemed to be evidence of the bondswoman’s passion’. Jennings, ‘Us Colored Women’, p. 45. This is discussed further in the final chapter of this thesis that focuses on forced breeding.

⁹ White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman*; A. D. Davis, “‘Don’t Let Nobody Bother Yo’ Principle”: The Sexual Economy of American Slavery, in S. Harley (ed.), *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work* (New Brunswick, 2002), pp. 103-127; hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman*; Painter, *Southern History across the Color Line*.

¹⁰ Davis, “‘Don’t Let Nobody Bother Yo’ Principle”, pp. 103.

Joanna Bourke has described slavery as a system in which white men had ‘institutional access’ to black women.¹¹ An enslaved woman’s entire sex life was indeed subject to the will of her owner. The works just referenced do not, however, give a sense of the scale of rape, which is a special feature of the present project.

This chapter begins by looking at the scale of rape as indicated in nineteenth-century book-length narratives and 1930s WPA interviews. In this section I show that a strikingly high percentage of the formerly enslaved had knowledge of a specific sexual assault. One indicator of the scale of rape comes from references to skin colour by 1930s interviewees and their (mostly white) interviewers. Some of the formerly enslaved interviewees point to their skin colour as evidence of the white man’s rape, and some interviewers record the light-skin tone of their interviewee in the absence of such a discussion. This latter testimony is therefore ‘unspoken’. The chapter then considers the trauma of rape, as manifested in the actions of the primary rape victims (mothers); and the secondary rape victims (the children born of rape and male relatives). I then reckon with the problem of consent and coercion under slavery, and explore other highly important issues such as premature sexualisation and the ‘grooming’ of enslaved rape victims.

Through the testimony of the formerly enslaved, the complicity of the white family in abuse is also explored. Here it is argued that married white men openly raped enslaved women, and sons learned such behaviours from their fathers who often encouraged these abusive practices. Within this sexually abusive culture it was

¹¹ Bourke, *Rape*, p. 78.

accepted that young white men would openly father children with enslaved black women, before later marrying free white women. Information contained in WPA narratives alongside census records can be used to reconstruct a picture of extended familial abuse networks that consisted of groups of white families, living in certain geographical areas, whose men abused black women before and after marriage. In such conditions the abuse of black women was normalised and became a prominent part of southern culture.

Finally, descriptions of the treatment of the children born of rape are probed. Some interviewees with white fathers described a callous disregard shown toward these children by their white family; in other cases, kind white women were described. While some slaveholding women were either portrayed by the formerly enslaved as frustrated, jealous and violent tyrants (these cases are discussed primarily in the next chapter) some were portrayed as kind souls who did what they could for their enslaved step-child or grandchild. Though often kind to enslaved children, these women were unable or unwilling to help the enslaved victims of their husbands', or sons' rape. Even when they accepted the enslaved child of their son or their husband into the family home (though always as a domestic slave), they gave acceptance and legitimacy to the white man's abuse, and made themselves participants (by proxy) in this abusive culture. The children born of rape could even have become the companion of their white half-brother or sister, so that positive meaning was placed on their existence as the embodiment of the close relations between blacks and whites under slavery. In this way abuse was turned into 'benevolence'.

Scale in former slave sources

This thesis uses all available nineteenth century narratives of slavery that are available for the states of Louisiana and Texas. The contemporary context meant that the longer narratives and autobiographies are often more candid than the later 1930s interviews. The interviews do, however, offer some valuable testimony as well as providing a baseline figure for the rape of enslaved women; this figure is brought closer to an accurate calculation by combining it with the number of 1930s interviewees who claimed that their father was a white man. Table 4.1 documents a substantial number of interviews that either mentioned a rape or a white father. Combined, these numbers amount to 9.4 per cent of the total interview sample; and this is in spite of serious undercounting factors discussed below.

The clearest examples of sexual violence are found in interview references to rape. Rape was discussed in 7.3 per cent of the Louisiana interview sample and 1.5 per cent of the Texas interviews. It should be noted that, in almost all cases, the interviewees testified, not to being raped themselves, but to direct knowledge of a rape. Such testimony did not, however, simply comprise of broad assertions that rape took place under slavery, but directly catalogued cases known to the interviewee. In these references, the interviewee explicitly stated that the woman or girl involved had no choice, or had not consented to the sexual relationship. Keywords indicative of sexual abuse and coercion can be identified in interviews: these include 'forced' ('they whipped and forces', Abbie Lindsay, Louisiana); 'make/made' ('make you have 'em', Louisa Sidney Martin, Louisiana); or

'take/took' ('De mosters and the drivers takes all de nigger girls day want', James Green, Texas).¹²

Rape was less directly documented in references to white fathers. The interviewee disclosed that their father was a white man in 6 per cent of interviews, and that their grandfather was a white man in 2.1 per cent of interviews. An additional 1.3 per cent mentioned some other white ancestor such as a great-grandfather, or great-great grandfather. As not every rape culminated in the birth of a child, any study that attempts to quantify rape by the offspring born of it can only produce a baseline figure. Few studies have attempted to quantify references to white fathers within the former slave sample. Crawford found that six to ten per cent of interviewees reported that their father was a white man, the percentage depending on whether the person was interviewed by a white interviewer (6%) or a black interviewer (10%). Fogel and Engerman, however, reported that just 4.5 per cent of WPA interviewees said that one of their parents was white. They then concluded that this statistic supported their assertion that the extent of sexual exploitation had been previously over-emphasised by abolitionists and by later historians.¹³

Fogel and Engerman's analysis grossly underestimates both the scale and impact of the number of enslaved offspring of white fathers whose very existence stems from

¹² Abbie Lindsay interview, *TAS*, Vol. 2, Part 4, p. 255; Louisa Sidney Martin interview, MCC, UNO.; edited James Green interview, Vol. 4 part. 2, p. 87, unedited James Green interview *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, part 4, p.1577.

¹³ Fogel and Engerman reported that 4.5 per cent of the interviewees said that one of their parents was white, and concluded that this statistic supported their assertion that the extent of sexual exploitation had been previously over-emphasised by Abolitionists and by later historians. Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 133; Crawford, 'Quantified Memory', p. 159.

an act of sexual violence. Sociologists Liz Kelly and Susan Brownmiller have both reflected on rape, and the threat of rape, as a form of social control that affected all women. Angela Davis, bell hooks, and Deborah Gray White have made similar points in particular relation to the social control that white men gained over the whole slave community through their abuse of enslaved women.¹⁴ The present chapter not only suggests a far higher scale of rape than Fogel and Engerman acknowledged but also demonstrates that there are many secondary victims of the rape of enslaved women: an individual act of sexual violence can have consequences that continue for generations.¹⁵

Undercounting

As discussed in the previous chapter, issues of undercount are highly likely to apply when using the WPA narratives to calculate the frequency of rape and white fathers. Of the three interviews briefly referred to in the paragraph above, two were interviewed by black WPA employees. Abbie Lindsay and Louisa Sidney Martin both gave longer and fuller accounts of rape and other forms of sexual violence than in the third interview, that with James Green. Significantly, Green was interviewed by a white male in Texas, and while Green's interviewer recorded his reference to rape, it was later removed by state editors. The original account can be found in the unedited version of his interview that was kept behind in a state repository at the close of the Texas Writers' Project. Such information supports the analysis made in

¹⁴ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence* and S. Brownmiller, quoted in Kelly, both p. 23; Davis, "Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle"; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*

¹⁵ Van Ee and Kleber, 'Growing Up Under the Shadow'.

the previous chapter which pointed to the potential of interviews conducted by black interviewers for uncovering the true scale of sexual abuse under slavery.

Other factors would also contribute to a significant undercount of rape, not least the young age of the interviewees at emancipation. Age-related circumstances also affect the number of interviewees who mentioned a white father, over those who mentioned a rape. Because of their low average age at emancipation in 1865, interviewees were less likely to have been a direct victim of rape when compared with the typical experiences of people who had experienced a lifetime under slavery.

Additionally, like all sexual issues, rape and white fathers were not on the list of formal questions that the former slaves were to be asked; and even if asked about such issues, rape victims specifically would have been highly unlikely to divulge such information to a person whom they had never previously met.¹⁶ Liz Kelly discussed the difficulties in finding women willing to discuss their abuse. As discussions of sexual violence are potentially very distressing, Kelly wrote that it was important that women *chose* to participate in her study.¹⁷ A formerly enslaved woman who had grown up in what Joshua Thomas Rothman has described as the ‘forced silence’ of slaves and their families on issues relating to sexual abuse, was highly unlikely to volunteer to discuss such matters, especially with a white person in the segregated South.¹⁸

¹⁶ There was more than one list of questions that the WPA-employed interviewers were to follow, see Chapter Three for further discussion of interview questions.

¹⁷ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighbourhood*, p. 136.

Editing practices, as with the case of James Green mentioned above, would also contribute to an undercount. Although Cato Carter's interview stated that his master's brother was his father, the state editors removed the part which said that Cato's mother 'was part of white family's blood too'; this comment would indicate an intergenerational pattern of sexual abuse that was not present in the edited interview. The statement that Winger Van Hook's father was his master was completely edited out of his interview. Allan Carthan's description of his mother's 'long black hair, high cheekbones and a light colour' was omitted too.¹⁹ These traceable editorial decisions show no clear guidelines on state-level editing, and indicate that more than one editor was working on the interviews.

The black body and evidence of white rape

Considering the risks of mentioning such issues in the Jim Crow South, and not least that sexual violence was a taboo topic, some 1930s interviewees may have believed that their appearance was sufficient visual testimony to their parentage. Light skin, eye colour, hair colour and texture all seem to have acted as 'signifiers' of white fathers when this was not vocalised in interviews. Louis Fowler, enslaved in Georgia but interviewed in Texas, told his white male interviewer, Sheldon F. Gauthier,

¹⁹ *TAS, SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 657; *TAS, SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 445; *TAS, SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 653.

Now 'bout my father, I's let yous judge. Look at my haiah. De color am red, ain't it? My beard am red, an' my eyes brown, my skin am light yellow. Now, who does you think my father was? Yous don't know, ob co'se, but I's know 'cause on dat plantation am a man dat am over six feet tall an' his haiah am red as a brick²⁰

The reading of enslaved peoples' bodies, skin and features for signs of white parentage was a defining characteristic of antebellum slavery.²¹ In the nineteenth century, rumours abounded amongst white and black people regarding blond-haired and red-haired slaves of the South who were living evidence of illicit relationships between master and slave. Col. Mallory, a former Louisiana slave and nineteenth century autobiographer, wrote that '[s]ome of the children sold by their combined owner and father could hardly be distinguished from the white people'. The fallacy of race-based slavery was not unnoticed by those who were young at the time of their emancipation. Rosa Maddox, born in 1848 in Louisiana, told her white female interviewer that she heard from others that '[t]here was some redheaded neighbours of the Andrews had a whole crop of redheaded nigger slaves'.²²

While Louis Fowler encouraged his interviewer to read the signs of white parentage on his body, others did not, perhaps knowing that their southern interviewer would have been all too aware of these visual clues. White female interviewer Letha K. Hatcher described the former slave Nora Armstrong as 'probably part-white' and

²⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1386

²¹ This was especially evident in the domestic slave trade, see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 125-27 (on light-skinned slaves), and Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, pp. 135-61 ('Reading Bodies and Marking Race').

²² Col. W. Mallory, *Old Plantation Days* (Hamilton, Ontario 1902), p. 20; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, p. 2521.

inserted into the interview of Wash Armstrong that '[h]is nose lips and general shape of his face resemble the white race'.²³ Other white interviewers simply commented on the colour of the interviewee's skin alongside statements of their age, where they lived, and who they were owned by. This in itself was an acknowledgement of the variations of skin colour that existed among slaves. Edmond Bradley was described as 'light brown' by his interviewer, and Sarah Thomas's skin colour was described as 'ginger'. Other interviewers commented on the interviewees' skin colour as if to verify their claims to white parentage. White male interviewer Fred Dibble said that former slave Ellen Nora Ford, 'might well pass for white', Victor Duhon was described as 'very light' and Donaville Broussard was described as 'light skinned, with blue eyes'.²⁴

Trauma

The trauma of rape continues to have a significant impact on the primary rape victim, long after the original attack. Van Ee and Kleber, alongside many other psychological studies, have provided evidence of issues encountered by rape victims who bear their rapist's child. They have reported that mothers in this situation often show a distinct lack of parental adjustment and interpersonal sensitivity. In addition, the negative effects of psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder impact severely on the development of the child. Van Ee and Kleber found that while many mothers try to see their child as a blessing, their

²³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 75; *TAS, SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 77.

²⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 324; *TAS SSI, Mississippi Narratives*, Vol. 9, Part 4, p. 3772; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1354; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1238; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part. 1, p. 454.

psychological trauma will have a negative effect on their parenting practice: the child will continue to be a living reminder of the rape and the rapist.²⁵

Auntie Thomas Johns, who lived in Burleson County, Texas, under slavery told her white male interviewer of the significant psychological trauma of one 'half white' enslaved woman on the plantation who had children by the unmarried white owner:

Aunt Phullis she was called, that he had some childrun by. She was half white. Remember her and him, and five of their sons. Some of their other children died before I wuz old 'nough to remember 'em. The ones I knowed wuz nigger black. His daddy was a nigger man. When she wuz drunk and mad she'd say she thought more of her black chile than all the others. Major Odom treated their childrun jus' like he treated the other niggers.²⁶

The children in this situation were rejected by both their master father and rape-victim mother. The mother was described as 'half-white', so was likely to have been a child born of rape herself.

While Van Ee and Kleber mainly studied children born of wartime rape, in the United States the sexual abuse of enslaved women was much more sustained, systematic and intergenerational. Under such conditions, the neglect, stigmatism, and ostracism of such children did not occur so uniformly. While Van Ee and Kleber list 'Devil's children' (Rwanda), 'children of shame' (East Timor), 'monster babies' (Nicaragua), 'dust of life' (Vietnam), 'children of hate' or 'Chetnik babies' (Bosnia-

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 205.

Herzegovina) amongst the names given to children born of rape, such stigma is not common in the testimony of the formerly enslaved from the United States.²⁷

Just two interviewees mentioned that their white parentage prevented them from forming attachments to other family members. Mandy Billings, born in 1854, was interviewed by Bernice Bowden of the Arkansas Writers' Project, but had lived in Sparta, Louisiana under slavery. Her father was her white master, Charles McLaughlin. She told Bowden that her mother was 'sold on that account. Old Master Charles' wife wouldn't 'low her to stay'. She protested to her white female interviewer (who took a condescending and hostile tone in some of her other interviews), 'I'm tellin' it just like they told it to me'. At the end of her interview she revealed:

I been treated pretty well. Look like the hardest treatment I had was my grandfather's, Jake Nabors. Look like he hated me cause I was white—and I couldn't help it. If he'd a done the right thing by me, he could of sent me to school. He had stepchillun and sent them to school, but he kep' me workin' and plowin'.²⁸

Billings did not provide any direct evidence for her grandfather's animosity toward her, and her belief that this treatment was something to do with her light skin could say more about her own psychological trauma of knowing how she was conceived, rather than her attitude of her grandfather. Cato Carter told of his own psychological torment attributed to his mixed racial heritage. He told his interviewer,

²⁷ Van Ee & Kleber, 'Children Born of Rape', p. 388.

²⁸ *TAS*, Vol. 2, Part 1, *Arkansas Narratives*, p. 162.

My grandmammy was a juksie, 'cause her mammy was a nigger and her daddy a Choctaw Indian. That's what makes me so mixed up with Indian and African and white blood. Sometimes it mattered to me, sometimes it didn't. It don't no more, 'cause I'm not too far from the end of my days.²⁹

In another case Donaville Broussard, the son of a white man and a light-skinned female slave reported that his black 'step papa didn't like me. I was light'.³⁰ These three cases represent the only negative attitudes in Louisiana and Texas testimony toward children born of rape. Overall, evidence does not point to any significant impact on family relationships that can be attributed to lighter skin. Additionally, the negative reaction in these cases came from close family members who themselves were likely to have been tormented by an inability to protect their loved one from sexual violence.

Evidence presented later in this study, especially in Chapter Seven, a case study of Louisa Picquet, demonstrates that children born of rape could form part of a strong network of other light-skinned enslaved people. Louisa's mother was a rape victim, as was her future husband's mother and first-wife. Picquet's narrative builds a picture of a slave sub-community that was understanding, supportive, and resilient. Despite this community support, the impact of rape and the culture of fear would not have been lessened, and would have extended far beyond those who had been directly sexually assaulted.

²⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 639.

³⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, part. 1, p. 454.

'Consent' and premature sexualisation

Key to this chapter is the relationship between references to 'rape' and references to fathers who were white men. Alan Wertheimer describes the word 'rape' as 'emotionally freighted'.³¹ The word rape could not be used in many everyday social situations, and was certainly not always a suitable topic of conversation. It is quite possible that many of those who referred to a white father or grandfather were aware that their interviewer knew that this was an indirect reference to the rape of their mother or grandmother. In these cases, the argument for counting such references as a reference to sexual assault hinges on the notion of 'consent'.

Annette Gordon-Reed analysed the sexual relationship between Thomas Jefferson and the enslaved woman Sally Hemings. Hemings accompanied Jefferson on a trip to France between the ages of 14 and 16: she returned pregnant with his first child. Hemings' decision to return to the United States with Jefferson as his sexual partner (possibly sex-slave, see Chapter Six), is described by Gordon-Reed as sounding

[m]ore like the handiwork of a smart, if overconfident, attractive teenage girl who understood very well how men saw her and was greatly impressed with her newly discovered power to move an infatuated middle-aged man.³²

This depiction of Hemings as a calculating young woman, in control of her lusty white master is complicated by Hemings' very young age.

³¹ A. Wertheimer, *Consent to Sexual Relations* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 8.

³² Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, p. 362.

The age at which sexual maturity is reached differs throughout nineteenth-century sources. In the colonial period, the age of consent in Anglo-America ranged from 10-12 years for young girls; though enslaved girls did not receive any formal legal protection from rape. Harriet Jacobs, in her chapter entitled 'the trials of girlhood' wrote that age fifteen was a 'sad epoch in the life of a slave girl', when the slave girl would become 'prematurely knowing in evil things'.³³ Marie Jenkins Schwarz wrote that when enslaved children made their way into the world of adult work in their early teenage years they believed that they were entitled to the romantic relationships of adulthood too: these relationships had to be 'secretive', indicating that enslaved parents made attempts to prolong the youth of their children.³⁴ It is clear from enslaved testimony that enslaved people believed that their youth should be protected.

The term 'grooming' has been employed in recent years to describe the process by which potential sex offenders establish relationships of trust with future victims in order to facilitate abuse.³⁵ Anne Marie McAlindon has defined grooming as the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject, in a range of inter-personal and social settings in order to establish trust, or normalise sexually harmful behavior and prohibit exposure.³⁶ McAlindon also discussed the

³³ H. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York, 2001; originally published Boston, 1861), pp. 45-7.

³⁴ M. Killias, 'The Emergence of a New Taboo: The Desexualization of Youth in Western Societies Since 1800', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, No. 8 (2000), pp. 459-77; M. J. Schwarz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.174.

³⁵ See A. Salter, *Transforming Trauma: A Guide to Understanding and Treating Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (Newbury Park, CA, 1995); A. Salter, *Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders: Who They Are, How They Operate, and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children* (New York, 2003).

³⁶ Some have preferred the term 'entrapment', as 'grooming' can often fail to acknowledge that many of the behaviors covered by the word would be considered appropriate if they were used outside the

construction of relationships built on gaining the trust of the young child's family, these relationships being designed to facilitate abuse. There is no way to conclusively prove that Jefferson groomed Hemings, but there are problems with Gordon-Reed's argument that the good relations between Hemings' family members and Jefferson meant that he was unlikely to have been a rapist. In the light of modern research on child sex abuse and grooming, their good relations do not exonerate Jefferson.

Although the premature sexualisation of girls under slavery exists throughout the testimony of the formerly enslaved, girls and young women were even more likely to have been the sexual prey of the master when they were domestic slaves. The previous chapter mentioned that women were more at risk of sexual abuse the closer they were to the master; whether as a domestic slave on a larger unit, or working anywhere on a small unit. 'Aunt Jane', whose narrative was recorded a little before 1890 by black researcher Octavia V. Rogers Albert, recounted the experience of 'Ella', a young domestic slave who lived with her master and mistress from the age of twelve after being given to the mistress by the slaveholder's mother. Ella suffered sexual abuse by her master and extreme physical abuse and was eventually murdered by her mistress, despite having lived with them since being a young child. Ella's case will be discussed further in the next chapter.³⁷

context of abuse. See A. M. McAlindon, *'Grooming' and the Sexual Abuse of Children: Institutional, Internet, and Familial Dimensions* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 3-14.

³⁷ Albert, *The House of Bondage*, p. 159.

In the 1930s, Alice Moore Davidson told her white male interviewer that her mother, when an infant of three years, had been bought by Tom Moore. When her mother became old enough, she became Moore's house girl, his sexual victim and bore his child Alice. The age at which Alice's mother became pregnant is unclear, but Moore clearly saw the potential in a young child as a victim of sexual abuse. Alice, herself, was too young to do any real work during slavery, indicating that she was likely to have been born just before the Civil War. She remembered that her father-master married a widow named Mrs Hornsby.³⁸ In the cases of both Ella and Alice's mother, the young girl was brought into the slaveholder's house at an early age and became the victim of sexual abuse.

The narrative of Solomon Northup reveals slave traders' recognition of the premature sexualisation of young slave girls through the calculation of the value of their future sexual appeal. A slave trader remarked that there was 'heaps and piles of money to be made' of a young light-skinned child, Emily, when she was older. He continued, '[t]here were men enough in New-Orleans who would give five thousand dollars for such an extra, handsome, fancy piece as Emily would be....She was a beauty—a picture—a doll'.³⁹ Emily (again discussed further in the next chapter) was, like Alice Moore Davidson, intended as a victim of sexual abuse from a young age. As indicated by the cases of the two young female domestics discussed above, the slave trader was unlikely to have kept Emily long before he was able to cash in on her beauty. Because there was no legal or social recourse for an enslaved victim of sexual abuse, a white-male sex abuser did not need to undertake a process of

³⁸ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1059

³⁹ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 86-7.

grooming future victims, but some, perhaps to maintain their own self-image of benevolent slaveholding, may have undertaken this anyway.

Two 1930s interviewees revealed that their sisters were sexual victims of the master. Julia Woodrich told her white female interviewer in Louisiana that she

‘member how my massa use to come an’ got my sister, make her take a bath an’ comb her hair an’ take her down in the quarter all night – den have the nerve to come aroun’ de nex’ day an’ ax her how she feel...Dats de reason dere is so many mulatto nigger chillins now.⁴⁰

Anthony Christopher, born in 1851 in West Columbia, Texas, told his white male interviewer, Clarence Drake, that his mother and father were treated slightly better than the other slaves, ‘[d]at’s ‘cause Deenie, what was my sister, was Marse Patton's gal. He wasn't married and he keeps Deenie up to de big house’.⁴¹

In cases like those of Woodrich and Christopher, the enslaved parents had no power to object to the master’s abuse of their daughter. Stephen Williams, who lived close to Baton Rouge under slavery, told his white male interviewer in Texas that ‘when a colored girl get 'bout 12 years old, she mighty liable to get mistreated by some low-down overseer. If her folks make a fuss 'bout it, the owner don't pay no 'tention to 'em, and they jes' bring on trouble for themselves and get whipped or mebbe worse’.⁴²

⁴⁰ WPA-Ex-Slave Narrative Project at Louisiana Southern University (LSU).

⁴¹ *TAS*, SS2, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 718.

⁴² *TAS* SS2, Vol. 10, Part 9, p. 4037.

That some women made a decision not to resist sexual relationships with white men, does not always make these relationships any less a form of sexual violence. The recognition that some white men groomed enslaved women does not make the enslaved woman childlike, or make every sexual relationship between a white man and an enslaved woman a statutory rape, but enslaved women were at the ultimate control of the master who controlled their physical labour and emotional wellbeing. Grooming, by the definition given by McAlindon, can occur with women of any age and stretches far beyond the manipulation of children. Women could have been coerced into sexual relationships through other means aside from direct physical force. Furthermore, psychological studies of rape survivors have found that women can opt to submit to sexual abuse when the risks associated with direct physical resistance are just too high: this allows the woman a sense of control over her own body and is an important cognitive resistance and coping strategy.⁴³

Ellen Sinclair, who had lived in Beaumont, Texas, told her white male interviewer that her master Bill Anderson and his three sons ‘mek de wimmin do what dey want cose dey slaves and coultn' help deyself’.⁴⁴ Enslaved women had the underlying knowledge that white men could rape without repercussion, but any resistance on the part of the woman would have been met with consequences. John Finnely of Texas told his interviewer that ‘[d]e worst whuppin' I seed was give to Clarinda. She hits massa with de hoe 'cause he try 'fere with her and she try stop him. She am put on de

⁴³ A. Burgess and L. Holstrom, ‘The Coping Behavior of the Rape Victim’, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 133, No. 4 (1976), pp. 413-18.

⁴⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3592.

log and give 500 lashes'. Finnely described Clarinda as 'deadlike' after her punishment.⁴⁵ Other non-violent forms of resistance are reflected on further in Chapter Seven and in the Conclusion of this study, but in most situations, the risk of resistance was just too high. As women had no option to refuse the master, any 'consent' given was in the absence of any alternative: under these circumstances 'consent' loses all of its most fundamental meaning.

In Chapter Eight, resistance to forced reproduction in the form of birth control is discussed. Richard Follett and Liese M. Perrin discussed the silent resistance of enslaved women through gynaecological resistance, a tradition that was found by Londa Schiebinger to stem from a longer history amongst the enslaved throughout the Atlantic World. Perrin found that pregnant women 'unfixed' themselves by taking calomel and turpentine and revealed that indigo, another plant frequently grown on plantations, was also used to cause miscarriages. Enslaved women were forced to inflict physical injury on themselves, and potentially harm any future reproductive capacity in order to resist giving birth. These women were outwardly unable to resist rape, or resist the wishes of the master for them to produce more children, but contraception could be used as a silent alternative when the only option was to live under a veneer of 'consent'.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 1341.

⁴⁶ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, p. 75; Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction', p. 260; Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave*, p. 98; L. Schiebinger *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 105-149 ('Exotic Abortifacients'). Additionally, the termination of unwanted pregnancies -- as a 'contraceptive practice' -- was the norm for all women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. See L. Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley, 1997).

Another means of resisting the rape of predatory white men was to take another white man as a sexual partner and protector. Saidiya V. Hartman explored the concept of ‘consent’ through Harriet Jacobs’ relationship with the white man, Mr Sands, as a protector against the sexual assault from another white man (Mr Flint, in Jacobs’ narrative). Hartman wrote that ‘if desperation, recklessness, and hopelessness determine “choosing one’s lover”, absolute distinctions between compulsion and assent cannot be sustained’.⁴⁷ This quotation demonstrates the complicated nature of ‘will’ and ‘agency’ under slavery. Calculations were made under the shadow of intense dominance by white men: very different decisions would have been made without this pressure.

Louisa Sidney Martin, born in 1848 in Napoleonville, Louisiana, told her black interviewer, Octave Lilly Jr, that her owner, David Pugh, raped the women on his large plantation of 300 slaves. Those who refused were beaten ‘lak dogs’ by the master. She then described an incident that occurred with the master’s brother after the Civil War. Martin recounted,

ah aint never had no white man an ain’t never want none. Robert Pugh told me ah was too fine [illegible text] an told me ef ah’d be his woman, he’d build me a house [illegible text] on his mother’s place...But ah told him no cause ah was scared of w’ite people; but ah wasn’t scared, ah just didn’t want him...

⁴⁷ S. V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America* (Oxford, 1997), p. 111.

Significantly, Robert Pugh's sexual approach to Martin was made just after the Civil War and he accepted her decision to decline the relationship. Whether Martin would have made the same choice while still enslaved is unlikely, especially considering her knowledge of the repercussions of other women who rejected the advances of Pugh men.⁴⁸

Olivier Blanchard who was enslaved in Martinville Parish, Louisiana, told his white interviewers, Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey, that his father was a *white* carpenter on the plantation, but when freedom came 'daddy and mama didn' lib dere on de place no mo. My mama tuk me and atter w'ile she marry 'gin'.⁴⁹ The relationship between Olivier's mother and his white father was rendered meaningless without the influence of slavery and all that came with it. Although Olivier stated that his father and mother lived together under slavery, this is unlikely. The only white male of the same name listed in St Martinville in the 1850 census lived nearby in the household of Therese Guidry, a female head of house. The senior Olivier Blanchard was illiterate and also had a white son aged 10 who also lived as part of the otherwise solely female household of Guidry. While Blanchard is not listed as a carpenter on the census record, his illiterate status may indicate that he was likely to undertake manual labour elsewhere to support himself and his son.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Octave Lilly interview with Louisa Sidney Martin, Dillard Project material, Earl Long Library Special Collections and Archives, University of New Orleans.

⁴⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 324.

⁵⁰ Year: 1850; Census Place: *St Martin, Louisiana*; Roll: *M432_240*; Page: *154A*; Image: *312*. Accessed at *Ancestry.com*.

The Olivier Blanchard interviewed by the Texas Writers' Project was born on a small slaveholding and his mother undertook domestic work. He spoke affectionately of the white mistress, but said nothing of the master, Clairville LeSan, and so the master's views on the relationship of Blanchard's mother with the white carpenter are unknown. Telling though are the actions of Blanchard's mother directly following freedom. He told his interviewer 'my mama come'd 'way and I follow her. De w'ite lady she cry and cry'. This suggests that the mother was keen to leave the slaveholding. Perhaps their master, Clairville LeSan, was sexually aggressive toward Olivier's mother and what is left unsaid regarding the relationship between Olivier's mother and LeSan is more poignant.⁵¹

Louise Neill, who was born in Georgia but interviewed in Texas in the 1930s, told her white male interviewer that her father was the white overseer on the plantation. She remembered that '[m]y fathah was good and when we got freedom he took us all and moved to another fahm. He used to come to our cabin in the afternoon when he was restin' and set on the front po'ch and sing a song that went like this: I wish- I wish- I wish, I wish I was young again.' Louisa's father, again, did not live with them in their cabin. Neill also revealed that she had 'four half-brothers' who 'went to war on the southern side', indicating that the overseer had a white family too.⁵² The relationship with Louise's mother was conducted in the shadow of a white family.

⁵¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, pp. 324-29.

⁵² *TAS SS2*, Vol 7, Part 6, p. 2890.

Cases of former slaves who disclosed that their father was a white man would not all have indicated that a violent and forceful rape occurred, although many certainly did. A large number, however, occurred out of a prolonged process of grooming or entrapment that equalled rape, and this is most horribly true when the female involved was still a child. Those who entered into a ‘consensual’ relationship with other white men likely did so out of hope for a degree of protection for themselves and their children. Choices made under slavery that would not have been made in the absence of the institution must be recognised as another form of sexual interference into the lives of the enslaved.

The southern slaveholding family and collusion with abuse

Rosa Maddox, born in 1848 in Louisiana told her white female interviewer in Texas, ‘[w]heee! Nobody needs to ask me. I can tell you that a white man laid a nigger gal whenever he wanted her. Seems like some of them had a plumb craving for the other color. Leastways they wanted to start themselves out on the nigger women’.⁵³

Young white men are often mentioned in the testimony of the formerly enslaved and abolitionists as having started sexual relationships with black women at a young age. Gabriel Gilbert, who lived in New Iberia parish, Louisiana under slavery, told his white male interviewer, Fred Dibble, that the sons of his master ‘all had black women on the place’.⁵⁴ James Redpath, a white abolitionist traveling in the Southern states in the 1850s wrote that ‘not one per cent of the native male whites in the South

⁵³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, p. 2521.

⁵⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 1477.

arrive at the age of manhood morally uncontaminated by the influences of slavery. I do not believe that ten per cent of the native white males reach the age of *fourteen* without carnal knowledge of the slaves.⁵⁵ Southern women also testified to the immorality that slavery had brought into the home. Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut famously wrote that

Under slavery, we live surrounded by prostitutes...like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any

Table 5.1. Identity of white male involved in rape or the fathering of enslaved interviewees

	Identity of white man in rape references	Identity of white fathers
Master or master's son (named)	20	22
Overseer	4	3
Son of neighbouring planter	0	1
White carpenter	0	1
Slave trader	1	0
Name/identity not given	1	18
Total	26	46

Note: references are from the Texas and Louisiana samples combined

⁵⁵Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, p. 222-23.



Figure 5.1. Valmar Cormier Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C, and digitally at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>

lady is ready to tell you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household but her own⁵⁶

Redpath and Chesnut show the involvement of adult men, teenage males, and indeed the whole of the white southern home in the culture of abuse. Testimony of the formerly enslaved reveals that sexual abuse was part of the very fabric of the South: it had become not only custom, but also a normal favoured white male practice.

Chapter Six reveals more evidence for enslaved women who were kept in sexual slavery in the southern home. Table 5.1 lists the identities of the white men discussed as rapists or white fathers. The master, or his sons, were overwhelmingly the most common perpetrators of sexual violence against enslaved women. Of the 27 cases where the white father was specifically named, the master or his son was named in 22 interviews. Out of the eighteen references to unidentified white fathers, only four interviewees indicate that the white man was not the master or one of his children.

James Burleson of Texas told his white interviewer, Alfred E. Menn, that his father was a white man but refused to tell his name. Menn lists Burleson as a 'mulatto'.⁵⁷ Valmar Cormier (Figure 5.1), was the son of a 'white Creole man', whose name he took after emancipation. Cormier's father could have been either one of the planters by the name of Cormier in Lafayette parish, or could have been a visitor from further afield. Cormier's willingness to take his father's name would indicate at the very

⁵⁶ C. Vann Woodward and E. Muhlenfeld, (eds.), *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (New York, 1984), pp. 32-33.

⁵⁷ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 527.

least that it was somebody closer to home whom he knew.⁵⁸ Valmar told his white male interviewer, Fred Dibble, that his master was a poor man. He only had Valmar and his mother and sister as slaves. The master therefore would certainly have known the identity of Valmar's father. Many of the references to white fathers in which the identity is not stated are likely to concern the master or another close family member.

As we have already noted, while those citing white fathers referred to their own personal situation, those referring to rape (in all but one case) documented the experience of others. Because of the young average age of interviewees during their experience of slavery, 13.1 in 1865, interviewees had lived relatively few years under the risk of rape. Those who had a white father, such as James Burleson, spoke directly about their own situation and were therefore often especially reluctant to tell their white interviewers specific details regarding their parentage.⁵⁹

Of those who did reveal the specific identity of their father, some constructed a horrific image of cruelty, intergenerational sexual abuse, and abuse within the white house and outside of it. Jacob Aldrich who was born in Terrebonne Parish in 1860 was the grandson of his master, the white planter, Michelle Thibedoux (Michelle in

⁵⁸ There were two men by the name of Cormier in Lafayette Parish, Valery and Celestin Cormier were middle-aged planters who lived in Lafayette Parish. Year: 1850; Census Place: *Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana*; Roll: M432_232; Page: 258B; Image: 523; Year: 1850; Census Place: *Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana*; Roll: M432_232; Page: 267B; Image: 541.

⁵⁹ Some cases of rape by overseers have features of 'forced breeding' and these will be discussed in Chapter Nine. Fred Brown, for example, tells of the 'overlooker' who fathered the enslaved children because 'he am portly man.' He added that enslaved women were whipped if they formed attachments to other men. *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 468.

this case being a male name). The 1860 census shows Thibedoux as a wealthy man, both in both real estate and personal wealth. Aldrich's interview indicates that Thibedoux had more than twenty slaves. Aldrich told Fred Dibble, that 'Marster would come 'round to de cabins in de quarters. Sometime he go in one and tell de man to go outside and wait 'til he do what he want to do'. Thibedoux, according to Aldrich 'had chillen by his own chillen'. He also had four enslaved women who lived in his house as sex slaves, including 'a light one' from Charleston. This behaviour was passed on to his son. When his son became overseer he 'had as many mulatto chillens as his daddy had. He was my uncle'.⁶⁰ In commenting on this intensive sexual abuse on the plantation, Aldrich added that '[o]ld Missus ain't say nothing 'tall 'bout it. Warn't no use, 'cause he [Michelle] was a hard man.'⁶¹

Incest is mentioned in other interviews, and nineteenth-century narratives too. Ellen Sinclair, enslaved to Bill Anderson in Beaumont Texas, told Fred Dibble that the master had a daughter by a slave, and then his son had a child with that daughter. 'Dat Bill Anderson wasn' much good man. He had t'ree boys, Wash and Oliber and Irvin'. Ol' man Anderson he hab a daughter by one of the slaves'.⁶² The case of Louisa Picquet will be referred to in some detail in Chapter Seven, but Picquet was sexually harassed by her master (Mr Cook) who had already had children with her mother. In such cases the master can be seen as an erstwhile stepfather, having

⁶⁰ Census records show that Michelle Thibedoux lived on the plantation with one of his elder sons, Lamarque Thibedoux, who was aged 27 in 1860. This is likely to be the young man who was the father of seven enslaved children mentioned by Aldrich. Lamarque Thibedoux married a white woman in 1872 and had a white daughter. See, Year: 1860; Census Place: *Ward 10, Terrebonne, Louisiana*; Roll: M653_425; Page: 87; Image: 415; Family History Library Film: 803425; Year: 1900; Census Place: *Police Jury Ward 2, Saint James, Louisiana*; Roll: 580; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 0053; FHL microfilm: 1240580.

⁶¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 138.

⁶² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3592.

maintained a longer-term sexual relationship with the female slave's mother. Mother Anne Clark interviewed by a white male Texan provided stunning testimony of violence and incest. Clark provided evidence that her father was killed by her master. After her father had been killed, '[m]y momma had two white chillen by marster. They were sold later as slaves. I had two chillen too. I neva married.'⁶³ Here the master murdered the enslaved man for sexual access to his wife and daughter.

Donaville Broussard (Figure 5.2 below) was born in 1850 in Louisiana to an enslaved mother whose owner was Emilier Carmouche. Broussard stated that his grandfather was 'one of de Carmouche boys, one of Mr. Francois' sons' but Broussard did not reveal the relationship of 'Mr Francois' to his owner, Emilier Carmouche. Broussard gave his interview in a 'patois of the Louisiana French' but it was translated into an English that fulfilled the Anglo-white expectations of former-slave speech held by the writer, editor or translator. Important details are likely to have been left out of such a translation. Broussard's mother lived with her master and white relation as a domestic slave

⁶³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 733.



Figure 5.2. Donaville Broussard.
Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C, and digitally at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>

on the small slaveholding in St Martin.¹ Donaville Broussard was the son of a white man, Neville Broussard, of whom no further details were given.²

As mentioned in the introduction to the present chapter, Victor Duhon's interviewer described him as showing 'the white strain in his blood very definitely'. He was fathered by the son of the Duhon family, and the case of his mother who was a long-term victim of rape will be discussed further in the next chapter.³ Victor and his mother were slaves in the house of Jean Duhon and his wife, Emily Prejean. Census records from Lafayette County in the 1850s and 1860s show strong family ties between the Broussards, Duhons, Prejeans and Cormiers in this county. These four families all had male members who had enslaved children interviewed in the 1930s.⁴

Fred Dibble, mentioned previously, conducted many interviews with those who had lived in Louisiana under slavery, but had moved to Texas.⁵ Strikingly these interviewees gave some of the most detailed information about sexual abuse. The distance between the former slave and the white descendants of their former owners

¹ 1820 US Census; Census Place: *St Martin, Louisiana*; Page: 159; NARA Roll: *M33_31*; Image: 154.

² Census records show that Neville Broussard was the son of another planter in nearby Lafayette parish, and is listed on the 1850 census with his twin brother Dupreville as 'labourers'. See Year: *1850*; Census Place: *Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana*; Roll: *M432_232*; Page: *257B*; Image: *521*. When his master and his wife died in 1862 Donaville and his mother were sold. Neither his mother's father nor Donaville's father purchased them and they were separated. The former slave does not give his reasons for taking the surname of his father. His father married a white woman but died in 1882. See *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part. 1, p. 454.

³ Like the interview of Donaville Broussard, Duhon gave his interview in a 'French patois'. His interview was interpreted by a 'Beaumont French teacher', not a qualified translator.

⁴ Year: *1880*; Census Place: *Lake Peigneur, Vermilion, Louisiana*; Roll: *473*; Family History Film: *1254473*; Page: *3B*; Enumeration District: *014*; Image: *0356*.

⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, pp. xxx-xxxi.

(distance created by moving from Louisiana to Texas) could be a factor in the willingness of former slaves to give the names of rapists and white fathers.

Callous disregard

Cases discussed so far in this chapter have shown endemic and intergenerational sexual abuse. In the cases of incest mentioned by Jacob Aldrich, Louisa Picquet and Mother Anne Clark, the men of the family did not recognise any familial relationship with the enslaved. According to Aldrich, men could have children by their own children.⁶ This extreme corruption of the lives of enslaved people and disregard for the parental role is also reflected in references to men who sold their own children. Colonel Mallory, a former Louisiana slave who published his autobiography in the nineteenth century, wrote that

[a]mongst the sad pictures of slave life that may be presented to my readers, the saddest was that of slave women pleading with their masters (and erstwhile husbands) not to sell their children....All pleadings were in vain. Either the father had no regard for his offspring, or he had a heart of adamant properties. No man with one grain of soul could sell his own flesh and blood! Was it not the acme of cruelty to rob a female of that priceless jewel--virtue--and then tear from her already bleeding heart that which would serve, in a measure, to sear over the wounds inflicted on her by her ruthless owner? ⁷

⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2. Part 1, p. 138.

⁷ Mallory, *Old Plantation Days*, pp. 20-1.

Mallory described the prolonged psychological torture of a master's rape; firstly the sexual violence, and then the constant prospect of the sale of any children produced. 15.4 per cent of references to rape refer to an economic incentive (see Table 4.8) and 10.9 per cent of those interviewees who mention a white father also reveal that they were sold by their father or a member of the slaveholding family.⁸

Former slave autobiographies from the nineteenth century were often more candid than 1930s interviews. These earlier sources recounted tales of many years spent enslaved and often gave much more detailed information regarding sexual relationships on slaveholding units. Henry Watson, born in Louisiana in 1813, had a master who had children by an enslaved woman, and recalled that 'these children were not treated any better than any other slaves'.⁹

Some of the most revealing accounts of sexual abuse can be found in the testimony of slavery written down by the black woman Octavia V. Albert in the 1880s. The elderly former slaves to whom she spoke were friends of hers whom had spent the majority of their lives under slavery. In this small collection, two of the formerly enslaved women had children by the master. The dialogue between Albert and former slave Charlotte Brooks is transcribed in the collection:

AUNT CHARLOTTE, what became of your baby? Were you blest to raise it?" "No; my poor child died when it was two years old. Old marster's son

⁸ For further discussion see Chapter Eight: Forced Breeding.

⁹ Henry Watson, *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave*. (Boston, 1848), p. 14.

was the father of my child." "Did its father help to take care of it?" "Why, no; he never noticed my child."¹⁰

Other cases can be found in the 1930s interviews. Preely Coleman, who was born in South Carolina in 1852, was fathered by her master's son. This displeased his white family and so Preely and her mother were sold away to Texas.¹¹ Elvira Boles was sold because of the jealousy of her mistress. Elvira revealed that she 'jus' 'member my first marster and missus, 'cause she don' want me there. I'se a child of the marster'.¹² The financial reward that white fathers gained from the sale of their own children can be classified among references to the general disregard for their enslaved offspring. The formerly enslaved people who mentioned the sale of the masters' children were not just referring to an individual act of shocking cruelty, but in addition to this they were attempting to communicate to the interviewer the extreme lack of regard that white men had for enslaved people, even when they were his own blood.

Of the slaveholding family, only the plantation mistress is ever referred to favourably by the children born of rape. Darcus Barnett told his interviewer that children of white masters 'didn't get treated no better'.¹³ 'Aunt Charlotte', who was interviewed by the black woman Octavia V. Rogers Albert in the 1880s, gave her own interpretation of how white men could sell their children: 'I saw a white man in Virginia sell his own child he had by a colored woman there....Old marster used to

¹⁰ Albert, *House of Bondage*, p. 14.

¹¹ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 240.

¹² *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 105.

¹³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 187.

say niggers did not have a soul, and I reckon all the white folks thought so too'.¹⁴

Chris Franklin born in 1855 and was enslaved in Bossier and Caddo parishes, Louisiana. He was interviewed by the white man, Fred Dibble, and explained that that white women were happy for white men to father children with enslaved women because of the financial gain¹⁵. He remembered that

[d]ey was lots of places whar de young marsters have heirs by darkey gals.

Dey sell 'em jes' like de other slaves. Dat was pretty common. It seem like de white women didn't mind dat. Dey didn't object 'cause dat mean more slaves. Masters have children by slaves and sell them.¹⁶

Formerly enslaved people who were fathered by their masters gave mixed reports on the behaviour of slaveholding women. Some were represented as hateful and jealous (and some further examples of this can be found in the next chapter on sexual slavery). Other white women emerged as angelic in their acceptance of the enslaved children born of their husbands.

The transformation of 'rape' into 'benevolence': my family white and black

The 1930s interviews provide several instances where former slaves spoke affectionately about white fathers or grandfathers, but these situations were usually

¹⁴ Albert, *The House of Bondage*, p. 50.

¹⁵ See forthcoming work by Stephanie E. Jones Rodgers 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery: White Women, the Slave Market and Enslaved People's Sexualized Bodies in the Nineteenth-Century South', in D. Ramey Berry and L. Harris (eds.), *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (Oxford, forthcoming).

¹⁶ *TAS*, SS2, Vol. 4. Part 3, p. 1402.

far from straightforward.¹⁷ The former slave Martha Johnson was raised in her white grandfather's house. She spoke of white cruelty but also said that her grandfather's white wife was kind. Speaking of her mother, Martha said that she was three quarters white:

[h]er master was her father. He had two families. They was raised up in the same house with his white family. Master's white wife kept her and raised her until her death. He was dead I think...Then her young master sold her. He sold his half-sister.¹⁸

Victor Duhon was also raised in the house of his white grandfather and grandmother and was very fond of his white grandparents. Duhon told his interviewer:

[d]ey was 'bout fifteen slaves on de lan' w'at de Duhon's own, but I nebber run 'roun' wid dem. I had a room at de back of de Duhon home. You know Missus Duhon she was r'ally my gramma. She was sho' good to me. Only t'ing I hafter do was to look atter my marster' hoss w'en he come in. W'en I git to be a ol'er boy I was coachman for my missus. I hafter look atter her hoss and karrige.¹⁹

Cato Carter was born in 1836 in Alabama and interviewed in Texas by the white female interviewer. Cato was a slave of the Carter family and was the son of his master's brother, Al Carter. His master's wife built him a room in the big house when he was just older than a baby, but she showed a disregard for his mother, the enslaved woman who had been the victim of rape and who was made to stay in the

¹⁷ The reference to 'my family white and black' comes from Genovese's romanticised view of slavery. See earlier in this chapter and literature review.

¹⁸ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1948.

¹⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part. 3, p. 1238.

quarters. Nevertheless, Carter told his interviewer ‘[t]he Carters told me never to worry 'bout them, though, 'cause my mammy was of their blood and all of us in our fam'ly would never be sold, and sometime they'd make free man and women of us’. Carter described the tag on his hat for when he left the plantation which read, 'Don't bother this nigger or there will be Hell to pay....’ He also proudly remembered how his master left him to look after the white women on the plantation when he went to war.

Cato’s master told him, ‘[i]f I don't come back, I want you to allus stay by Missie Adeline! I said, 'Fore Gawd, I will, Massa Oll.' He said. 'Then I can go away peaceable.' Cato seemed keen for his white female interviewer to recognise his loyalty to his white family. Although his father gave the Carter’s money for his education, he did reveal that his owners never did teach him how to read or write. He said that they regretted it though.²⁰

Will Parker, Ed Domino and Charlie Webb all claimed that they were looked after by their white families while enslaved. Parker said that his mother had a white father and that she lived in the house of her father and his white wife. Parker told his interviewer that ‘[m]e and ma we had it easy. Ma was housemaid and I was houseboy.... They teached ma to read'. Domino told the white male interviewer, Fred Dibble, that his mistress and his mother were half-sisters and said that ‘my mistus wouldn' 'low nobuddy t' touch me 'r' my mudder’, and Webb also told Dibble

²⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 639.

that '[t]hey tole me I would had it more harder on'y the marster took a right lot of intrus' in me. More'n some of the others, co'se I'se his own son'.²¹

Children fathered by white masters and interviewed in the 1930s were young by the time they were emancipated at the end of the Civil War. Had they lived longer under slavery, their story is unlikely to have remained so positive, and they were highly-unlikely to have maintained such a close relationship with the white family of their sexually abusive fathers. Stephen Jordan who spoke to Octavia V. Rogers Albert in the late nineteenth century was freed as an adult. He told Albert:

[m]y first old master was a mighty good man, and my mistress used to love me like her own children. In fact, my old master was my own father; but, of course, the thing was kept a sort of a secret, although everybody knew it. My mother was one of the house servants, and I was raised about the white folks' house. Indeed, after I was old enough to be weaned old mistress had me to sleep in a couch with her own children in her own room, until I got to be a great big boy.

Although Jordan was close to his half-siblings and his white stepmother, this domestic situation did not last forever. He told Albert that when he was fifteen '[s]omehow or other old master got broke, and his big plantation and all his slaves were seized and sold for debts'.²² Jordan's case demonstrates that despite this perceived closeness, slaves in his position would be sold like any other when the finances required it.

²¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, p. 3017; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 10, Part 9, p. 4003; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4 Part 3, p. 1218.

²² Albert, *The House of Bondage*, p. 101.

The fond reminiscences about the white family noted in the last few paragraphs, with the exception of the Stephen Jordan, were all told to a white interviewer. Chapter Three explored the interview that Zoe Posey, a white woman, conducted with former slave Marry Harris. In this interview, despite Mary Harris having been sold by her own father, Posey encouraged the elderly former slave to make positive comments on slave-owners. The majority of interviews contain no trace of the interviewers input, but undoubtedly Posey was not the only white WPA employee to intimidate the elderly formerly enslaved interviewees.²³ Cruel white mistresses were unlikely to be discussed under such circumstances. Some such cases did still, however, emerge. These cases will be discussed in the next chapter on sexual slavery. In that chapter I argue that the normalisation of the link between black women and abuse was so great that plantation mistresses saw black women who were being kept in sexual slavery as ‘prostitutes’ or ‘concubines’. Rather than seeing them as victims, these white women saw them as jezebels, complicit in their own abuse.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored references to rape and white men who fathered children with enslaved women. The consideration of these two issues together has demonstrated the extreme likelihood of a report of a white father having been a direct reference to a form of sexual violence under slavery. This chapter has been led by

²³ Zoe Posey interview with Mary Harris, WPA-Ex-Slave Narrative Project Collection at Louisiana Southern University.

the evidence presented by former slaves for the frequent occurrences of rape, the premature sexualisation and sexual assault of young enslaved girls, and the participation of the whole white family in a culture which accepted, legitimised and often encouraged sexual violence against enslaved women.

The chapter began with further reflections on issues of undercount, specifically in relation to the WPA interviews of the 1930s. The mainly qualitative nature of the analysis of the material in this chapter has reconstructed some of the situations in which sexual violence occurred, and has offered at times, glimpses of extended networks of abusive white slaveholders. These networks were connected through marriage and family, but also through slaveholding ideology and practices which allowed white men to participate in the sexual abuse of enslaved women, either for a short time almost as a rite of passage, or as a lifestyle choice that would continue even after marriage to a white woman.

Further research is aided by the naming of certain abusive processes in order to make them more visible. ‘Grooming’ was certainly underway on some slaveholding units, on others the master exploited his power in other ways to sexually access enslaved women and girls. The recognition of ‘grooming’ or ‘entrapment’ is essential to uncover what has been romanticised in other studies of slavery. The psychological trauma of children born of rape is complicated by the extended period of slavery, and the huge presence of enslaved people of similar mixed parentage or ancestry. Rape as a tool of war and social control has tragic effects at any time, but children born of rape were so common under slavery that, especially in the later period, most slaves

would have been affected by this in some way. There would have been little room for a widespread stigma in the black community -- even if certain children were treated badly by individuals, such as black stepfathers or black grandfathers. These black men are likely also to have been secondary victims of the rape; psychologically tormented by their inability to protect a loved one, and additionally by the embodiment of the rape in the form of the light-skinned child born of it.

Chilling accounts of sexual violence, incest and familial networks of abuse have been discussed in this chapter. In the next, outright sexual slavery is examined and the issues of 'grooming', 'consent', and the entire culture of sexual abuse are probed further.

Chapter Six

Sexual Slavery

In the late 1850s, the *New York Tribune* reporter, James Redpath, detailed his conversation with a ‘Saxon-faced’, ‘yellow girl’ outside a southern farm. This woman, with a ‘roguish eye’ suggestively told him that ‘she would not object to becoming his property’. Redpath, in this section of his travel account, introduced a theme that would be familiar to a nineteenth-century readership: light-skinned sex slaves of the South who were commonly referred to as ‘concubines’. Redpath wrote that married and unmarried men in the South ‘support colored mistresses’ and that ‘she, like nearly all her class was evidently the mistress of a white man’.¹

The term ‘concubinage’, that was used (primarily by whites) in the nineteenth century to describe women who were kept in sexual slavery, has been used in different times and places to describe the practice of men engaging in long-term sexual relationships with women to whom they were not married (or could not be married). The application of the term ‘concubinage’ to the situation in the South is problematic. Though the terms on which this arrangement was negotiated, privately and publicly, has been changeable by time and place, the most common references to the practice can be found throughout sources documenting the Ancient World in Greece, Rome and Persia, and the Far East.² The different forms that ‘concubinage’

¹ Redpath, *The Roving Editor* p. 69.

² An Ancient example of concubines is the of the powerless Persian ‘concubines’ referred to by Herodotus in the 5th century BC, but these differed greatly to the influential and powerful ‘concubines’ present in the Persian court, and referred to by the historian Xenophon just a few decades later. At the same time, in Ancient Greece, ‘concubines’ were common as long as they were

has taken highlights the problem inherent in applying an umbrella term to a human relationship which differed depending on when and where it occurred, and the individuals involved.

The only constant throughout the last three millennia is that ‘concubinage’ has always involved a long-term sexual relationship between two people of unequal social status. ‘Concubinage’ could range from a de facto marriage, to open polygamy, it could be legal or extra-legal, socially sanctioned or a shameful secret, conducted by married or unmarried men; and could range from a bond of love, to outright sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse. The way that these relations played out under slavery was altogether different.

Louise Kelly, in *Surviving Sexual Violence*, wrote of the importance of ‘naming’ abuse, in order to insist that ‘what was naturalized is problematic’.³ The naturalisation of the long-term forced sexual relationship between enslaved women and their masters is reflected in the naming of such women as ‘concubines’. The term ‘concubine’ groups enslaved women with other women in various times and places who were more able (because they were not enslaved) to consent to such an arrangement. The previous chapter grappled with the notion of ‘consent’ under slavery; it was argued that ‘consent’ under slavery was impossible given the power

hidden away from the legitimate family and in Rome, mainly in the Republican Era, ‘concubinage’ was a ‘public and honorable’ social- sanctioned union. Xenophon, *Hellenica*. 3.1.10. Translation accessed at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, 14 January 15. J. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1998), pp. 98-9. B. Rawson, ‘Roman Concubinage and Other De Facto Marriages’, in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 104 (1974), p. 293. The social meaning of ‘concubinage, and the terms on which it has been negotiated have never been stable.

³ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 139.

that the slaveholder had over the enslaved woman in terms of physical or emotional punishment (e.g. the sale of family members) had she chosen not to consent. The renaming of ‘concubines’ as ‘sex slaves’, in the present study has been a conscious decision in order to get to the heart of the real powerlessness of these women.

There are clearly no defined and discrete categories into which male sexually aggressive behaviour can be placed: sexual slavery was likely to have been just one of many forms of sexual abuse on a continuum of sexual violence that was experienced by women described here as ‘sex slaves’. For the purpose of this chapter, sex slaves have been identified as victims of rape by the same man over extended time periods who were prevented by their ‘owners’ from forming relationships with any other man during their period of sexual slavery. A sex slave could live inside a family home, or in separate living quarters; either on the slaveholding unit or elsewhere, and these living arrangements were not dependent on the marital status of the man involved.⁴ Sex slaves often gave birth to the offspring of their abuser but there was no guarantee that their children would not have been sold like those of any other slave. The presence of sex slaves reveals so much about the contradictions inherent in southern slavery, and also about the mind of the master class who brought slavery in this peculiar manifestation into the domestic sphere, thus affecting men, women and children of all social classes and skin colours.

⁴ An example of a sex slave who was kept outside the slaveholding unit can be found in Picquet, *The Octoroon*, pp. 18-19, discussed further in Chapter Seven. In this case, an enslaved woman from Charleston lived in an unspecified location outside the slaveholding unit and it was the responsibility of ‘T’ (a friend of Picquet’s) to bring her to the owner as required. Examples of sex slaves who lived independently can also be found in Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon*.

The present study argues that sexual abuse had become naturalised in US culture. The previous chapter discussed incidences in the testimony of the enslaved where young white men would learn abusive behaviour from their fathers; this extends to the discussion of ‘concubines’ in this chapter. Evidence from the narratives of enslaved people who came into contact with sex slaves and their owner-abusers points to intergenerational cycles of abuse which were perpetuated through the experience of white children growing up with slavery and the sexual abuse of slaves as part of the domestic environment. This knowledge increased the likelihood of the young male child reproducing their father’s behaviour as they grew older. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron described the naturalisation of certain (unconscious) cultural choices as a ‘genesis amnesia’, a ‘naïve illusion that things have always been as they are’. Cultural education consists of ‘the institutional or customary mechanisms ensuring the transmission from one generation to another of the culture inherited from the past’.⁵ At the heart of the sexually abusive culture in the antebellum South was an arbitrary link between enslaved women and their availability for abuse. The ideas, language, and practice of sexual slavery were passed from generation to generation of white males to become either part of a life cycle or a way of life.

This chapter will make initial explorations into language practices that developed out of the ‘cultural education’ of the South. While the term ‘concubine’, adopted by twentieth and twentieth-first century historians, obscures the sinister nature of a non-

⁵ P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron (translated by R. Nice), *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2nd Ed. (London, 1990), pp. 8-9, 10. This is also supported by recent sociological research, which states that social and cultural factors and experiences, including abuse and peer pressure, can influence a child’s sexual development and alter their ideas about sexual relationships, see Chapter One.

consensual sexual relationship and paints white male enslaver-rapists as the *de facto* husbands of their victims, there was another layer of cultural metaphor that consciously, and then over time unconsciously, linked some domestic occupations with sexual labour. Though ‘seamstresses’ and ‘housekeepers’ were not always sex slaves, evidence links these occupations to women who were abused. References to a ‘seamstress’ in the slave market (to name just one southern site where race, gender and potential for abuse were reinforced), would have indicated to the potential enslaver-rapist, that an enslaved woman had been predestined for abuse by either her appearance or parentage.

The case study following this chapter examines the narrative of Louisa Picquet, a light-skinned enslaved woman, forcibly kept as a sex slave in New Orleans. She was eventually emancipated through her master’s will after his death, but only after years of sexual abuse during which time she bore him four children. A number of ‘seamstresses’ are encountered in Picquet’s narrative. In preparation for the themes encountered in the narrative of Louisa Picquet, and through looking at narratives and 1930s ex-slave interviews, this chapter will look at evidence for sexual slavery in book-length narratives and former slave interviews. It will also look at the effect of the practice of sexual slavery, not just on members of enslaved families, but slaveholding women and children too.

This chapter will argue that sexual slavery was a common practice throughout the South and, despite antebellum accounts, those living under sexual slavery were not always light-skinned. Young girls were prematurely sexualised and their right to

choose their own partner was taken away. Enslaved women of any age could become either a temporary sexual partner for young men of the master class (before these young men entered a white marriage), or a victim of sexual slavery for as long as their master wanted them. Young white children were exposed to this abuse at an early age, and its legitimization within the household ensured the perpetuation of the cycle of abuse in the following generations.

While some sex slaves undoubtedly used whatever leverage their sexual relationship with the master afforded them in order to ameliorate the conditions of slavery for themselves and their offspring, the enslaved status of the persons involved ensured that this amelioration was neither permanent nor guaranteed. Additionally, because of the difficulty surrounding the concept of ‘consent’ under slavery, there was often little difference compared to cases of rape, aside from long-term nature of the sexual labour. Sexual slavery in the United States could lie somewhere in the continuum of sexual violence between pressurised sex and coercive sex.⁶

The question of scale: nineteenth-century autobiographies versus 1930s interviews

References to sex slaves can be found in studies that have focused on areas throughout the southern states. Judith Schafer has found references to sex slaves in

⁶ In conceptualising sexual violence as a ‘continuum’ this project does not judge any form of sexual violence as more serious than another. The seriousness and impact of different forms of sexual abuse varies according to the people involved, no two women are likely to interpret their experience in the same way. The impact and survival of sexual abuse will be discussed in the following chapter on Louisa Picquet and in the conclusion to this thesis.

travellers' accounts, records of slave traders, antislavery literature, ex-slave interviews, and even in probate cases brought to the Louisiana Supreme Court cases (where sex slave owners had attempted to free the woman by will after their death and this had been challenged by 'legitimate' heirs).⁷ Whilst this chapter mainly focuses on Louisiana, recent work has shown that New Orleans was not the only city in which light-skinned sex slaves were common. The significance of Emily Clark's recent work on *The Strange History of the American Quadroon* (2013) is its evaluation of New Orleans as an imagined space in which Americans could neatly 'quarantine' the threat that the quadroon posed. As Clark writes, '[a]nxiety over the destabilizing potential of procreation across the colour line was assuaged as America ignored its own interracial population and practices, preoccupied itself with the migrant quadroon, and found a way to cordon off the newcomer from the nation'.⁸ Interracial sex was neatly contained in this southern urban space to create the impression that this was not happening elsewhere, but it is clear from the work of Joshua Rothman, Cynthia Kennedy and Philip Troutman that indeed it was.⁹

Kennedy discovered that sexual slavery was also a common feature in Charleston. She wrote that consensual and non-consensual sex between white men and women of colour, slave and free, was a part of life in Charleston from the colonial through to the antebellum period.¹⁰ In Virginia, Philip Troutman found two slave traders, Robert Lumpkin and Robert Omohundro who fathered children with enslaved

⁷ Schafer, *Slavery, the Civil Law, and the Supreme Court of Louisiana*, pp. 180-200.

⁸ Clark, *The Strange History of the American Quadroon*, p. 9.

⁹ Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood*; Kennedy, *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives*; P. D. Troutman, 'Slave Trade and Sentiment in Antebellum Virginia', unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of Virginia (2000).

¹⁰ Kennedy, *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives*, pp. 111-125

women whom they both acknowledged and subsequently bequeathed their estates to.¹¹ The culture of abuse therefore extended throughout the South.

In the sample of 1930s interviews available for Louisiana and Texas, a little over two per cent include a discussion of enslaved sexual slavery, this low percentage is unsurprising considering the long-term abusive nature of the practice. 1930s interviewee Mary Reynolds told her interviewer of the difficulty in expressing some of the things that happened during slavery, some things were simply ‘past the tellin’.¹² Whilst the references to women who were subjected to sexual slavery are few in number, the information that is given covers a wide range of themes.

Alternatively, with autobiographies, a powerful medium through which sexual abuse was brought to the heart of the antebellum slavery debate, sexual slavery is mentioned in around 30 per cent in the sources from these same states.¹³ The themes in the autobiographies differ slightly; references were generally to light-skinned

¹¹ P. Troutman, ““Black” Concubines, “Yellow” Wives, “White” Children: Race and Domestic Space in the Slave Trading Households of Robert & Mary Lumpkin and Silas & Corinna Omohundro”. Unpublished paper presented at the Southern Association of Women’s Historians Sixth Conference on Women’s History, Athens, GA. 5 June 2003.

¹² This percentage just takes into account the clear references to concubinage, without taking into account any references to ‘seamstresses’ or ‘housekeepers’; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3284-99.

¹³ Though not part of the main source base for this project, abolitionist written tracts such as Weld, *American Slavery As It is*, were also prominent in making claims about enslaved women who were kept in sexual slavery. 28.6 per cent of autobiographies of the formerly enslaved discuss a woman who can be identified as a sex slave, in these particular sources the woman was always light-skinned; the significance of this is discussed later in this chapter. Autobiographies that mention a sex slave include: *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, who was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (New York, 1838). pp. 61-7, *Narrative of William W. Brown, A Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1847), pp. 32-33., Colonel W. Mallory, *Colonel W. Mallory, Old Plantation Days* (Hamilton, Ontario, 1902) p. 20. and Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and rescued in 1853 From a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River, in Louisiana* (Auburn, NY) pp. 21, 50-53, 87.

women encountered either in the slave market or in the possession of a slave trader. The narratives of Solomon Northup and William O' Neal give particularly extended discussions of the practice of sexual slavery: O'Neal discusses the treatment of light-skinned women as sex slaves, and Northup describes a range of sexual abuses perpetuated against enslaved women and children who were both light, and dark-skinned.

Aside from the narratives and 1930s interviews, I will include evidence from *The House of Bondage, or, Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves*, a collection of memories of formerly enslaved people who were friends and acquaintances of Octavia V. Rogers Albert. Albert discussed slavery with just five formerly enslaved people in her published work, but four of these feature a woman who could be described as a sex slave. Each informant in the collection had lived in Louisiana under slavery and was elderly at the time of their interaction with Albert, meaning that they were well into adulthood by the time they were emancipated. Like the 1930s interviews discussed below, people who had lived under slavery for a longer time period were far more likely to reveal information relating to a sex slave.

The scale of sexual slavery is difficult to quantify, and research is hampered by the sensitive nature of the topic and the language employed by the abusive culture whereby sex slaves were sometimes known by alternative job roles that unconsciously masked their primarily sexual labour. Testimony, especially that of Louisa Picquet in the following chapter, demonstrates that sex slaves were commonly referred to as 'seamstresses' and 'housekeepers', though these two terms

are likely to just scratch the surface of language of abuse employed by slaveholders. The extent to which abuse was embedded in the culture of the South means that it is not always apparent to modern historians. The next two chapters go some way in identifying various ways in which sexual slavery can be unearthed in the testimony of the formerly enslaved.

Undercounting factors in 1930s interviews

Thirteen out of around 800 interviews with the formerly enslaved from the states of Louisiana and Texas explicitly mentioned some form of sexual slavery. The

Table 6.1. Types of reference to sexual slavery

Type of reference to sexual slavery	Number of interviews that mention issue
There was a sex slave on their unit	6
Mother was a sex slave	3
Master had two families	2
Sister was a sex slave	1
Sons of master had sex slaves	1
General reference to sexual slavery	1
Total number of issues that mention sexual slavery	14

Note: Some interviews refer to more than one of the issues listed above.

differences in the frequency of references to sexual slavery in nineteenth and twentieth-century sources strongly indicates that limiting factors were present with the 1930s interviews. The calculation of the frequency of sexual slavery from the interview sample used in this project is likely to be a substantial underestimate of those who experienced such sexual abuse for various reasons set out below; but despite the small numbers, significant patterns can still be recognised. Table 4.1 showed that sexual slavery was mentioned in just 1.8 per cent of the interviews in the sample. There were 8 references in the Louisiana sample, and 6 in Texas.

The various types of references are shown in Table 6.1. The significance of these numbers, however, is that while the matter of sexual slavery has often been associated with the literary trope of the tragic mulatto, 13 out of the 14 references to sex slaves actually knew the woman who had this experience; and one had the experience personally. This puts real evidence behind the concept of sexual slavery.

i. Age of interviewees

As discussed in Chapter Three, in cases in which interviewees revealed their age, the mean age at emancipation for those who discussed sexual slavery was sixteen; three years older than the overall average age at emancipation for interviewees in the Texas and Louisiana sample. Significantly, forty per cent of the sexual slavery sample were over 25 at the time of their emancipation; these interviewees had experienced slavery as adults and were able to talk about issues of abuse in more detail. J.W. Terrill, Victor Duhon and Mary Reynolds, all enslaved in Louisiana and aged 25-28 at emancipation gave their interviewers detailed information regarding

sex slaves and family members that had endured some form of sexual abuse. Mary Reynolds gave powerful testimony of her white master who had children with three women on his large rural plantation: his white wife, his light-skinned sex slave, and Reynolds' aunt.¹⁴ Interviewees who were slightly younger at emancipation remembered the practice of enslaved 'concubinage' differently, primarily remembering details relevant to them as children (see Chapter Three).¹⁵ The number of years that the interviewees spent under slavery critically affected both the type of reference to sexual slavery and the detail that they were able to give. The young average age of the 1930s interviewees in 1865 clearly points to an undercount of instances of sexual slavery.

ii. Gender of interviewer and interviewee

Although the number of interviews that refer to sexual slavery are limited, male interviewers were more likely than females to record this type of abuse. Male interviewers conducted seven out of the twelve interviews, female interviewers conducted three, and the remaining two interviews failed to list an interviewer's name. Significantly, no black interviewers recorded any reference to sexual slavery. It is possible that the interviewees spoke to black interviewers about sexual slavery in terms that indicated the true non-consensual nature of such relationships.

¹⁴ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 3 & 4, pp. 78-9; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, pp. 3772-7; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1238-41; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3292-96.

¹⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p.1360; *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1 & 2, pp. 205-7; *TAS SS2* Vol. 6, Part 5, pp. 1973-6.

Female interviewees, however, were more likely than males to provide more detailed information about sexual slavery. Clarence Drake conducted three of the interviews in which sex slaves were mentioned; two of these interviews were with formerly enslaved women, and one was with a formerly enslaved man. Drake's interview with former slave Anthony Christopher contained little information other than that his 'sister was Master Patton's gal. He wasn't married and keeps Deenie up to de big house', yet the two interviews he conducted with women contained more detailed information. One of these was the aforementioned Sarah Ford who told Drake of the 'uppity' Miss Rachel, and the second was Adeline Marshall. Drake extracted quite detailed references to both sexual slavery and the rape of enslaved women from Marshall who told him that her master had 'no wife but a black woman what stays at the house'. She also attributed the number of '[n]o Nation niggers' who 'ain't all black and dey ain't white', to the conditions of enslavement.¹⁶

Though women seemed, from the small number of interviews available, to be in a better position to discuss sexual slavery, the nineteenth-century narratives were mostly written by men. These earlier sources nevertheless contain a high percentage of references to the practice. Had there been more women in this earlier sample, the number of references could have been even greater and even more detailed.

iii. State editing and influence of white interviewers

Again, though the number of references to sexual slavery is small, a close reading of the edited and unedited versions of the 1930s interviews from Texas indicate that

¹⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 718; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1358; *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 3, p. 45.

some state editors were keen to downplay the element of force in long-term sexual relationships between enslaved women and their masters. Two references were amended. Interviewee Adeline Marshall told Clarence Drake that the number of lighter skinned African Americans ‘comes from slave times an de white folks did de wrong ‘cause de blacks get beat and whipped if dey don’t do what de white folks tell ‘em to’; this comment did not make the final editorial cut, yet the reference to the ‘black wife’ of the master remained.¹⁷

This type of editing can be found in other interviews in the sample. Gabriel Gilbert who had lived in Louisiana under slavery but was interviewed by Fred Dibble in Texas, had two passages that focused on the topic of sexual interference edited out of his interview. The first related to young white boys who had sexual relationships with sex slaves on the plantation. Gilbert divulged that ‘Ol’ marster had seb’rel boys. Dey wen ‘roun’ after some of the slave gals on the place. Dey raise seb’rel chillen by ‘em. Dem gals had dere cabins where dey and dey famblys live’. While Dibble recorded a reference to repeated rapes on the plantation, the state editors seemingly objected to this information being sent to the central office in Washington. Gilbert told Dibble that there was no overseer on the plantation, only the masters sons -- but instead of managing the workers, they would ‘see a gal and go off in the woods wid her and leave de han’s to do dey wuk by deyse’fs’.¹⁸ This clear reference to rape was omitted from the final version of Gilbert’s interview that would be read outside of the state.

¹⁷ Edited version *TAS*, Vol. 5, Parts 3 & 4, pp. 45-7 Unedited version *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, pp. 2576-2580.

¹⁸ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1480-1.

Light skinned sex slaves

In 1842 the abolitionist and women's rights activist, Lydia Maria Child wrote that 'the world does not afford such materials for tragic romance, as the history of the quadroons'.¹⁹ The image of the 'quadroon', which drew on the features of the 'tragic mulatto' was to become a stock figure in abolitionist literature, and allowed abolitionists to draw attention to sexual abuse under slavery through bypassing the 'jezebel' stereotype (discussed in the previous chapter) of the black woman who was incapable of victimhood, and presenting the sexual abuse of enslaved women through a veil of whiteness.²⁰ In the earliest critical review of the slave narrative genre in 1849, clergyman and writer Ephraim Peabody mentioned the constant theme of the miseries 'peculiar' to the enslaved woman and the 'corrupting urgencies' of the surrounding white males'.²¹ The tragic light-skinned female character was a constant theme in abolitionist and republican texts. While allowing abolitionists to discuss the sexual immorality of slavery in Victorian America, the presence of mulattoes featured prominently in abolitionist arguments as their large numbers meant that dark skin had ceased to be the primary marker of slavery.²²

¹⁹ Child, 'The Quadroons', p. 141.

²⁰ The trope of the tragic mulatto dates back to nineteenth-century literature and focuses on individuals who were light enough to pass for white. In such stories, the 'mulattoes' were often unaware of their black heritage. When discovering the truth of their ancestry later in these stories, the 'tragic mulatto' character will often find themselves barred from white society and often turn to suicide. Mulattoes are often portrayed as highly attractive. The myth of the tragic mulatto perpetuates the idea that the races should not be mixed due to the potential harm it could cause to subsequent generations. For further discussion see D. Pilgrim, 'The Tragic Mulatto Myth', <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/mulatto/>, accessed 14 January 2015.

²¹ Peabody, 'Narratives of Fugitive Slaves', p. 71.

²² Laurence Tenzer has argued that the dread of "white slavery" was one of the hidden causes of the Civil War, see L. R. Tenzer. *The Forgotten Cause of the Civil War: A New Look at the Slavery Issue* (Manahawkin, 1997), p. 37.

Although it would be easy to assume that the image of the ‘tragic mulatto’ was an abolitionist-invented trope, historians have recently found that there was a specific demand for light-skinned women in the South. Michael Tadman discovered that whilst the prices for light-skinned slaves were generally lower than for those with darker-skin, light-skinned women generally gained a higher price at the slave market.²³ These women were labelled ‘fancy women’, or ‘fancies’, and while they were most often sold under the guise of domestic servants, buyers would know that they were to be used for explicitly sexual purposes.

The evidence contained in nineteenth-century autobiographies of the formerly enslaved particularly illuminate the ‘fancy-trade’ in light-skinned women. William O’Neal aptly demonstrated the meaning that was attached to the light-skinned enslaved woman. O’Neal wrote that while he was the property of a slave trader ‘a copper-colored young woman made her appearance at the end of the vehicle...she was thinly clad’. The slave trader told a potential buyer that ‘This one with the child is Laura, the house-maid, a likely young woman’. The slave trader, Mr Scott, ensured that the buyer to whom he was speaking knew that this was a young domestic slave, and available for sex. The significance of this role was reinforced when his was told that the woman would ‘fill your order in every particular’.²⁴

Solomon Northup in his autobiography, *Twelve Years a Slave*, met a sex slave, Eliza, in the pen of a slave trader. Eliza had arrived with her daughter ‘Emily’, who had

²³ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 125-27.

²⁴ *Life and History of William O’Neal, or, The Man Who Sold His Wife*. (St. Louis, 1896), pp. 7-8

been fathered by Eliza's previous owner. Emily, a child of 7 or 8 years with a very light complexion and 'admirable beauty', was discussed by Northup: 'the style and richness of her dress, and the neatness of her whole appearance indicated she had been brought up in the midst of wealth', her mother was described in a similar manner. Northup continued that 'her air and manners, the correctness and propriety of her language – all showed evidently that she had sometime stood above the common level of a slave'.

Eliza's position seems somewhat less fortunate when Northup learns the details of her previous life. After Eliza's master had fallen out with his wife, he built a new house on the same estate, and leaving his white wife and child in the old house, he then brought Eliza into the new house to live with him. On condition of her living there with him, she and her children were to be emancipated after his death. She lived there with him for nine years 'with servants to attend upon her, and provided with every comfort and luxury of life', though was subjected to the 'hatred and dislike' of the former white mistress and the master's white daughter. The white daughter found the sight of Eliza 'to be odious...neither could she bear to look upon the child, half-sister, and beautiful as she was'.²⁵ When the white daughter married, property was divided, and as soon as Eliza fell under the daughter's control, she and her children were sold. The instability of the position of sex slaves was a common theme in book length narratives, and it was present in 1930s interviews too. Sarah Ford told her interviewer that 'iffen a bird fly way up in de sky it mus' come down sometime...': she discussed the death of her master when 'Miss Rachel' was sent to

²⁵ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 52-3.

work back in the field. It was not long though before the new master took her as his sex slave too.²⁶

Solomon Northup noted that Eliza and her daughter were dressed in clothes not usually allocated to enslaved people, this immediately indicated to Northup that their background was somewhat different. Maurie McInnis in her work on abolitionist art and the American slave trade, noted that some women, such as Eliza, were dressed differently to indicate that they were to be sold as a 'fancy'.²⁷ This is also reflected in the work of Walter Johnson who wrote that in the slave market, slave buyers prided themselves on being able to 'read' the bodies of the enslaved for their innate character. The fancy clothes worn by Eliza, in addition to the light-skinned Emily stood alongside her, was a clear indication to a potential buyer that this woman had been the sex slave of the master.

Despite these findings on the demand for light-skinned women in the slave market, the role of sex slave was not reserved for women with lighter skin. Walter Johnson has written that 'whiteness' and 'blackness' was mapped onto bodies in the slave market according to imagined coordinates; if this is correct then evidence in the testimony of the formerly enslaved demonstrates how certain 'lightening' or 'darkening' characteristics, such as occupation and dress indicated to slave buyers that a woman was destined for a life of sexual slavery.²⁸

²⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1360-1.

²⁷ M. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago, 2011), p. 138.

²⁸ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 139.

The slave market was not the only place that the role and ‘race’ of the sex slave was determined. On the slaveholding unit, the day-to-day existence and living conditions of the enslaved woman and enslaved children of white men either affirmed the status of a sex slave, de facto ‘spouse’ or second family; or alternatively, that the master was an opportunistic abuser of his enslaved women. The aforementioned Sarah Ford of Texas reported that the sex slave of her master was ‘uppity’ over the other slaves and made them call her ‘Miss Rachel’.²⁹ Similarly the sex slave of Mary Reynolds’ master attempted to set her children apart by physical appearance and behaviour. Reynolds remembered that ‘She larnt them fine manners and combs out they hair’. This woman was set apart from the other enslaved people on the level of appearance (light skin, ‘fine’ dress), domestic location (‘He builds her a house ‘way from the quarters’), and behaviour (‘fine manners’).³⁰

Phillip Troutman studied the complex lives of slave traders and their sex slaves in Virginia. He described how the physical layout of domestic spaces in which enslaved people and white enslavers resided can help reveal the logic of the complex and changing racial identities that shaped the lives of these women and their children. The homes of the sex slaves of slave traders Omohundro and Lumpkin were placed within the slave trading compound, but separate from the jail where other slaves were kept. This shows the way in which an imagined racial hierarchy can be constructed in certain spaces. While the light-skinned women in the case of these slave traders were separate from the other slaves, their residence in this

²⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1360-1.

³⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3284-99.

environment surely would have underscored the fragility of their condition as unfree people who could be traded at the patriarch's will. In addition, Silas Omohundro kept a 'black' sex slave, as well as his light-skinned sex slave. When Omohundro died, the dark skinned sex slave and her children were emancipated, but did not receive the same amount of inheritance as his lighter-skinned family.³¹

Similar patterns can be found in the WPA interviews, firstly with Mary Reynolds and secondly with Mrs Thomas Johns. Mrs Johns reported that 'Aunt Phyllis' had five children by the white master and one child with a black man. When Aunt Phyllis was drunk, Johns remembered, 'she'd say she thought more of her black chile than all the others'. The master 'treated their children jus' like he treated the other niggers', and made the children live in the quarters when they were grown. Aunt Phyllis' behaviour in engaging in social activities such as drinking with the other slaves indicates that she occupied a lower position than other sex slaves.

Additionally, the interview with Mary Reynolds of Louisiana, which shall be returned to later in this chapter, attests to the racial hierarchies created within the slave community. Mary Reynolds remembered that her master 'took a black woman as quick as he did a white...and he took them often', yet her aunt who had four children by the master said were ignored by their father. This stark contrast to the relationship between the Doctor and the children of the 'yaller gal', to whom he was 'Daddy'.³²

³¹ Troutman, 'Black' Concubines, 'Yellow' Wives, 'White' Children'

³² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 4, pp. 1973-76; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3292-96.

While light-skin was the primary marker of the sex-slave, the social realities of plantations meant that women could be ‘lightened’ according to material conditions. The ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ associated with particular types of slavery could be produced in numerous way. Slave traders and buyers could easily impose on enslaved women external signifiers of ‘whiteness’ such as occupation, the location of her living quarters, dress, and even his own behaviour to indicate to other enslaved people that a woman was a sex slave.³³

Occupation of sex slaves

Mary Reynolds, interviewed as part of the Texas Writers Project, discussed two victims of sexual abuse that resided on the plantation on which she was enslaved in Black River, Louisiana. She remembered the experiences of the two women very differently. The first was the ‘yaller gal dressed in fine style’ who was described as a ‘seamster nigger’. As discussed previously, the children of this woman were treated relatively well by their father-master. In contrast she told the story of Aunt Cheyney, an enslaved woman who worked in the field who also had four children by the master, but did not receive the same treatment from Dr Kilpatrick as the lighter skinned woman or her children. Reynolds recounted Aunt Cheyney’s horrific experience;

[Aunt Cheyney] was just out of bed with a sucklin’ baby...another of Marster’s breedin’. She runs to the woods ... Old Solomon and some other

³³ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 150.

mens gets them nigger hounds and takes her trail. They gets near upon her and she grabs a limb and tries to hist herself into a tree but the dogs grab her and pulls her down. The mens holler, Who-o-o-e-e-e-e.... The dogs tore her naked and et the breasts plumb off'n her body. She got well and lived to be a old woman but another woman has to let her baby suck and she ain't got no sign of breasts no more.³⁴

Aunt Cheyney clearly held a different position in relation to the master than the light-skinned woman, despite the fact that she too was a long-term victim of the master's rape. Reynolds remembered that the dogs 'tore her naked' and 'et' her breasts. For the repeated victim of rape this was clearly another horrific attack on her sexuality, and a harmful attack on her child, described as a 'sucklin' baby'.

This account illuminates the aforementioned duality of knowledge relating to sexual abuse. This woman of lighter-skin tone who was trained to be a 'seamster nigger' received different treatment to the field slave Aunt Cheyney who was raped by the master and left to her work. It is doubtful that the master allowed Aunt Cheyney's children to call him 'Daddy' as he did with the children of the lighter skinned enslaved woman.

Walter Johnson wrote that in the slave market 'slave buyers suggested that slaves' skin color could be read as a sign of a deeper set of racial qualities'.³⁵ The lighter

³⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3294.

³⁵ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 139.

Table 6.2. Occupations of those who mentioned sexual slavery and stated their occupation, and the composition of total sample

Number of interviewees by state	Occupation as a % of sample			
	Domestic/skilled	Domestic/field	Field	Too young to work
Subset of those mentioning sexual slavery and their occupation (7)	57.1	0	42.9	0
Total sample (533)	47.1	1.7	47.5	3.8

Note: Half of the subset of interviewees who mentioned sexual slavery did not disclose their occupation under slavery so the numbers used for this table are small. In the ‘total sample’ row, the number is less than the total number of 773 interviews as 240 interviewees did not mention, or the interviewer did not record their occupation under slavery.

skin tone of certain women indicated to the slave buyer that they were less suited to field work, and were more likely to be domestic slaves where they would be more susceptible to sexual abuse. Chapter Four discussed the results of 1930s interviews and revealed that when the enslaved person was in closer proximity to the master, either through their work as a domestic slave, or if they were enslaved on a small slaveholding unit, they were more likely to encounter or be aware of some kind of sexual abuse or interference.

Table 6.2 shows that a slightly larger percentage of formerly enslaved people who mentioned sexual slavery and who also disclosed that they had worked domestically.

While the percentage is slightly raised when compared to the composition of domestics in the total sample, there are still a high percentage of field workers who were aware of the issue, and this indicates that sexual slavery also had a significant impact in the lives of field slaves too. The narrative of Solomon Northup attests to this with his evidence of the abuse of ‘Patsey’, an enslaved woman who performed duties in the field. ‘Patsey’ was a sex-slave of Northup’s master and was also subjected to the jealousy of the mistress because of her appearance and ‘pleasant character’.³⁶

Most qualitative evidence does, however, indicate that women who occupied a domestic position such as ‘seamstress’ or ‘cook’ were far more likely to be abused by the master. It is likely that women were trained in these roles at an early age because of their desirability and light skin. Chapter Four indicated that there is significant evidence that points toward an intergenerational cycle of victimhood for women of light-skin; evidence from the 1930s interviews suggests that women were far more likely to have a white father when they had a white maternal grandfather. The young children of sex slaves who worked domestically were therefore far more likely to be trained in a domestic role, although enslaved women who worked in the field were certainly not exempt from long-term abuse.

³⁶ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 21, 50-53, 87.

Black and white children: secondary victimhood and cycles of abuse

Growing up in a domestic environment in which sexual abuse was ingrained in the fabric of the household could not have failed to have an impact on children; black and white. For white men who deemed it acceptable for the sex slave to live in the house alongside the white wife and children; they exposed children, black and white to the worst kind of violence, force and jealousy. The experience of black and white children as they became aware of sexual slavery is investigated in this section.

i. Experiences of black children

Though formerly enslaved people interviewed in the 1930s were young at the end of slavery, they remembered the abuse of their family members clearly, indicating the significance that they attached to this experience as children. J.W. Terrill, Victor Duhon, Mary Reynolds, and Anthony Christopher all aged between 14 and 28 at the time of their emancipation had family members who were abused over a long time period. J.W. Terrill grew up in the house of his white father alongside his enslaved mother who was the long-term victim of his father's sexual abuse. Terrill described his mother as his white father's 'mistress'.³⁷

Martha Johnson recalled that her mother grew up in the house of her white father, a married man with white children. Johnson's mother was then sold by her white half-brother after the death of her white father; Johnson emphasised the point to her interviewer that 'he sold his half-sister'.³⁸ Anthony Christopher told his interviewer

³⁷ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3772.

³⁸ *TAS (Arkansas)*, Vol. 2, Part 4, p.122.

that his sister was ‘master Patton’s gal. He wasn’t married and he keeps Deenie up to de big house’. Yet Christopher was himself a domestic slave, which meant that he worked in close proximity to the site of his sister’s abuse.

Other interviewees revealed the depth of abusive behaviour toward enslaved women that occurred within the white family home; but also its naturalisation as part of the culture of abuse that existed amongst white men, in particular. An anonymous formerly enslaved man told his interviewer, ‘you know when a man would marry, his father would give him a woman for a cook and she would have children in the house by him, and his wife would have children too’.³⁹ Again, this demonstrated an openness about institutionalised sexual abuse within white families, especially among white slaveholding family members. In this case, the concepts of sexual slavery and forced breeding were linked through the gifting of an enslaved female. Firstly, the woman performed sexual labour as a long-term victim of rape; and secondly she would increase the young man’s ‘stock’ of slaves through reproducing the enslaved labour force. This testimony from the anonymous interviewee demonstrates that sexual abuse existed across a continuum under enslavement.

Approximately half of the abusers mentioned by the former slaves are described as ‘unmarried’, yet at least two of the men mentioned had white wives and families. One of these men lived in the same house alongside his black and white families; and

³⁹ *TAS*, Vol. 18, p. 298.

the second, mentioned in the interview of Mary Reynolds, organised for his sex slave and enslaved children to live elsewhere.

Reynolds told her interviewer, white woman Heloise Foreman, of the ‘yaller gal’ from Baton Rouge who was purchased as a ‘seamstress’. This case in particular shows the potential for psychological distress that the sexual abuse of enslaved women could bring to both the white man’s black and white children. Reynolds described a first encounter between the white offspring of her master, and their enslaved half-siblings. Reynolds remembered that when the enslaved children wanted to play inside the white children’s doll house they were told, “‘You can’t go in the doll house ‘cause that is for white chillum. Nigger chillum don’t have no doll house’”. Reynolds recalled the surprise of the enslaved children who replied “‘we ain’t no Niggers ‘cause we got the same dada you got’”. The Kilpatrick boy says, “‘Naw you ain’t, our dada is a white man and he owns all this place; you is a Nigger’”. When the white wife of the master asked her children “‘What are you playing with them little Niggers for?’” The white children replied, “‘we ain’t playing, we is fussin’; he says that our dada is they dada.’” The enslaved children then told the white woman “‘He is our dada and we calls him dada when he comes down to our house to see our mama’”.⁴⁰ The children in this case, black and white, were prematurely caught up in the corrupted world of adults.

A number of 1930s interviewees reported that the jealousy and frustration of white women was sometimes misdirected at the children born of the sexual abuse of their

⁴⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3292-96

white male family member: enslaved children were often direct victims of the long-term consequences of the institutionalised abuse under US slavery. J.W. Terriel told his interviewer that his father, his mother's master, took him away from his mother at six weeks old. He described the cruelty of his master-father who made him 'wear a bell till I was 21 year old, strapped 'round my shoulders with the bell 'bout three feet from my head in a steel frame. That was for punishment for bein' born into the world a son of a white man and my mammy, a Negro slave'. Other punishment received by Terriel included his having been strapped to a tree and beaten until he was unconscious. This treatment occurred while Terriel's mother was still made to be his master's 'mistress'. The mental anguish for Terriels's mother must have been horrific: first, she was a victim of sexual abuse; and secondly, she could do nothing but watch her child being tortured by her abuser. This is a clear demonstration that long-term sexual relationships or abuse between white men and enslaved women did not guarantee alleviation of the position that enslaved children occupied, and in Terriel's case, it brought him added attention and made his day-to-day life significantly worse.⁴¹

The most direct reference to the potential of young children as future sex slaves can be found in the autobiography of Solomon Northup. While Eliza, the aforementioned sex slave who was sold by her master's daughter when her master died, was sold to the same master as Northup, the slave trader refused to sell Emily as there was 'heaps and piles of money to be made of her, he said, when she was a few years older. There were men enough in New Orleans who would give five

⁴¹ TAS SS2, Vol. 9, Part 8, pp. 3772-7

thousand dollars for such an extra, handsome fancy piece as Emily would be'.⁴² Emily was kept in order to be groomed for the 'fancy-girl' market in New Orleans. In this culture of sexual exploitation, the profit that could be made from the future sexuality of young girls was calculated from an early age. This profit could be in terms of reproductive potential, or the value of young girls in the 'fancy market'. In the business correspondence of slave traders, Troutman has found that traders 'understood the sexual and racial mores of their patrons' and themselves partook in what were looked upon as 'fringe benefits of their power and proximity to such women'.⁴³ Emily was unlikely to have escaped abuse by the slave traders by the time she was sold.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it has long been speculated that Thomas Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings rested on something other than rape or coercion. Madison Hemings, Jefferson's third child to Sally Hemings, wrote in his memoirs that that it was during the trip to France that his mother 'became Mr Jefferson's concubine'.⁴⁴ The five Hemings children were freed upon reaching the age of twenty-one, as Jefferson had promised, yet Madison Hemings recalled that while the President was in the habit of showing affection toward his white grandchildren, 'he was not in the habit of showing partiality or fatherly affection to us...we were the only children of his by a slave woman'.⁴⁵ Madison Hemings, like

⁴² Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 86-7.

⁴³ Troutman, 'Slave Trade and Sentiment in Antebellum Virginia', p. 47.

⁴⁴ Hemings gave birth to another child that died in infancy in 1799. See Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighbourhood*, p. 32.

⁴⁵ M. Hemings, 'Life among the Lowly, No. 1,' *Pike County (Ohio) Republican*, March 13, 1873. Original scanned online at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jefflife.html>, accessed 14 January 2015.

all the children born of sexual slavery in this chapter, was unable to escape his enslaved status.

ii. Experiences of white children

The presence of children, white and black, in the households in which abuse took place is especially worrying when modern research on sexual abuse is considered. The literature review chapter discussed findings in recent sociological and psychological studies, which have indicated that social and cultural factors and experiences, including abuse and peer pressure, can influence a child's sexual development and alter ideas about sexual relationships. Children who were exposed to physical or sexual violence at an early age were more likely to display sexually harmful behavior later in life. Moreover, it has been suggested that these same children may have linked problems including a poorly developed or primitive sense of morality, limited self-control, and strong cognitive distortions about others, themselves, and the world they share. Other research has found that children become normalised to acts of sexual aggression and sexual exploitation, and these become embedded in their peer culture.⁴⁶ Growing up in a culture in which sexual abuse was normalised must have had an impact on children, both black and white.

1930s interviews contain cases of male members of the slaveholding families who continued the cycle of abuse. Young white men engaged in sexual abuse, and even incest, following the examples set by their fathers. Victor Duhon's mother was a

⁴⁶ E. Vizard et al, 'Children and adolescents who present with sexually abusive behaviour'; L. Pullman and Seto, 'Assessment and treatment of adolescent sexual offenders'.

house servant in the white family home, a 'hairstylist'. Victor told his interviewer,

One day she barbed my master's son, who was Lucien. He says that he'll shave her head if she won't do what he likes. After that she his woman till he marries a white lady.

Lucien fathered Victor but he and his mother continued to live in the master's house with his father and the master's family. He said, 'Madam Duhon was my grandmamma. She was good to me', yet he still had to wait on the 'white folks'. In this case Victor reported that the son of the master (Lucien) unashamedly sexually abused his enslaved mother whilst she continued to live in the house with his parents.⁴⁷

Another 1930s interviewee told of her mother's upbringing in the master's house and illuminated the peculiar domestic situations which occurred in the South, as well as their underlying tensions. Martha Johnson was enslaved in Lake Providence, Louisiana and reported that her mother was '3/4 white'. She elaborated;

Her master was her father. He had two families. They was raised up in the same house with his white family. Master's white wife kept her and raised her until her death. He was dead I think... Then her young master sold her. He sold his half-sister.

These two cases display how sexual abuse, in particular that of sex slaves who lived in the master's house, reached into the heart of the white family. Actions of fathers

⁴⁷ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1238-41

were perpetuated by the sons and this continued a cycle of cruelty and abuse.⁴⁸

In *The House of Bondage*, 'Uncle John' told of his upbringing in the white house of his father and his white mistress. He told his interviewer

my old master was my own father; but, of course, the thing was kep a sort of secret, although everybody knew it. My mother was one of the house servants, and I was raised about the white folks' house. Indeed, after I was old enough to be weaned old mistress had me to sleep in a couch with her own children in her own room, until I got to be a great big boy. The children and I used to play together⁴⁹

In this peculiar domestic situation the domestic sex slave and her young child lived in the house with the abuser's white children. The testimony of the formerly enslaved highlights themes of childhood corrupted through cruelty, jealous mistresses, and polygamous households; further complicated by issues of racial and servile inequality.

Young white women whose fathers and mothers abused enslaved people were likely to have been affected too. Madame Lalaurie of New Orleans was the daughter of a slaveholder who fathered children with his female slaves. As a married adult woman, Lalaurie was found to have been performing acts of severe torture on a group of slaves in her home in the French Quarter of New Orleans in 1831.

Recently, Carolyn Morrow Long has found that numerous persons of mixed race

⁴⁸ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part. 1, p. 454; *TAS* (Arkansas), Vol. 2, Part 4, p.122.

⁴⁹ Albert, *House of Bondage*, p. 102-4.

were the ‘concubines’ and natural children of Delphine Lalaurie nee Macarty’s kinsmen. Her uncle, cousins and father all openly cohabited with one or more enslaved or free women of colour. Her father formed a relationship with a free quadroon woman and fathered a daughter who was baptised with Delphine Lalaurie as the godmother. Morrow Long theorised that it was Delphine’s anger and mortification with her kinsmen’s relationships with women of colour that caused this horrific cognitive distortion and caused her to torture her slaves.⁵⁰ Considering the number of cases that discuss the presence of white children among the victims and secondary victims of their father’s abuse, including the case of the white children who lived in the house of Louisa Picquet and her abusive master, discussed in the next chapter, it is unlikely that Lalaurie was the only young girl to have been so severely affected by this upbringing.

The slaveholding woman: complicity and victimhood

While white male family members of all ages were active conspirators in abuse, slaveholding women also occupied a curious position. The previous chapter, in addition to the present, discussed slaveholding women who would make some attempt to adopt the child born of rape into the domestic environment, though the child would always work domestically for their white family. While such actions gave legitimacy to the sexual abuse of the male family members by turning abuse

⁵⁰ See C. Morrow Long, *Mistress of the Haunted House* (Gainesville, 2012) pp. 19-24, 194 (note 25) for other historians who have speculated that Delphine Lalaurie’s upbringing and contact with sex slaves and other black women who entered into plaçage with her relatives was a cause of her cruelty to enslaved people.

into 'benevolence', the slaveholding women in these situations would have often been performing whatever 'kindness' they saw that they could within the confines of their role as a wife and a white slaveholding woman. Other white women, however, were unable to see the enslaved child as a secondary victim of their son's or husband's sexual abuse and took their frustrations out on the children. The anonymous interviewee, mentioned previously, also spoke of the cruelty of the mistress in her jealousy of the lighter skinned enslaved children. The mistress made the young enslaved children cut their hair as to limit their resemblance of her own children, as well as their attractiveness.⁵¹

Thavolia Glymph has portrayed the slaveholding domestic space as a site of daily struggles for power between enslaved, and slaveholding women. Slaveholding women were the 'female face' of slaveholders violent power, and although enslaved women found ways (forthright or clandestine) to resist this power, the simple fact remained: 'Plantation mistresses were slaveholders...and this status gave them virtually unrestricted power over the slaves who laboured in their homes'.⁵² Some white women, discussed in the previous chapter, did try to alleviate the conditions of enslavement for children whom they recognised as their relations. While the children were sometimes treated favourably by the slaveholding woman, the mothers and primary victims of sexual slavery were not mentioned as ever receiving any help in the testimony of the formerly enslaved. Slaveholding women are rarely portrayed in black testimony as showing kindness to enslaved women, especially in cases of

⁵¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 2000.

⁵² T. Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge, NY, 2008), pp. 4, 227.

sexual abuse. As Minrose C. Gwin has written, enslaved women were victims of the ‘two-headed monster of the slaveocracy, the lecherous master and the jealous mistress’.⁵³

Some slaveholding women had little reaction to the abuse of their husbands, but neither did they attempt to stop the abuse. An example of this can be found in the case of Mary Reynolds who remembered the reaction of her mistress when she discovered that her husband had fathered children with a light-skinned ‘seamstress’. The mistress began:

I’m studying in my mind about them white young’uns of that yellow Nigger wench from Baton Rouge. He says, Now honey I fotch that gal just for you ‘cause she is such a fine seamster. She says, It looks kinda funny that they got the same kind of hair and eyes as my chillum and they got a nose that looks like yours. He says, Honey you is just payin’ ‘tention to the talk of little chillum that aint’t got no mind to what they say. She said, Over Mississippi I got a home and plenty with my dada and I got that in my mind.

According to Reynolds, the mistress ‘didn’t never leave and the Marster bought her a fine new span of Surrey horses. But she don’t never have no more chillun and since that time ain’t so cordial with the Marster’. The light-skinned seamstress did have more children although Reynolds told her interviewer ‘they don’t go down the hill no more to the big house.’⁵⁴ In this case the master continued with his living arrangements, and the white mistress was powerless against it.

⁵³ M. C. Gwin, ‘Green-eyed Monsters of the Slaveocracy: Jealous Mistresses in Two Slave Narratives’, in D. Clark Hine (ed.) *Black Women in United States History* (New York, 1990), p. 560.

⁵⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, pp. 3292-4.

Recently, Loren Schweninger has studied divorce petitions from throughout the southern States, he found that ‘in every section of the South, racial issues often lurked under the surface or rose to become the primary cause of divorce or separation’. White wives were suspicious of their husbands: they entered plantation kitchens in the middle of the night, followed husbands into slave quarters, listened outside doors of rooms, and questioned slaves of the whereabouts of their husbands. He found divorce petitions where wives of planters complained that their husbands were treating enslaved women as ‘de facto wives’ and purchased young female slaves (in their teens or twenties) purely for sexual pleasure. In certain cases he even described women who complained that the enslaved ‘mistress’ had been rude to them or had taken her place as the plantation mistress.⁵⁵

Octavia V. Rogers Albert in *The House of Bondage* recorded a story that former slave ‘Aunt Charlotte’ had told her about a cruel plantation mistress and a young domestic slave who had been receiving attention from the master. Ella, the house servant, started work in the house at age twelve and had always been treated cruelly by the mistress, yet when Ella got to be eighteen the mistress ‘got jealous of her and old marster’;

[s]he used to punish Ella all sorts of ways. Sometimes she tied her up by her thumbs. She could do nothing to please the mistress. She had been in the habit of tying Ella up, but one day she tied Ella up and left her, and when she went back she found Ella dead. She told old marster she did not intend to kill

⁵⁵ Schweninger, *Families in Crisis in the Old South*, pp. xiv, 1, 18-20.

her, she only wanted to punish her. Mistress and marster did not live good after she killed Ella, for a long time.⁵⁶

Aunt Charlotte's story indicates that the mistress was suspicious of the master and Ella, and whilst the book does not state it explicitly, it suggests that there was some kind of relationship between the master and the young enslaved girl.

Aunt Lorendo, another woman interviewed by Albert told of a woman in an equally impossible position. Aunt Lorendo was born in Louisiana and a woman named Hattie had lived on her plantation. Hattie also had problems with her mistress, she met Aunt Lorendo after she had run away to the woods where she had given birth to a stillborn child and buried it on her own. Hattie told Lorendo 'I have so many trials with my mistress. I try to satisfy her but nothing I do pleases her', Lorendo asked her why she ran away;

old mistress came up to me one morning and went to beating me with a big iron key all over my head and I tell you, she almost give me a fit. I give her one hard slap and left her....Hattie had two children by her master's son and she reckoned the one Hattie had given birth to in the woods was by his son too. Hattie wanted to get married to one of the men on the place, but the master would not let her, because he wanted her for his son.⁵⁷

Whilst the reason for the mistress' rage against Hattie is not stated, it is clear that Hattie was blamed for the white man's abusive behaviour.

⁵⁶ Albert, *The House of Bondage*, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-3.

Solomon Northup discussed the case of Patsey, a sex slave, in his 1853 narrative. He wrote that

Patsey wept oftener, and suffered more, than any of her companions. She had been literally excoriated. Her back bore the scars of a thousand stripes; not because she was backward in her work, nor because she was of an unmindful and rebellious spirit, but because it had fallen to her lot to be the slave of a licentious master and a jealous mistress.⁵⁸

In the public sphere the individual plantation mistress could have seemed to overlook the indiscretions of her husband, whereas in private, as Angela Davis has written, the ‘enraged and humiliated’ white woman could have herself ‘perpetuated ugly violence, at times sexual, against the women workers their husbands abused’.⁵⁹

The cases of cruelty exhibited by slaveholding women toward enslaved victims of sexual abuse can be put down to either a sexual competition, or a misdirected anger at the enslaved women for ‘tempting’ the white husband or son into a sexual relationship. Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut wrote that ‘[u]nder slavery, we live surrounded by prostitutes...like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines’.⁶⁰ Chesnut’s description of sex slaves as ‘prostitutes’ demonstrates her belief that enslaved women were complicit in their own abuse. On account of this belief, slaveholding women took measures to limit the attractiveness of enslaved women. An anonymous former slave reported that if

⁵⁸ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, p. 189.

⁵⁹ Davis, ‘Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment’, p. 463.

⁶⁰ Vann Woodward & Muhlenfeld (eds.) *The Private Mary Chesnut*, pp. 32-33

the light-skinned enslaved children in the house had ‘nice long hair’, then the plantation mistress would ‘cut it off and wouldn’t let them wear it long like the white children’. Similarly in Louisiana the ‘tignon law’ made enslaved women cover their hair. Slaveholders at times tried to limit the visibility of ‘whiteness’ and attractiveness in the slave girls.⁶¹

Conclusions

The foundation of relationships between slave master and sex slaves ranged from an element of negotiation, such as with Eliza, in Solomon Northup’s narrative; to outright force, such as with the mother of WPA interviewee Victor Duhon whose father told his mother that he would ‘shave her hair off’ if she did not comply. The normalisation of the sexual abuse of enslaved women reached into heart of the white family. The innocence of slave girls was taken too soon through their premature sexualisation, and white children were sometimes spending their childhood years in an environment of which sexual abuse, or coercion was a part of the domestic environment.⁶²

Whether the white children understood fully the sexual corruption happening in their home or not, it cannot have failed to have an effect on their future behaviour or mind-set. James Redpath wrote that ‘not one per cent of the native male whites in the South arrive at the age of manhood morally uncontaminated by the influences of slavery. I do not believe that ten per cent of the native white males reach the age of

⁶¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 19.

⁶² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1238-41

fourteen without carnal knowledge of the slaves'.⁶³ The corruption of children was obviously clear to visitors to the South.

In the pre-civil war US South, as today, a woman's vulnerability to sexual abuse was not reducible to appearance, age, social status, or geographic location, and women of any skin tone, young or old, slave or free, living inside New Orleans or anywhere in the South were potential victims. Despite this, the abuse of women of certain skin tones and occupations was more systematised and formalised than any other. The lighter skin possessed by some sex slaves meant that men could, and did sexualise their bodies and character. Enslaved women could be 'lightened' through their dress, behaviour, or even living conditions. A language developed whereby the naming of women as 'seamstresses' or 'housekeepers' signified a susceptibility to abuse.

The power fostered by the institution of slavery meant that a culture developed in the South whereby men could sexually abuse women without repercussions or accountability. The development of this culture meant that children were exposed to this from an early age to become the next generation of abusers. The formation of the generational cycle of abuse passed on imagined meanings and fantasies which became unquestionably attached to the skin colour and occupation of enslaved women. Abuse was culturally reproduced.

⁶³ Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, pp. 222-23.

Chapter Seven

The Typical Case of Louisa Picquet

The previous chapter investigated cases of enslaved women who were long-term sufferers of sexual abuse. Testimony of the formerly enslaved indicates that in the nineteenth century US South, the implications of keeping women as sex slaves reached into the heart of enslaved and slaveholding families: enslaved children, male and female, were confronted with the sexual abuse of their mothers, sisters and other female family members; while white children often had fathers who were openly and visibly abusing enslaved women.

Analysis of interviews with the formerly enslaved have revealed that the older the interviewee at emancipation, the more likely they were to remember a woman who was being kept as a sex slave (or some form of sexual exploitation during their enslavement). As the majority of the former slaves interviewed were very young at the time of emancipation, this pattern indicates that the practice was more widespread than a simple count of interviews would suggest. While the sample was small, there was no indication that the size of the slaveholding unit; or its location, in either the town or the countryside, had any bearing on the presence of a woman who could be described as a sex slave in the memory of a formerly enslaved person.

Long-term sexual abuse could be a part of life on any slaveholding unit.

The interview sample does, however, reveal that domestic slaves were more likely to have been sex slaves or to have known cases of sexual slavery. Proximity was important: the closer an enslaved person lived to the master, either on a small slaveholding unit, or as a domestic slave, the more likely that person was to witness or to be subjected to some form of sexual abuse during the time of their enslavement.

This chapter will focus on Louisa Picquet, a formerly enslaved woman who was both old enough at emancipation to have lived a significant part of her life under slavery, and who had been a domestic slave. Picquet's narrative has much to say about the culture of abuse in the South: including issues of resistance and survival, familial and extra-familial support networks, and the scale of sexual slavery in the South.

Picquet's narrative is a unique antebellum account of a woman who and exercised both resistance and resilience to sexual slavery without, so far as we know, an attempt to escape. Her narrative took an entirely different form to that of most enslaved women: although other book-length narratives by formerly enslaved women such as Harriet Jacobs and Sojourner Truth refer to sexual violence, Picquet addressed the fact of sexual violence by white men explicitly throughout her narrative.¹

Picquet's account has significantly shaped this project for two reasons; the first of which is the frequency with which domestic slaves were mentioned in the context of sexual abuse. Women mentioned by Picquet were without black partners, all light-

¹ Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; S. Truth, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (Boston, 1850)

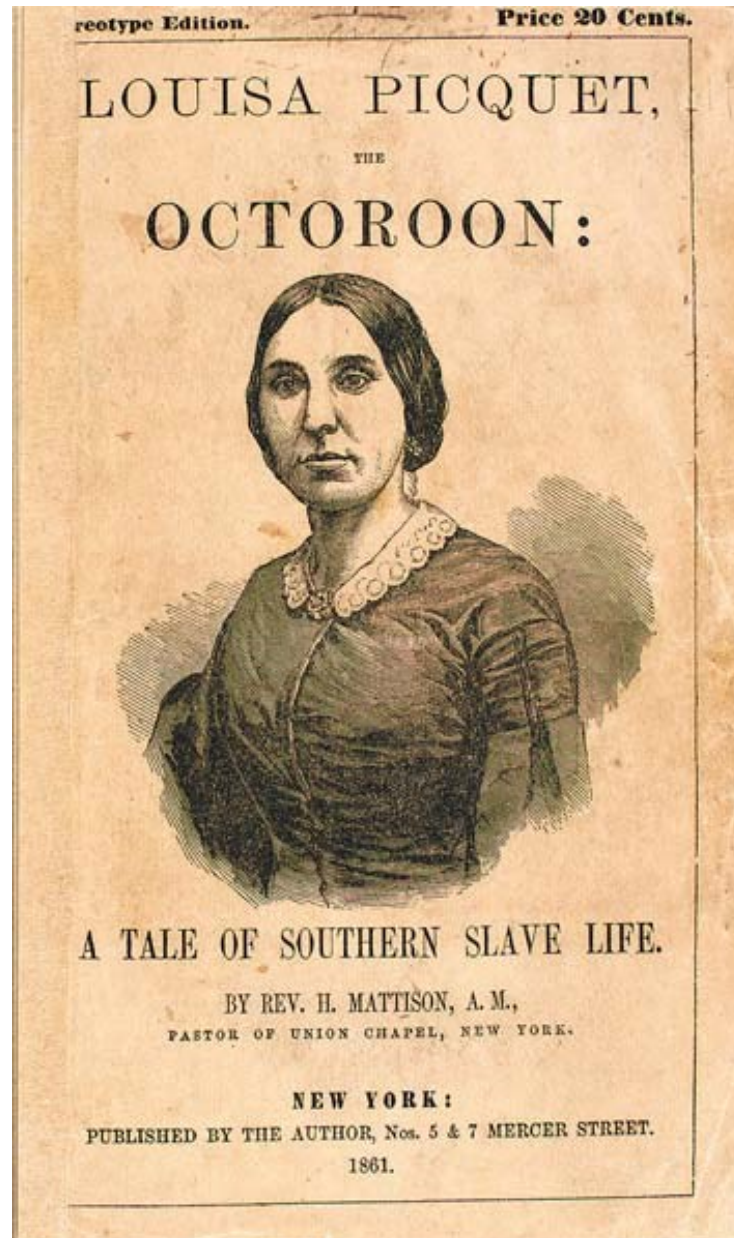


Figure 7.1. Original cover of Louisa Picquet narrative. This image of Louisa Picquet clearly showed her ambiguous racial heritage. Image available at 'Documenting the American South' website

skinned domestic workers and were most commonly described as ‘seamstresses’.

Picquet’s association of ‘seamstresses’ with sexual abuse could add further intricacy to what we know about the victims of sexual abuse, but also about a previously unrecognised ‘language of abuse’, and can enlighten us further on the cultural mores of the South. This link between occupation and abuse, unlikely to have been alluded to in documents written by southern whites because of the façade of paternalism, was embedded in the southern mind-set and slaveholding culture.

The second reason for the importance of Picquet’s narrative is the frequency of references to light-skinned women. The reader is alerted to Picquet’s light-skin from her first introduction when she is described as having ‘every appearance’ of a white lady.² In the slave market, Picquet refers to ‘plenty’ of ‘white’ girls like her who underwent physical examination before being purchased for the position of ‘sex slave’.³ This is reflected throughout the narrative, Picquet and her amanuensis were keen to impress upon the reader the significance of the light-skinned persons

² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 3. While the circulation of the narrative is unclear, Frances Smith Foster in her book-length study of slave narratives wrote that they were likely to have been written for three types of reader, ‘those who seek improvement, those who seek entertainment, and those who seek both amusement and entertainment’. Writers and amanuenses of ex-slave narratives did to some extent play on the sensationalism inherent in stories of enslavement, the issues tackled in Picquet’s narrative and in this entire genre were both valid and worthy of the attention of their readership. F. Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Antebellum Slave Narratives* (Madison, 1979), p. 64.

³ References to sexually abused light skinned women appear throughout the Picquet narrative. See Picquet, *The Octoroon*, pp. 6 (abuse of Louisa’s mother by John Randolph); 7-8 (abuse of Louisa’s mother by Mr Cook); 8 (‘Very light’ girl kept as a sex slave); 10 (start of Louisa’s harassment); 16 (Louisa stripped at auction); 17 (Auctioneer’s description of Louisa); 18 Mr Williams tells Louisa that he bought her to be his sex slave); 19 (Louisa tells Mattison that she had four children by Mr Williams); 20 (abuse of Lucy a ‘right white’ woman by numerous white men); 21 (Louisa laments that enslaved women cannot have husbands because of the abuse by white men); 21 (Lucy had two sisters who were ‘kept’ by white men); 26 (case of Mr Picquet’s mother who was kept as a ‘sex slave’ before being sent away when her master married); 27 (Mr Picquet’s first wife is sold as a ‘sex slave’).

encountered by Picquet, and then to intricately link this skin tone to the embeddedness of sexual abuse in Southern culture and its intergenerational nature.⁴

The intergenerational cycle of abuse, described in the previous chapter, that made the daughters of white men far more likely to be future victims of sexual abuse is explored further in the present chapter. Drawing on conclusions made in the previous chapter regarding the lighter-skin and domestic occupation of sex slaves, I pay close attention to the skin tone and occupation of the sex slaves mentioned in Picquet's narrative. I argue that the abuse of lighter-skinned women was a self-replicating intergenerational cycle of abuse. Skin colour and occupation interacted to form a special potential for abuse which was created and sustained, not just in the mind of an individual, but in an entire culture.⁵

In addition to this, the text highlights the mechanisms for survival of sexual abuse, both on an individual level and within the enslaved community. Picquet maintained a deep love for her mother and went on to establish a family life and become an anti-slavery activist. A network of light-skinned enslaved people also existed to which

⁴ While the previous chapter investigated 'sex-slaves', the formerly enslaved in the 1930s interview sample did not exclusively associate sexual slavery with lighter skinned women. Undoubtedly lighter skinned women were not the only ones to have experienced long-term sexual abuse. One sex slave mentioned by Sarah Ford, is described as an 'African woman'. This description gives the indication that she possessed darker skin than those described as 'mulatto' or 'yellow' by the former slaves *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 41.

⁵ For discussion of the sexual expression of racialised attitudes see Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood*, esp. pp. 92-129 where the role of time and place in the formation of the link between black women and sexual availability is discussed. Other notable studies that look at the development of the white attitudes towards the sexuality of black women include E. Baptist, 'Cuffy,' "Fancy Maids," and "One-Eyed Men": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 5 (2001), pp. 1619-1650; McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, pp. 139; Troutman, 'Slave Trade and Sentiment', pp. 101-115, Troutman discussed the attitudes of slave traders toward enslaved women of varying skin tones.

Picquet was connected during slavery and after. It was precisely the acknowledgement of the abuse by the community and the networks of support that arose out of sheer necessity that I will argue had helped women to go on to form loving marriages and family lives without being significantly affected by the ‘soul murder’ described by Parent and Wallace, and later Nell Irvin Painter.⁶

Background of the narrative

Louisa Picquet’s narrative is a sixty-page pamphlet written and published in 1861 with the help of Reverend Hiram Mattison, a white antislavery advocate and Methodist minister from Buffalo, New York State. Mattison recorded Picquet’s narrative in order to help gather funds to purchase Picquet’s mother, who was still enslaved in the South; but also to advance his own abolitionist agenda. He included his own ‘Conclusion and Moral’, which emphasised the many instances of slave women bearing their masters’ children, a situation which he wrote worked as ‘God’s testimony to the deep moral pollution of the Slave States’.⁷

At the time of publication of Picquet’s narrative, the significance of the large number of light-skinned enslaved people in the United States was being made known to the population. Eighteen months before the publication of *Louisa Picquet: The Octoroon*, a play was to debut at the Winter Garden theatre (just a few blocks from

⁶ Painter, *Southern History across the Color Line*, pp. 15-40; Parent and Wallace, ‘Childhood and Sexual Identity under Slavery’, pp. 363-401.

⁷ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 51.



Figure 7.2. Image from the front cover of 1860 edition of *The Octoroon* play written by Dion Boucicault. Note: The cover shows Zoe (left), an octoroon, with very light skin compared to the ‘white’ Irish overseer M’Closky (middle) and George Peyton, a ‘white’ nephew of Zoe’s mistress (right).

Mattison’s church) in Buffalo, New York State. The play was written by famous Irish playwright, Dion Boucicault and coincidentally was entitled *The Octoroon*.⁸ Set in Louisiana, the central character was an ‘octoroon’ who was born a slave of her white master and father. She was treated as one of the white family and her father attempted (but subsequently failed) to grant her freedom. The play follows the

⁸ Dion Boucicault (born 1820) was a famous Irish actor and playwright who was most commonly known for writing melodramas. He moved to the United States in 1850 living in both New Orleans and New York. For further discussion of *The Octoroon* (play) see J. Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996).

endeavours of the three central white male characters to claim Zoe the ‘octoroon’ as their mistress. The play ends with Zoe’s dramatic suicide by poison, a choice made over the prospect of life as the sex slave of cruel white Irish overseer turned landowner. The play was described in a New York newspaper as ‘a success of curiosity’, and another review from 1861 read, ‘at the present time we know no more interesting theme’.⁹

Louisiana residents were less pleased with the play. Dion Boucicault spent a period of seven years in New Orleans, yet a letter from the New Orleans *Picayune*, printed in a New York newspaper, described the outrage of New Orleans’ inhabitants at the display of what Boucicault saw as a prominent feature of ‘Louisiana Life’. The correspondence from Louisiana stated that Boucicault was ‘pandering to the prejudices of the times at the expense of Southern character’.¹⁰ The theme of the play, along with its reception, demonstrate an increasing awareness of, and an attempt to come to terms with the instability of the categories of ‘black’ and ‘white’, but also with how this instability functioned and interacted, sometimes unexpectedly, with the categories of ‘slave’ and ‘free’. This intertextuality between the play, ex-slave narratives and the later interviews displays the instability of race in this period; but also served to remind the US readers and audience that the ‘elevated’ position of a sex slave was neither stable nor permanent. Additionally, the recurrence of the theme in the antebellum period demonstrates that this was indeed an avenue through which the sexual exploitation of enslaved women could be addressed and impressed on the US readership.

⁹ *The New York Herald*, 13 Nov 1861.

¹⁰ Letter printed in *New York Herald*, 27 Dec 1859.

The life of Louisa Picquet

Picquet was born in Columbia, South Carolina in around 1828. She was the daughter of a fifteen-year-old enslaved seamstress, Elizabeth, and her married white owner John Randolph. John Randolph's wife had a baby who was just two weeks younger than Louisa. Picquet informed Mattison that she looked so similar to this baby that Madame Randolph 'got dissatisfied', so she and her mother were sold to a plantation owner in Georgia when she was around two months old.¹¹ The family were purchased by another married slave owner, Mr Cook. During their time with him, Mr Cook fathered three children with Picquet's Mother, though only one brother survived.¹²

Picquet, her mother and brother later migrated with Mr Cook to Mobile, Alabama.¹³ While they were residing in a boarding house, Cook began to pursue the teenage Picquet, yet because of a subtle intervention by a white female boarding house owner, she narrowly escaped being sexually abused. Picquet suffered physically and psychologically from living with the constant threat of rape; she was physically punished with the 'cowhide' when she refused to submit to her would-be rapist.

¹¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³ Mr Cook's motivation for migrating south to Mobile are unclear. Joan E. Cashin and Edward Baptist both support the view that young men would make the move southward in order to escape the stifling web of family and in order to gain economic and personal independence. They would live on nuclear units which dissolved male kinship ties and left slaveholding women feeling isolated from familial networks. See E. Baptist, 'The Migration of Planters to Antebellum Florida: Kinship and Power', *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1996), pp. 527-554 and J. E. Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York, 1991). For a discussion of the movement of slaves by planter migration and the unlikelihood of age-selective decisions on which slaves to take with them see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 228-36.

When she was approximately thirteen years old, financial trouble forced Mr Cook to sell Picquet and her family. Her mother was sold to Mr Horton, who lived in Texas, seemingly to be a sex slave for the third time at just age 28, and Picquet was sold to Mr Williams in New Orleans.¹⁴ Williams who had ‘parted’ with his wife some time previously had three white sons.¹⁵

After a painful goodbye to her beloved mother and younger sibling, Mr Williams immediately informed of Picquet of her new role: “He said he was getting old, and when he saw me he thought he'd buy me, and end his days with me. He said if I behave myself he'd treat me well: but, if not, he'd whip me almost to death”.¹⁶ In the following years she had four children by Mr Williams, whilst throughout praying “that he might die”. Williams eventually allowed for Picquet’s emancipation after his death through his will.¹⁷ After Williams died, and his brother threatened to re-enslave Picquet as he had originally lent the money to purchase Picquet (money which had not been repaid), she was able to move as a free person to Cincinnati, Ohio. There, she married Mr Picquet, who was also the son of his master and an enslaved woman. Louisa Picquet began working to free her mother and brother, who were still enslaved in Wharton County, Texas. She was eventually successful in securing the funds to buy her mother’s freedom, yet the mother’s master was unwilling to sell her brother.

¹⁴ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 17.

¹⁵ The white sons of Williams were mentioned just once by Picquet, though they presumably resided with Williams alongside Picquet, *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Reverend Hiram Mattison and the wider context of Picquet's narrative

Picquet remained illiterate throughout her life, and as such Mattison recorded her story. It is precisely because of Mattison's involvement that the narrative has failed to be included in influential studies such as Frances Smith Foster's *Witnessing Slavery*.¹⁸ The near-exclusion of Picquet's narrative from the traditional historiography of the slave narrative genre reveals more about interpretations of abolitionist motivation rather than the content of the text. In the 1960s scholars began to reject many aspects of Ulrich B. Phillips' work, which had described abolitionists as needless 'fanatics'. Despite this, there was still a tendency to focus on the abolitionists' attempts to absolve themselves from a 'morally corrupting proslavery culture', rather than on their forcing that culture to change.¹⁹

Out of this intellectual climate, historian Robin Winks in 1974 first described ex-slave narratives as 'pious pornography'. His argument was that abolitionists were quite aware of the marketability of enslaved bodies, not just in the slave market, but also as 'written entertainment'. He described the ex-slave narratives as the

pious pornography of their day, replete with horrific tales of whippings, sexual assaults, and explicit brutality, presumably dehumanized and fit for Nice Nellies to read precisely because they dealt with black, not white, men.²⁰

This thinking persisted among scholars until into the twentieth-first century, as perceptions of exploitative racism continued to underlie the actions of abolitionists in

¹⁸ Foster wrote in the introduction to the second edition of her book that her decision to exclude all third-person accounts, along with other sampling decisions, left her study with only one female slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, pp. xxi-xxii.

¹⁹ See discussion in S. Harrold, *American Abolitionists* (New York, 2001), pp. 3-9.

²⁰ R. Winks, 'Introduction', in R. Winks, (ed.), *Four Fugitive Slave Narratives* (Boston, 1969), p. 17.

some interpretations. It is clear that for US abolitionists -- with whom the book-length narratives were often written, or whose support often assisted publication -- sexual abuse was an extremely important ingredient for a successful narrative.²¹

The narrative did not exist independently of Mattison's other abolitionist activity. His name regularly appeared in New York newspapers through the mid-1850s and until the Civil War. In 1859 he described slavery as a 'terrible crime against humanity', and it is clear that a special part of his outrage was the involvement of churchmen, like himself, in slaveholding.²² He believed that the church's tolerance of slaveholding pastors was 'a disgrace to Methodism and our common Christianity, and a stumbling block to unbelievers'. He wanted the church to be absolved of what he called the 'great sin'.²³ An account of the physical and sexual abuse of Louisa Picquet reinforced Mattison's previous sermons, which discussed the emotive topics of slave breeding, sexual abuse and the burning alive of slaves. In 1860 it was reported that his antislavery sentiments caused him to be looked down on as an 'alien' and a 'heretic' within the church, but to great personal sacrifice he continued with his antislavery efforts.²⁴

²¹ Whilst the 'pious pornography' claim went unacknowledged by some, most published work on Louisa Picquet has embraced this interpretation. One such writer is William Andrews who wrote that although Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* alluded to more varieties of perverse sexuality than any other antebellum slave narrative, it contained little in the way of 'voyeuristic titillation' present in Louisa Picquet. W. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography 1760-1865* (Chicago, 1986), p. 251.

²² *The Liberator* 29 August 1856 (Boston, MA), in 'An Appeal To All Members of the Great Methodist Family, Affiliating with the Methodist Episcopal Church, Throughout the World'.

²³ See, 29 July 1859 (Boston, MA), *New York Herald* 01 October 1859, 26 October 1860 (New York, NY).

²⁴ Abolitionists such as Mattison would not have been surprised with this exploitative interpretation of their actions, in fact, this was a prominent theme in the proslavery argument which emerged from the North. On 5 December 1859 *The New York Herald* printed an article which implied that abolitionism was not an altruistic activity, "...the topic of slavery was seized upon by some of the new school sensation preachers, whose idea of preaching Christ and Him crucified consists in making the largest amount of money in pew premiums. The cross they bear is stamped with the Mintmark. They are

In this particular narrative, Mattison took great care to construct a link between the immorality of slavery and the tolerance of the church. He made sure to ask about Picquet's non-attendance at church when she was enslaved, and exposed the hypocrisy of the church when she was spoken to as a 'wife' after Mr Williams had died. Picquet told Mattison that the minister in New Orleans acted as though he knew her as Mr Williams' wife and 'talked about the vows I had made to the Lord about my husband'.²⁵ Mattison was keen to point out that this occurred in a Southern Methodist church and that Picquet's church in the North did not commune with slaveholders. Additionally, he described the immorality of the owner of Picquet's mother. The Texan slave-owner had bought Picquet's mother twenty years previously for \$600 but still demanded \$900 for her 'old and calloused flesh'; and moreover he was a member of the Baptist church. Mattison exclaimed, '[m]ay Heaven save the heathen from the curse of such a Christianity!'²⁶

While Mattison did attempt to guide the narrative to meet his own needs, Picquet demonstrated a degree of authorial control.²⁷ This was particularly evident in the 'question and answer' segments in which Picquet declined to answer or diverted Mattison's questions. When relating an incident in which she had once again avoided Mr Cook's persistent sexual advances, she told Mattison that she did not

martyrs who are well known in Wall Street...', in other words, the abolitionists were catering to a public demand for their own pecuniary profit, rather than out of a humanitarian enthusiasm for antislavery.

²⁵ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 24, 29, 33.

²⁷ Doveanna Fulton described a technique used by literate and non-literate freedwomen to gain authorial control within a discourse that would normally exclude them. This is described as 'oral literacy', D. Fulton, *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery* (Albany, 2006), pp. 22, 26, 40-43. R. Ferguson described 'mulatta texts' which are often built on a power struggle between the oral narrator and the amanuensis. Ferguson, 'The Mulatta Text and the Muted Voice', p. 49.

‘want to tell what he said’. Later in the narrative, Mattison entered in brackets: ‘[h]ere Mrs. P declines in explaining further how he whipped her...’.²⁸ While Mattison did demonstrate an occasional insensitivity, the questioning was far from a ‘literary return to the market block’, that one scholar, Anthony Barthelemy, has claimed.²⁹ The information given by Picquet to Mattison supported the view he recorded in the *New York Herald* in 1859, that slavery was ‘the foster parent of adultery, fornication and incest’. In the same sermon he asserted that there were ‘70,000 mulattoes in Virginia alone’, to Mattison this was a fact which spoke alone ‘to the morality of the people’.³⁰

Sexual slavery in the Picquet narrative

The previous chapter mentioned the range of abusive behaviours that can come under the banner of ‘sexual slavery’. There are five women in Picquet’s narrative that could be described as sex slaves. All but one of these women was specifically described as light-skinned, and all worked under the veneer of domestic slavery. The manner in which these women entered slavery ranged from their purchase in the slave market (as a ‘fancy’); to their having been singled out for abuse by the master through their proximity.

²⁸ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 15.

²⁹ A. G. Barthelemy, *Collected Black Women’s Narratives* (New York, 1988), p. xli.

³⁰ H. Mattison, sermon reprinted in the *New York Herald*, 12 Dec 1859.

i. Elizabeth Randolph

The mother of Louisa Picquet was a ‘sex-slave’ from the age of fifteen or earlier, as was Picquet herself. The sexual abuse in the Picquet narrative begins with the conception of Louisa, who was born to a fifteen-year-old enslaved ‘seamstress’, Elizabeth. Louisa told Mattison:

Mother’s master, Mr. Randolph, was my father. So mother told me. She was forbid to tell who was my father, but I looked so much like Madame Randolph’s baby that she got dissatisfied, and mother had to be sold.³¹

This story was not exceptional. The previous chapter quoted Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut, a slaveholding woman born in South Carolina in 1823, who wrote that ‘the mulattoes that one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children’.³² The jealous mistress in this case demanded that the young victim of abuse was sold along with the infant Picquet, the secondary victim of her husband’s rape. Picquet’s mother, a light-skinned domestic ‘seamstress’, was sold with her light-skinned child in the slave market.

Domestic slave sale advertisements offer an avenue into the trade in ‘fancies’ that will be elaborated on later in this chapter. In a sample of advertisements from four Louisiana newspapers in which a ‘seamstress’ was mentioned, just 3 per cent of women were described as ‘black’ with almost half (48 per cent) listed as either ‘griffe’ or ‘mulatto’.³³ Women, such as Picquet’s mother, a ‘mulatto’, were clearly

³¹ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 6.

³² Boykin Miller Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, p. 29.

³³ This sample was put together from the *Times-Picayune*, *New Orleans Gazette and Commercial Advertiser* and *Louisiana Advertiser* from 1803 to 1865. A search was carried out for the advertisements which included the words ‘seamstress’ and ‘Negro’ which found uncovered 54

linked with this position. This same sample indicates that the experience of Louisa's mother as a seamstress was not exceptional either. Picquet's mother gave birth at just 15 years old, Louisa herself was also the victim of sexual harassment from the age of fourteen by Mr Cook. A number of the 'seamstresses' in the sample were sold with children. There is no way of knowing if the child was the first-born, but even if the children were all considered to be so, as the sample stands, one quarter of the seamstresses sold with a child would have been age 15 or 16 at the time of their first pregnancy.

Elizabeth was sold to Mr Cook, who would father an additional four children by Elizabeth, though only one brother survived. Mr Cook was obviously aware from the outset that the teenage Elizabeth had been a sex slave, she had clearly already been sexually available to white men as evidenced by the presence of the very light-skinned Louisa. Most seamstress advertisements fail to specify the skin colour of the child for sale with their mother, but in the sample just mentioned, there were two exceptional cases in which the skin colour was specified, the mothers were described as 'dark mulatto' and 'griffe', whereas the two children were both listed as 'mulatto'. This was likely to have had an effect on the way in which these women were viewed by potential purchasers. Walter Johnson wrote that, in the slave market, 'as the slaves were paraded before them, slave buyers began by reading the slaves' skin color, groping their way from visible sign to invisible essence'.³⁴ The marketing of the darker skinned mother with the lighter skinned child would have been a visible

references to seamstresses. 33 advertisements in the sample listed the skin colour. Other skin tones described as 'negro' 36.4 per cent, and 'creole' 12 per cent.

³⁴ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 139.

sign that the woman was sexually available to white men: Elizabeth was twice sold with her light-skinned children, and both times she began a new life of sexual slavery.

ii. Lucy

Picquet was sold alongside her mother to a man named Mr Cook from Georgia. In this household we are introduced to Lucy, an enslaved woman living as a sex slave and who had with “light hair and blue eyes”. Lucy was another ‘seamstress’ in Mr Cook’s family. She was remembered as having 6 or 7 “right white” children, fathered by white men, but no husband.³⁵ Picquet told Mattison that “she sew in the house all day, and then go to her room, off, at night”. And when asked if slave women like Lucy usually have husbands, Picquet responded that “some of them do; but some of them do not. They can’t have any husbands, because their masters have them all the time”.³⁶ Lucy and her children were sold in New Orleans at the same time as Louisa Picquet, and each of the white men, by whom Lucy had been abused or had a semi-consensual relationships with, bought their children.³⁷

If Lucy could be considered a ‘sex-slave’ of Mr Cook, she certainly did not have the same role that Picquet had with Mr Williams. Whilst it is possible that Mr Cook fathered one or more of her children, the fact that other men were allowed sexual access to Lucy meant that there is no clear evidence for the jealousy that was often a characteristic of the owner–sex slave relationship. Williams would not allow Picquet

³⁵ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 50.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

any involvement with other men. Picquet told Mattison that Williams “was always so jealous. He never let me go out anywhere”.³⁸ There are a further two examples of violence perpetuated by jealous owners against enslaved women from other black testimony.

‘Patsey’ was mentioned in a narrative by William Wells Brown, himself the son of a white man who was the relative of his master, George Higgins. The master in this case

whipped her [Patsey] until several of the boarders came out and begged him to desist. The reason for whipping her was this. She was engaged to be married to a man belonging to Major William Christy Mr Colburn had forbid her to see John Christy. The reason of this was said to be the regard which he himself had for Patsey....he took vengeance on the poor girl.³⁹

Steve Robertson, who lived in Washington County, Texas, while a slave told his white interviewer Woody Phipps about another violent incident of fuelled by jealousy:

Dere am one thing happens on de place 'causes my fam'ly heap ob sorrow. Marster's son-in-law, Marster Hugh Jackson, tooks my sistah--she am 'bout 17 den an' am settin' up wid de young bucks in de neighbourhood--to de peach o'chard, pulls her dress over her head an' whups her wid de long peach tree switch.... him keeps on 'til de blood am runnin'.... [Master] says 'twould

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18-9.

³⁹ Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, p. 25.

be best to fo'git de whole thing. Him says dat M'ybe 'twon't happen 'gain 'cause Marster Hugh will be 'shamed ob de reason why him whups my sistah.⁴⁰

Here the jealousy of the young man is manifested in violence, but the master was clearly aware that his son-in-law had a sexual relationship with one of his female slaves, and did not seem to have done anything to stop this. Such cases show that the sex slaves were seen as possessions by their abusers, they were unable to form relationships with other men: the relationship, therefore, was a sexual manifestation of the power that white men had over the enslaved community as a whole.

iii. 'Light girl' from Charleston

The fourth sex slave mentioned (after Elizabeth, Lucy, and Louisa) is an unnamed woman, a 'very light girl' from Charleston. The girl's owner was also the owner of an unnamed light-skinned enslaved man, referred to as 'T'. Picquet had once planned to marry 'T'. 'T's owner kept the 'very light girl' in separate quarters and it was the job of 'T' to bring the sex-slave to the master whenever he wanted her. Picquet said that the time came when another dark-skinned male, jealous of favouritism shown by the master towards the lighter-skinned enslaved man indicated to him that the 'T' and the sex slave were in a relationship. The owner believed it and 'whipped him [T] awfully' and then sent to woman 'off to New Orleans'.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, p. 3339.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

Interestingly, we meet ‘T’ again later in the narrative; he had passed into white society and married a white woman who was unaware of his racial status. Louisa did not mention his real name as she was afraid that he would be discovered, Mattison wrote, ‘if only the public knew!’ Picquet and her mother were not isolated cases but part of an oppressed community of light-skinned slaves. The jealousy of Williams and this nameless slave-owner demonstrated that while white men desired certain enslaved women more than others, the women had no rights and were subject to the jealous whims of their masters. The actions of this master, and Williams’ warning to Louisa that if she did not “behave” then he would “whip her to death”, demonstrated that any amelioration of living and working conditions that an enslaved woman may have hoped to gain from a long-term sexual relationship with the master, would have always laid on a fragile foundation.⁴²

iv. Mr Picquet’s mother

Mattison names this section of the narrative ‘Another Southern Household’. Henry Picquet was the son of a slave owner and a female slave. Picquet told Mattison that Mr Picquet’s father,

bought my husband's mother, and live with her public. I knew all about it there, before I left Georgia. She had four other children, but he never uses them as slaves. They are his children.... when he got married, he sent them all to Cincinnati, the mother and five children. It would be unpleasant for

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

them all to stay there together (i.e., his wife, and sex-slave and her children).⁴³

This case is interesting as Mr Picquet's father lived with his sex slave 'in public', indicating that there was little shame in this practice.

The fact that the father of Mr Picquet then married a white woman demonstrates that for some men, the abuse of enslaved women was a part of the life-cycle. The previous chapter referenced James Redpath, a white abolitionist journalist who travelled the southern states, he wrote that 'not one per cent of the native male whites in the South arrive at the age of manhood morally uncontaminated by the influences of slavery'.⁴⁴ This was not necessarily kept secret, as evidenced from Redpath's knowledge of the practice. Judith Kelleher Schafer found numerous court cases from Louisiana in which enslaved women had long-term sexual relationships with white men, and in which the white man involved had attempted to free the enslaved woman through his will after his death.⁴⁵ The majority of cases, however, were not played out in the courtroom and Mr Picquet's mother was simply cast aside when the master married, rather than having been freed by will after the master's death.

v. Mr Picquet's first wife

Picquet told Mattison that her current husband, Henry Picquet, had been married to an enslaved woman previously. They came to part when the enslaved woman's

⁴³ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, p. 222-23.

⁴⁵ Judith K. Schafer, "'Open and Notorious Concubinage': The Emancipation of Slave Mistresses by Will and the Supreme Court in Antebellum Louisiana'. *Louisiana History* 28 (1987), pp. 165-82.

owner sold her away from Henry. Henry Picquet was able to borrow money from his white father with the intention of purchasing his wife's freedom from her new master, but when he arrived in her new home of Macon, Georgia "he found he could not have her any more for his wife. You see, the gentleman had bought her for himself". The slave owner said that Mr Picquet could buy his child, so he did, and raised the child himself. Picquet described the girl as the "smartest one" and the "darkest one" in the house. She did betray her white ancestry through her straight hair which was, "only little bit wavy".⁴⁶ The slave owner was not willing to part with the woman whom he had purchased as a sex slave, though he was willing to separate her from her child. The new owner clearly had little respect for the marriage between the black woman and the free man of colour.

The experiences of the sex slaves listed in Picquet's narrative all differ slightly, though all indicate a sexual relationship with the master that was coercive, abusive and psychologically distressing; women were abused from an early age and separated from their children and other loved ones. Additionally, their position led to what seems to be an increased chance of sale, with the master easily casting them aside and back into the 'fancy trade' at any time.

Picquet's participation in the 'fancy trade' of New Orleans

Picquet described her experience of what has been called the trade in 'fancies'. At

⁴⁶ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 27.

the slave market, Louisa was marketed as a sex slave; she was attributed characteristics associated with this role.⁴⁷ Whilst in the inspection room, Louisa told Mattison that; “[t]hey began to take the clothes off of me, and a gentleman said they needn't do that, and told them to take me out. He said he knew I was a virtuous girl, and he'd buy me, anyhow. He didn't strip me only just under my shoulders". The auctioneer later told potential buyers that Louisa was

a good-lookin' girl, and a good nurse, and kind and affectionate to children; but I was never used to any hard work. He told them they could see that. My hair was quite short, and the auctioneer spoke about it, but said, 'You see it good quality, and give it a little time, it will grow out again.'⁴⁸

Though there was no explicit description of Louisa as a ‘fancy’, the slave trader knew what the slave-buyer was looking for and described her in terms that implied the role for which she was destined. Her outward appearance of light skin was first pointed out to the potential buyers. Maurie McInnis, through her research of abolitionist art and the American slave trade, wrote that slave traders took care to point out the gradations in skin tone in order to imply the popularity of lighter-skinned women in the slave market, especially in places such as Natchez and New

⁴⁷ Michael Tadman, Edward Baptist, Walter Johnson -- and more recently Maurie McInnis -- have all written on the subject of ‘fancies’ in the internal slave trade. While Tadman found higher prices for light-skinned women in the slave market, Walter Johnson described the process by which the ‘whiteness’ of the light-skinned enslaved woman was packaged by the traders and ‘imagined into meaning’ by the slave-buyers. Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 125-7; W. Johnson, ‘The Slave Trader, the White Slave, and the Politics of Racial Determination in the 1850s’, *The Journal of American History* Vol. 87, No.1 (2000), p. 22. Baptist specifically studied correspondence between slave traders, in which mulatto women are described in terms of ‘commodity fetishism’, a phrase coined by Karl Marx to describe goods that appear as abstractions with their own existence and their own value. E. Baptist, ‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men’: Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States’, in *American Historical Review* Vol. 106, No. 5, pp 1619-23. Maurie McInnis took a different approach in her recent work on abolitionist art and the American slave trade, and wrote that slave traders took care to point out the gradations in skin tone in order to imply the popularity of lighter-skinned women in the slave market, especially in places such as Natchez and New Orleans. All of these studies point to the fact that white male enslavers fantasised about sexual availability of light skinned enslaved women. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, p. 139.

⁴⁸ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 17.

Orleans.⁴⁹ The auctioneer layered this with the description of Picquet as having little experience of ‘hard work’. The auctioneer projected a special image of Picquet out onto the buyers who were fluent in the language of abuse, and knew exactly the life to which she had been predestined for by her skin colour.

Williams purchased Picquet as his ‘housekeeper’. Picquet told Mattison that “Everybody knew I was housekeeper, but he never let on that he was the father of my children”.⁵⁰ Historian Emily Clark wrote that one of the mainstays of the ‘mulatresse’ identity in Haiti maintained by the refugees landed in New Orleans was that of the role of the ‘menagerie’ or housekeeper. The free women of colour who took on this role could be expected to be a housekeeper and a sexual partner. This arrangement could last a few weeks, or until the white man married a white wife. It evolved into what became known in New Orleans as ‘plaçage’. The prices charged by free women in this role would often amount to the price paid at a boarding house, making it a convenient arrangement for men with long-term business arrangements in New Orleans. ‘Sex-slaves’ were deemed ‘fancy maids’ in the slave market and a girl such as Louisa could have been purchased in the early nineteenth century for \$1500 to \$5233.⁵¹

The institutions that arose in New Orleans in the antebellum period allowed men of all socio-economic backgrounds sexual, exploitative and abusive access to free women of colour and of slaves. Picquet’s narrative tells us that sexual access to

⁴⁹ McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, p. 139.

⁵⁰ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 19.

⁵¹ Clark, *The American Quadroon*, pp. 63, 164-65.

‘black’ women of all skin tones was not limited to elite white men. While rich men could afford a more permanent arrangement with a free woman of colour, for which they could provide a house and security for any children produced, men with more limited resources, such as Mr Williams, could borrow money to purchase a woman who served the dual purpose of keeping his house and becoming his sexual partner. Williams himself borrowed money from his brother, which in itself again indicates that this abuse was open, naturalised and acceptable in the culture of the South.

‘Whiteness’ and sexual slavery

Mattison began his systematic building of evidence for the sustained, inter-generational cycles of sexual abuse in the South from his first visual impression of Picquet. He was struck at first sight with her ‘fair complexion’, ‘rosy cheeks’, and ‘flowing head of hair with no perceptible indication to curl’.⁵² For her, like many others, a personal history of interracial sexual exploitation and abuse across generations was brought into the public realm through the visible lightness of the skin. She was considered an ‘octoroon’, or as Mattison wrote, an ‘eighth-blood—and, consequently one of the four millions in this land of bibles, and churches, and ministers, and “liberty”, who have no rights that white men are bound to respect’.⁵³

Picquet was quizzed on the skin colour of every person she brought into her story: “Was your mother white?”; “Were there any others there white like you?”; “Were

⁵² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

your children Mulattoes?"; "Who was this Lucy?...What was her color?"; "Is she as white as you are?"; "Is he a white man or colored?"; "Is she as white as your children?". Linking the words "as" and "white" reflected Mattison's acceptance of the instability of race. While in this same time period proslavery theorists had sought to deepen white anxieties that the abolition of slavery would lead to inter-marriage and the degeneracy of the 'races', through Picquet's narrative Mattison demonstrated a point he had already made in the *New York Herald* a couple of years earlier, that '[s]lavery is the foster parent of fornication and adultery', not abolition.⁵⁴

Louisa was asked about her mother's previous masters and implied sexual abuse in order to establish the 'whiteness' of herself, her mother and younger brother.

Mattison asked if she had ever had a husband and tried to determine who had fathered her mother's children. Mr Cook had fathered the other children, as far as Louisa knew. Peculiarly Mattison also asked if her mother was 'white', and Louisa replied; "yeah she was pretty white; not white enough for white people. She have long hair, but it was kind a wavy".⁵⁵ By trying to determine the extent of her whiteness, Mattison was layering the particular moments of interracial sex and potential, but not explicitly stated, abuse. From this, intergenerational sexual exploitation emerged as an embedded, systemic, and self-replicating feature of American slavery.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 8, 16, 19- 20, 25-27, H. Mattison, sermon reprinted in the *New York Herald*, 12 Dec 1859.

⁵⁵ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, pp. 7-8.

The graphic imagery of the cowhide on near naked skin was used intentionally by Mattison, so that the audience could imagine this near-white woman being painfully abused. ‘Pain’ had become ever more racialised in this period as the slavery debate gained fervour. Ideology surrounding the insensitivity of Africans to pain had been around since at least the sixteenth century when travellers to Africa wrote of the insensitivity of African women to pain during childbirth.⁵⁶ In the United States in 1851, New Orleans physician Samuel Cartwright wrote in a widely circulated New Orleans medical journal of a supposed condition called ‘Dysaesthesia Aetiopis’, where African American victims were insensitive to pain when subjected to punishment.⁵⁷ The infamous southern slavery apologist and proponent of scientific racism, Dr Josiah C. Nott, however, wrote that ‘Mulattoes’ (rather than black people) were as sensitive to pain as white people. Mattison was possibly playing on Picquet’s whiteness and femininity in order to intensify the reader’s identification with her pain. Mattison chose to end the narrative with a chapter entitled ‘slave-burning’; here he included numerous newspaper accounts of the burning alive of slaves, and not just light-skinned slaves. His purpose seems to have been to demonstrate the barbarity of slavery, and also the humanity of black people. He sought from his audience sympathy for all enslaved people, dark and light-skinned alike.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See J. L. Morgan “Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder”: Male Travellers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770, in *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 54, No. 1 (1997), especially pp. 187-192. Morgan discussed the discourse created by travellers on both the fecundity of African women and their capacity to bear children without pain.

⁵⁷ See T. Dormandy, *The Worst of Evils: The Fight Against Pain* (New Haven, 2006), p. 295.

⁵⁸ For further discussion on racialised/gendered perceptions of the pain of others see M. Pernick, *Calculus of Suffering: Pain, Professionalism and Anaesthesia in Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York, 1985).

‘Whiteness’, linked with endemic sexual abuse, was highlighted in the Picquet narrative, and other ex-slave narratives such as that of William O’Neal and Solomon Northup containing light-skinned ‘sex-slaves’ for three main reasons: first, it made the sexual abuse of all black women relevant to a nineteenth century white readership, bypassing the image of the ‘jezebel’ and presenting the ‘victim’ through a white-washed lens; secondly, it served to demonstrate to the reader that this sexual abuse could not be attributed to a singular moment or time-period, but was endemic and intergenerational; and lastly, the selling of light-skinned women specifically as ‘fancies’ indicates a deep corruption based on the profitability of intergenerational sexual abuse and the breaking up of enslaved families.

Mattison certainly provided support for his arguments of endemic sexual abuse through his use of ‘whiteness’. He created a visual image of the gradual whitening of enslaved women over generations. The spectrum between black and white that was created through sexual abuse was in opposition to imagined duality of white and black which had been created by the legal system. As Walter Johnson has pointed out, slave traders in the South attempted to create precise measurements for ‘imagined proportions’ of black and white blood, using categories such as ‘Negro’, ‘Griffe’, ‘Mulatto’, and ‘Quadroon’, which preserved a shifting tension between blackness and whiteness. Mattison illuminated this tension throughout the narrative and explicitly linked it with sexual abuse.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 150.

Nowhere were ‘blacks’ and ‘whites’ seen more as binary opposites than in the intellectual and legal culture of the nineteenth century slave South. Scientific racism, especially through the American School of Ethnology, advanced a biological argument for black inferiority based on real or imagined physiological and anatomical differences. In a culture in which privilege was based on skin colour, to minimise the visible differences between the ‘races’ was a threat to inequality. The work of Mattison and other abolitionists, after the Dred Scott case in 1857 that denied American citizenship to all non-whites, was, in effect to reverse the view of whites and blacks as polar opposites.⁶⁰ In this pamphlet, Mattison recasted a new theory of race, in which people were not categorised, but put on a spectrum. Mattison encouraged readers in the North to think about gradations of skin tone and implicitly link this to sexual abuse.

Premature sexualisation, corrupted childhood and the ‘culture of abuse’

The previous chapter, and Chapter Five, that focused on rape and discussions of white fathers both pointed toward to corruption of the childhood of both black and white children through sexual abuse. The behaviour of fathers was consciously or

⁶⁰ Dred Scott was an enslaved man in the United States who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom and that of his wife and their two daughters in the Dred Scott v. Sandford case of 1857. The Supreme Court ruled that 1. No black person could be a citizen of the United States and 2. Slavery could not be constitutionally prohibited in American territories. Introductory studies to the Dred Scott decision and the increased polarisation of race after this see M. A. Graber *Dred Scott and the Problem of Constitutional Evil* (New York, 2006) and D. T. Konig, P. Finkelman & C. A. Bracey (eds.), *The Dred Scott Case: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Race and Law* (Athens, OH, 2010).

unconsciously replicated by sons, for whom the sexual abuse of women had become naturalised. Through this the abusive culture was reproduced.

i. Premature sexualisation

The premature sexualisation of young girls under slavery is implicit in both 1930s ex-slave interviews and nineteenth-century slave narratives; the narrative of Louisa Picquet is no different. In the previous chapter, the narrative of Solomon Northup was discussed, and in particular the case of Eliza, the light-skinned ‘sex-slave’ who had a child, a young girl named Emily, with her previous master. In the slave market, Eliza was sold along with Northup to a new master, whereas Emily, who was described as ‘seven or eight years old, of light complexion, and with a face of admirable beauty’, was retained by the slave traders as there was a lot of money to be made from a girl who would be a fine ‘fancy piece’.⁶¹

First, Louisa’s mother became a sex slave some time before she was fifteen, the age at which she gave birth to Picquet. Louisa’s description of her time spent at a boarding house in Georgia reveals the extent to which the abuse of children had been naturalised in slaveholding culture. Picquet was just fourteen when Mr Cook began to sexually harass her. In the section entitled, ‘Intrigues of a Married "Southern Gentleman"’, Mattison questioned her on this experience of sexual harassment:

I was a little girl, not fourteen years old. One day Mr Cook told me I must come to his room that night, and take care of him. He said he was sick...I was

⁶¹ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, p. 50.

afraid to go there that night, and I told Mrs. Bachelor what Mr Cook said to me.⁶²

Mrs. Bachelor was a white Scottish woman who ran the boarding house. She went to the room herself. Mrs. Bachelor continued to try to protect Louisa against Mr Cook's persistent advances, yet he did not cease his harassment. Picquet told Mattison that

he told me I must come up in his room that night; if I didn't he'd give me hell in the mornin'. Then I promised him I would, for I was afraid to say any thing else. Then he forbid me sayin' anything to Mrs. Bachelor about what he said to me.⁶³

Louisa was punished, but this was not the end of the abuse. Mrs. Bachelor hid Louisa when Mr Cook sent for her once more and told the cruel master that perhaps she "had gone out with some children, and got to playin', and didn't know it was so late". The tragic element in this portion of the narrative is the acknowledgement that Louisa is still a child, yet instead of playing with other children, she was in hiding from a man who wished to sexually abuse her. Mattison then whipped her for this sexual insubordination. Louisa told Mattison "I 'spect I'll take some of the marks with me to the grave. One of them I know I will."⁶⁴

At this point Mattison noted that Louisa declined to tell him any further details, as 'it is too horrible and indelicate to be read in a civilized country'. The significance of this comment goes back to the fact that Mattison was attempting to reveal something

⁶² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 10

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

about slavery that the US audience was unaccustomed to hearing about in detail.

Rather than describing Picquet's lacerated skin, the reader was encouraged to imagine how brutal the punishment would have been in order for the marks to remain there 'to the grave'.

Mr Cook then had to sell Louisa and her family due to financial troubles, but Louisa did not realise that she was about to "jump out of the fryin'-pan into the fire".⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the time that she spent with Mr Cook is representative of the premature sexualisation that young girls suffered under slavery. Harriet Jacobs described the age of fifteen as a 'sad epoch' in the life of a slave girl when her master began to whisper 'foul words' in her ear. Picquet who, like Jacobs, was not a rape victim at this stage, was nonetheless the victim of sexual harassment as a child.

ii. Corrupted white childhood and the culture of abuse

The account of Picquet's life centres on the 'debauched' sexual practices of those in the South. In the words of Mattison; 'There is not a family mentioned, from first to last that does not reek with fornication and adultery. It turns up as naturally, and is mentioned with as little speciality, as walrus beef in the narrative of the Arctic expedition, or macaroni in a tour in Italy'.⁶⁶ The families in the narrative are all permeated with abuse.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Louisa was not the only child mentioned in the narrative. While we do not hear much about white children, the narrative does reveal that Mr Randolph, Mr Cook and Mr Williams all had white wives and/or children. The previous two chapters of the present study referred to the effect on children black and white in households in which white men were sexually abusing enslaved women and girls. When the plantation mistress was present in the household, the enslaved children born of rape were often treated cruelly by the slave mistress; and these same children were at risk of being sexually abused too. The white children, on the other hand, were left to interpret this situation themselves.⁶⁷ Louisa Picquet, like other formerly enslaved people, mentioned white families as either witnesses or conspirators in the sexual abuse of enslaved women. The link between black women and sexual abuse was created in the slave owners' home.

Picquet was a sex-slave, and in this position clearly exposed the hypocrisy of the southern system of slavery with her treatment as a 'de facto' wife by her master Mr Williams. Sex slaves perfectly demonstrate C. Vann Woodward's concept of 'intimate distance' as the inherent paradox of US slavery.⁶⁸ Harriet Jacobs portrayed, in the most explicit manner, her exclusion as a black woman from the domain of the home, the sphere in which womanhood and motherhood are defined.

⁶⁷ As previously stated, recent research found that children and young people become normalised to acts of sexual aggression and sexual exploitation, and that these acts become embedded in their peer culture, leaving the children to enter adulthood with a skewed impression of what is appropriate sexual behavior. See Vizard, et al, 'Children and adolescents who present with sexually abusive behavior', and Pullman and Seto, 'Assessment and treatment of adolescent sexual offenders'.

⁶⁸ C. Vann Woodward, 'History from Slave Sources', In *The Slave's Narrative*, C. T. Davis and H. L. Gates Jr.(New York, 1985), pp. 48-59. Vann Woodward wrote that the 'paradox of formal distance and physical intimacy between the races that slavery maximized...The extended family of the planter patriarch included slaves of blood kin, and the interracial matings from which they sprang included not only casual couplings and rapes but durable and affectionate unions', *Ibid.*, p. 56. In this essay Vann Woodward argues that slave sources do occasionally hint at an affectionate intimacy between the races, most prominently with black wet-nurses.

Hazel Carby has written that without this ‘woman’s sphere’, ‘both womanhood and motherhood were rendered meaningless’.⁶⁹ The concepts of ‘womanhood’ and ‘motherhood’ interacted in a more complicated way in the household of Williams and Picquet, where Picquet was coerced into sexual labour, and was the maternal figure for children who were both white and black, free and enslaved. Women who were kept as ‘housekeepers’ in Louisiana were legally distant, but socially very close. They often lived with their masters, or in close proximity, had coerced sexual relationships with them and often bore them children, yet there was no legal relationship other than that based on the enslaver’s ownership.

Mr Williams had three children, all boys, and while Picquet did not mention her relationship with these children, they were doubtlessly aware that they lived with four half-siblings with the status of ‘slave’. There is no indication that they maintained contact with the woman who took the place of the mother in their household and the reader is left to speculate what effect this would have on their future behaviour, especially relationships with women, black or white. There is also evidence in the Picquet narrative of sexual relationships with black women as being part a ‘life cycle’ for young white men. This can be seen particularly in the case of Mr Picquet’s father who sent his sex slave away once he married a white woman.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Jacobs, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; H. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford, 1987), p. 40

⁷⁰ See previous chapter on ‘sex slaves’ in which sex with enslaved women as part of the life-cycle of young slaveholding men is discussed in relation to evidence from the former slave narratives and white writer Redpath in *The Roving Editor*.

Resistance, coping and survival

The final and most intriguing element of the Picquet narrative is the psychological strength that she exhibited throughout her period of sexual harassment up to age fifteen, and then again throughout her period of sexual slavery and after. Historians have argued that enslaved people may have undergone a form of ‘soul murder’ in which they were rendered unable to form attachments and relationships, yet Picquet remained loyal to her mother, had a healthy marriage to Mr Picquet, and would also aid fugitives who were escaping slavery. Liz Kelly defines ‘survival’ as ‘continuing to exist after the life threatening experience that is a part of many instances of sexual violence’: survival can be emotional or physical.⁷¹ Emotional survival means the ability to reconstruct one’s life in order that the sexual attack does not continue to have a lasting and negative impact. This study has found indications of a number of ways and reasons why enslaved women in the United States may have been able to emotionally survive sexual violence, and Picquet’s narrative has been valuable for this. These means of survival can be separated into resistance (before or during the abuse) and coping strategies (after the abuse).

i. Resistance

Some feminist historians have described the sexual abuse of women under slavery as a form of social and political control.⁷² Testimony contained in this thesis has demonstrated that enslaved women resisted abuse in various ways, thus asserting their unwillingness to become passive victims of the culture of absolute domination

⁷¹ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 162-3.

⁷² White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman*; Davis, “Don’t Let Nobody Bother Yo’ Principle”; hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman*; Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line*.

by white men. All manifestations of resistance were indicative of the value that enslaved women placed on the control of their own bodies and sexuality. Anne Burgess and Linda Holstrom have divided forms of resistance to sexual violence into three categories: verbal (screaming), physical (fighting or running away), and/or cognitive (deciding to submit to avoid further injury before or after the rape).⁷³ There were few incidences of direct physical resistance in the testimony of the enslaved, but there were other less explicit forms of resistance that included the control of reproduction (see Chapter Five and Chapter Eight), avoidance strategies to limit the frequency or risk of abuse, taking another white man as a sexual partner and protector (See Chapter Five), and even willing submission -- a cognitive measure that allowed enslaved women a sense of agency when the risk of direct physical resistance was too high. Picquet demonstrated control over her body mainly through opting to submit to her inevitable abuse.

The first time she demonstrated this cognitive resistance strategy was when she was a young teenager and staying with Mr Cook at the boarding house. Picquet told Reverend Mattison that

when he [Mr Cook] was whippin' me so awfully, I made up my mind 'twas of no use, and I'd go, and not be whipped anymore...I saw he was bent on it, and I could not get Mrs. Bachelor to protect me anymore.

In this instance, Picquet opted to submit to avoid further physical punishment and repercussions for the white lady who had tried to protect her. She did this again with her next master, Mr Williams. Picquet recalled that her Williams told her that he

⁷³ Burgess and Holstrom, 'The Coping Behavior of the Rape Victim', pp. 413-18.

would 'blow my brains out' if she dared to escape his abuse. Picquet thought to herself, 'if that be the way, all I could do was just to pray for him to die'.⁷⁴ In neither case was Picquet a passive victim, by choosing to submit she refused to allow her potential rapist to control events and therefore have complete power over her. Kelly described this as 'learned helplessness', a form of coping when the options to resist are very limited.⁷⁵

Picquet certainly did, however, suffer symptoms that would now be recognised as anxiety and depression. Picquet told Mattison that Mr Williams was so disagreeable that she wished he would sell her, as she 'had no peace at all' and said that she would 'rather die than live in that way'.⁷⁶ In the chapter of her narrative entitled, 'Inside views of another Southern family', Picquet spoke frankly of what she felt was the immorality of her situation. Mrs Cook, Picquet's previous mistress had imposed these feelings on her through her animosity to the sex slave 'Lucy'. Mrs Cook told her that "when folks had children that way they must be married like she was to her husband. It was adultery to stay with anyone without bein' married".⁷⁷ But while Louisa was deeply troubled by the morality of the position she was in, she did not lose sight that it was the white abusers that were to blame.⁷⁸

When the victim of sexual abuse was a child, ways of resisting were even more confined. Picquet demonstrated, however, that even young enslaved girls found

⁷⁴ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 20.

⁷⁵ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 181.

⁷⁶ Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 19.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

ways to protect their physical and emotional wellbeing. As well as using avoidance strategies by limiting the time spent in Mr Cook's company, and hiding from him when he searched for her, Picquet maintained a psychological strength in other ways. There was an incident in which Mr Cook, after drinking alcohol, gave her some money in return for her sexual submission. As he was drunk at the time, she managed to get away, and bought a dress with the money. While she knew that Mr Cook wanted the money back, she told Mattison that she "had sense enough to know he would not dare tell anyone that he gave me the money, and would hardly dare to whip me for it".⁷⁹ The dress that she purchased became a symbol of her resistance to sexual abuse, and she later transformed it to an item that demonstrated the close bond of family, in spite of the sexual abuse endured by multiple generations of their women. After Picquet was sold to Williams, she recalled, "I wanted to go back and get the dress I bought with the half-dollars....Then I thought mother could cut it up and make dresses for my brother, the baby...I had a thought, too, that she'd have it to remember me".⁸⁰

ii. Coping strategies

According to cognitive theories, an individual has sets of pre-existing beliefs and models of the world, of others, and of themselves, which are products of prior experiences: trauma occurs when the individual encounters a very prominent experience, incompatible with the person's established beliefs and models.⁸¹ This thesis has established that the abuse of enslaved women existed on a cultural level,

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸¹ Veas-Gulani, *Trauma and Guilt*, p. 30.

and little stigma, if any, was attached to victims of abuse. As abuse was so endemic in the southern United States, it was unlikely to be ‘incompatible’ with established world-views. Louisa Picquet demonstrated her knowledge of sexual slavery from an early age, she was a product of the practice, and grew up in an environment with at least two other sex slaves (Lucy and her mother). As a young girl, before her sexual harassment started, she even had conversations with Mrs Cook, her mistress, regarding the immorality of the practice under slavery. The sexual abuse of enslaved women was a part of Picquet’s world-view from a very young age.

Recent studies have shown that supportive and reassuring responses when a sexual abuse is reported can significantly reduce feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety or depression and also aid the maintenance of close relationships with both men and women.⁸² Sociological research has shown that a common response of women to sexual abuse is a distrust of men.⁸³ What remains to be distinguished, however, is how this functioned in a society where white men were almost exclusively the abusers: it is quite possible that white men became an abusive ‘type’, whereas black men remained outside of this association. Liz Kelly discovered that women’s distrust in men was lessened when the abuse survivor had been able to tell a man about experiences of abuse, and his reaction had been supportive.⁸⁴ Louisa Picquet went on to form a seemingly healthy marriage to Henry Picquet, and her intricate knowledge of the abuse suffered by her husband’s female family members clearly

⁸² Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Bames, ‘Social reactions to rape victims’; Ullman, ‘Social reactions, coping strategies and self-blame’.

⁸³ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 202.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 202-3.

demonstrates that sexual abuse under slavery had been discussed openly amongst the couple.

Louisa Picquet was also connected to a mainly light-skinned network of people who were either children born of rape, or had lived lives of sexual slavery. Louisa's mother was a rape victim, as was her future husband's mother and first-wife.

Picquet's narrative builds a picture of a slave sub-community that was understanding, supportive, and resilient. Louisa Picquet and her mother Elizabeth Randolph, both lived lives of sexual slavery from their young teenage years, yet they were able to go on to form loving families and maintain a close bond. The literature on children born of rape cites problems with attachment to children amongst mothers who gave birth to their rapist's child, but there is no evidence of attachment problems in the strong bond between Picquet and her mother.

Picquet's narrative demonstrates the scale on which sexual slavery was occurring in the southern States and that this outright sexual abuse could be forced on any enslaved woman from a young age. The narrative adds further intricacy to what we know about the demand for 'fancy girls' in the domestic slave trade. The 'language of abuse' which linked physical appearance to sexual availability was being developed in the slave market in order to gain a higher price for women such as Louisa Picquet, and the presence of children in abusive slaveholding households meant that the language was learned and the cycle of abuse was perpetuated. This abuse was a deeply embedded and toxic element of the culture of the slave South: the link between sexual availability and enslaved bodies was ingrained and

unquestionable. While Louisa Picquet clearly did suffer mental health problems, such as the depression and anxiety referred to previously (though an issue that is in need of further study), she certainly was a survivor of sexual violence and she went on to maintain strong family ties and create new and meaningful relationships.

Chapter Eight

Experiences of 'forced breeding' in Louisiana and Texas

In 1897 The *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, a black newspaper, published a report written by Octavia V. Rogers Albert, in which she discussed a dream she had long ago of 'little children running after me in rags, begging ...fatherless and motherless'. Not long after this, she continued, she had met an old lady who recounted her experiences of slavery in a place 'remote from towns, where children are reared'. One time, the old lady told Rogers, a 'peddler' stopped by to chastise the children for their appearance. The peddler asked, "'Who made you?'" "Mars Billie'" they replied. He then asked, "'What did he make you for?'" "To take care of the cows and horses", said the little fellow'.¹

The ability of slave-owners to 'make' slaves through forced reproduction, either for the domestic slave trade, or to augment their own labour force is implicit in the question of the peddler and the response of the children. Even more significant though, is the impact that the memory of forced breeding had on Albert, who was just an infant when emancipated. The forced impregnation of enslaved women, either by slave owners, overseers or enslaved men, was a form of sexual and economic exploitation; embedded in this were white attitudes about race, sex, the black family and black parenthood, and the rights to enslaved body. For black people it meant the redefining of mothers and fathers as 'breeders' or 'studs', children as 'calves' or other livestock, separation of husbands from wives, parents

¹ *SCA* Nov 17 1887. A similar theme of 'making slaves' can be found in F. Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-39*, J. A. Scott (ed.), (Athens, 1984; originally published 1863). An enslaved woman told Kemble, a British actress who had married a Georgia slaveowner, "Missus, tho' we no able to work, we make little niggers for massa", (p. 127).

from children, the ultimate power of the master over the enslaved person's reproductive organs, futures and the manipulation of physical traits through selective breeding.² Almost all of these factors contributed to the extensive institutionalised sexual harassment that was manifested on slaveholding units in the United States.³

Historiographical context

This chapter addresses the practice of 'forced breeding', also described as 'slave breeding' and 'slave rearing' in other historical work. The term encompasses the range of practices listed above that centre on slaveowners' recognition of the profitability of the natural reproduction of the slave community. Slaves were raised to either add to the slaveowners' 'stock' of slaves, or directly for the market; in the latter case, discussions of slave breeding are implicitly linked to the domestic slave trade, the trauma of family separation and recent debates on capitalist behaviours of southern planters. The present study defines forced breeding as the short or long term reproductive manipulation of enslaved people: this could include the short-term pairing of enslaved men and women; descriptions of enslaved people as 'breeders' and 'studs'; a longer term forced 'marriage'; eugenic manipulation of reproduction; and rape by white men with an economic incentive.⁴

² 'Selective breeding' under slavery could be described as a primitive form of eugenics, a term that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century to mean 'the rational planning of, and intervention into, human breeding'. For a discussion of the history of the term and its application see P. Levine and A. Bashford (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (Oxford, 2010), esp. 'Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World', pp. 1-16.

³ Adrienne D. Davis described the 'plantation complex' as 'one of the earliest American sites of sexual harassment', in 'Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment', p. 9.

⁴ Individual instances of the sale of children by their owner-fathers have not been included in the quantification of slave breeding in former slave interviews in this study, unless it was specifically stated that they had raped for economic gain, though such men were obviously aware that they potentially gained financially from their rape of enslaved women.

Historians Herbert Gutman and Richard Sutch defined slave breeding as the use of ‘rewards’ for childbearing, the encouragement of early marriage and short lactation periods, the provision of both pre- and post-natal care out of line with nineteenth-century standards, and emphasised ‘stud farms’ and rearing for long-distance sale.⁵ Fogel and Engerman saw slave breeding as two interrelated concepts of interference in the normal sexual habits of slaves and the raising of slaves with sale as the main objective.⁶ A broader interpretation is made by Thelma Jennings who wrote that ‘whether female slaves were subjected to ‘breeding’ or not, they were expected to bear many children regardless of their own feelings’.⁷

While the term ‘forced breeding’ could include less violent measures used to encourage a woman to have more children, such as decreased workload and shorter working hours, the testimony considered for this project almost exclusively associated forced breeding with violence, threatening behaviour, and the traumatic separation of families. While forced sex between enslaved men and women usually amounted to an indirect rape of both sexes by the master, the topic also provides evidence for the rape of enslaved women by enslaved men. Walter Johnson has recently described the ‘landscape’ of slavery as a ‘matrix of sexual vulnerability’. As well as exerting their ‘phallic’ power through forcing enslaved men to impregnate enslaved women, many slave-owners also ‘used the women they owned to convert their own semen into capital’.⁸ According to the testimony of the formerly enslaved, white men commonly exerted this power through the callous sale of their enslaved offspring. Chapter Five gave numerous examples of the sale of young enslaved

⁵ Gutman and Sutch, ‘Victorians All?’ p. 154.

⁶ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 78.

⁷ Jennings, “‘Us Colored Women’”, p. 52

⁸ Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, pp. 192-6.

children by their master-fathers, white stepmothers, or white half-brothers and sisters. Additionally, overseers were often presented as economically-motivated rapists.⁹

Forced breeding was mentioned in 10 per cent of former slave interviews, and 30 per cent of longer autobiographies. The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that the forced breeding of slaves was a significant element of enslaved life in Louisiana and Texas. The debate over the importance of the systematic breeding of slaves in the United States has centred on a nineteenth-century abolitionist claim that in the Upper South, where the soil had supposedly become unsuitable for profitable agricultural production, a vast amount of farms 'raised' slaves for sale in the Lower South and South West. In states of the Upper South the rearing of slaves was described in some abolitionist pamphlets as the 'chief source' of income. They hinted at 'stud farms', and pointed to the destruction of the slave family and highlighted, not only the sexual abuse of enslaved women and children, but also the moral corruption of whites of 'all classes, all professions, both sexes, and all ages', all of whom were involved in the rearing and sale of slaves.¹⁰

While a number of historical works have argued for the existence of 'slave breeding' practices in the Upper South (see literature review), it is significant that several

⁹ From American slavery's earliest colonial beginnings, white men took full advantage of the law *Partus Sequitur Ventrem*, the U.S. slave law that that children would follow the status of their mother. See J. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, 2004).

¹⁰ The Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, *Slavery and the internal slave trade in the United States of North America; being replies to questions transmitted by the committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade throughout the world* (London, 1841), p. 22. Accessed at http://archive.org/stream/slaveryinternals00ameruoft/slaveryinternals00ameruoft_djvu.txt 10 April 2015.

important works that have focused on the domestic slave trade have argued against a concentrated regional interest in slave breeding. Walter Johnson wrote that in the New Orleans slave market (in the Lower South) ‘slaveholders reduced consideration of gender difference to the medical consideration of generative capacity’.¹¹

Similarly, Michael Tadman and Steven Deyle have recognised forced breeding discourse as unarguably present in the Lower South as well as the Upper South, despite the lack of evidence for any specialist ‘slave breeding’ or ‘stud’ farms.¹²

Evidence presented here will go against the traditional abolitionist focus on slave breeding. While it is significant that large numbers of former slaves forcibly moved from the Upper South into Louisiana and Texas in the antebellum period, Louisiana and Texas slave-owners still showed a lively awareness of the profitability of rearing slaves on their Lower South farms and plantations.¹³

The literature review chapter of this thesis examined the dominant discourses surrounding slave breeding. These works fall into two broad categories: those focusing on the abolitionist notion of an Upper South specialisation in breeding and those moving to a wider southern focus. Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer (1958), and Herbert G. Gutman and Richard Sutch (1976), followed the abolitionist regional model by arguing that slaves were reared in the states of the Atlantic seaboard for sale in the Lower South. Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman (1974), in contrast, claimed that slave-based agriculture was profitable and efficiently-run in all parts of the South, and asserted that an Upper South resort to the forced breeding of

¹¹ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 144.

¹² Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 4, 5, 121-9; S. Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Cary, NC, 2005), pp. 38-9, 29.

¹³ For estimates of the interregional slave movements into Louisiana and Texas see Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, p. 12.

slaves was an abolitionist ‘myth’. A second group of historians have moved beyond an Upper South focus and have argued for either a series of small-scale slave breeding activities enterprises throughout the South, or for a general awareness of the profitability of rearing slaves for the market. Historians who have taken this position include: Richard Lowe and Randolph Campbell, Kenneth M. Stampp, Michael Tadman, Steven Deyle, Daina Ramey Berry and Gregory Smithers.¹⁴

A non-regional specific explanation of forced breeding practices will closely align this chapter with the latter group of historians, though a special feature of this project is the indication of the scale of forced breeding through a quantitative analysis and a calculation of undercounting factors in the testimony of the formerly enslaved. The significant number of first-hand accounts of forced marriage and reproduction presented in this chapter strongly indicate that the forced breeding of enslaved people was far more than what Gregory Smithers calls a ‘narrative trope’ used by abolitionists and later by enslaved people in order to express a whole range of violations of the enslaved body.¹⁵ While Gregory Smithers argued for the existence of slave breeding, he mainly interpreted the practice as a ‘narrative trope’ that was used by multiple generations of African Americans to ‘emphasize the brutality of slavery and its violent legacies’. Evidence presented here suggests that Smithers was wrong to dismiss ‘slave breeding’ in this way. The present chapter instead explores

¹⁴ A. H. Conrad and J. R. Meyer, ‘The Economics of Slavery in the Ante Bellum South’, *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (1958), pp. 95-130; Stampp, *Peculiar Institution*, pp. 245-51; P. A. David, H. G. Gutman, R. Sutch, P. Temin, G. Wright and K. M Stampp, *Reckoning With Slavery: A Critical Study into the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976), esp. pp. 12, 18, 19-30, 134-162; Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, pp. 78-86; Richard G. Lowe and Randolph B. Campbell, ‘The Slave- Breeding Hypothesis: A Demographic Comment on the “Buying” and “Selling” States’, *Journal of Southern History*, No. 42, No. 3 (1976), pp. 401-12; Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, pp. 121-9, S. Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Cary, NY, 2005), pp. 38-9, 29; Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe*, pp. 82-88; Smithers, *Slave Breeding*.

¹⁵Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, p. 6.

the ways in which slaveholders forced enslaved men and women into intimate sexual relationships in the hope of them bearing children together.

The work in this chapter fits into wider debates on the structure and strength of the slave family in spite of severe adversity, commodification of the enslaved body, and the premature sexualisation of children. This chapter will first look at scale of forced breeding and at a series of undercounting factors that indicate that the practice was more widespread than has previously been understood. The second part of the chapter will then focus on the more qualitative testimony of the enslaved, firstly looking at the language of ‘forced breeding’, including the description of enslaved adults and children as ‘breeders’ and ‘studs’ and other livestock. The reality of forced marriage will then be investigated. Important here is the language of selective breeding that the former slaves employed in order to describe the callous putting together and separation of families in order to maximise profit. Alongside this the resistance of former slaves to forced breeding will be explored.

Scale in interviews and longer narratives

Thelma Jennings wrote that ‘according to both black and white sources, *forced* interracial sex was much more frequent than slave breeding’.¹⁶ Yet the percentage of interviews that discuss forced breeding is higher than any other sexual issue mentioned in Louisiana and Texas 1930s interviews, and an even greater percentage of nineteenth-century autobiographies discuss the issue. Forced breeding was mentioned in over ten per cent of the total sample of 1930s interviews used in this

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

thesis. The issue was discussed with similar frequency in the Louisiana and Texas samples (see Table 4.1). Forced breeding appeared in around 30 per cent of book-length narratives, the themes encountered in these giving an early introduction to the issues mentioned in the later 1930s interviews. In the book-length narratives, as well as in the 1930s interviews, discussions of forced breeding are very often put into the context of family separations. These discussions are indicative of the strength of the slave family, despite the constant threat of sale. While forced sex was undoubtedly traumatic, in slave testimony this was commonly overshadowed by the love that enslaved people had for their children regardless of the manner of their conception, and the horror of separation. Furthermore, the personal nature of the stories recounted in both the book-length narratives and the later 1930s interviews indicate more than interpretations resting on notions of collective trauma or the borrowing of literary tropes would suggest.

WPA interviews: issues of skew/undercount

Methodology sections throughout this thesis have pointed to a range of factors which indicate that sexual issues are significantly undercounted in 1930s interviews. The three most significant undercounting factors in this project are the age of the interviewees at emancipation, gender of the interviewee, and the race of the interviewer. In addition to these factors in this chapter, directed questioning is discussed as having played a significant role in determining rates of forced breeding reported by interviewees.

i. Age of interviewee

As a long time period had elapsed between the period of enslavement and the conducting of the 1930s WPA interviews, the testimony of the formerly enslaved recorded sooner after emancipation was far more likely to discuss a closer personal involvement in forced breeding. Octavia V. Rogers Albert, whose work was discussed in the introduction to this chapter, was born a slave in 1853 in Georgia, but moved to Louisiana in 1878. Although most likely recorded for her close female friends and family, her interviews were serialised in a local newspaper after her death. Three of the formerly enslaved people she spoke to mentioned some form of forced breeding activity, almost half of her small sample.

Almost half of the references to forced breeding activity in the 1930s interviews were from formerly enslaved people who had been born in Texas. This is, however, complicated by the young average age of the interviewees who mentioned forced breeding and had lived in Texas (13.7 years), the formerly enslaved were unlikely to have been forced to breed personally at this young age. Some testimony from Texas was from interviewees who were older and who had experienced forced breeding practices themselves, and this shall be discussed later in the chapter.¹⁷ This does not mean, however, that the younger interviewees would not have been aware of the issue, or that recollections were based on hearsay. Anthony S. Parent and Susan Brown Wallace wrote that ‘although slave children were often deprived of sexual

¹⁷ Four of these interviewees who had experienced forced breeding personally had lived in Texas or Louisiana since birth. Jephtha Choice, Lulu Wilson, Rose Williams, and Silvia King were all forced to breed personally in Texas, additionally one woman who had been formerly enslaved in Louisiana, Henrietta Butler, was made to breed and worked as a wet-nurse in Louisiana. Many other formerly enslaved people were likely to have been referring to forced breeding in Louisiana and Texas but did not specifically state this in their testimony. *TAS* Vol 4, Part 1, p. 217; *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 190; *TAS* Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 170; *TAS* Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 290.

knowledge, it is not necessarily true that they were shielded from the social realities evident in slavery'.¹⁸

Allesandro Portelli wrote that oral narrators maintain their stories by repeating them over time and suggested that oral sources can compensate chronological distance with a much closer personal involvement. Some interviewees, such as Sarah Ford, born around 1850 near West Columbia, Texas told her interviewer that

When I was growed up after freedom, mamma tells me things what go on in slave times what I didn't know nothin' bout 'cause I was too young. She say de white folks don't let de slaves what work in de field marry none, dey jes' put a man an' breedin' woman together like dey does mules an' cattle.¹⁹

Others, however, seemed to have been aware of the social reality of master-control over the sexual relationships of enslaved people, despite their young age at emancipation. It was a significant issue to the young children and often had a severe impact on their lives, so much so that they came to mention it when interviewed almost seventy-five years later.

Enslaved children were often prematurely sexualised, as their sexuality -- or anticipated fertility -- would have been part of their purchase price. Other studies with the formerly enslaved have found that slave owners were quick to talk about the breeding potential of young girls well within their earshot. Parent and Wallace in their study of the Fisk University narratives wrote that 'the intrapersonal violence of

¹⁸ Parent and Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', p. 381.

¹⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, pp. 1358.

slave breeding cannot be underestimated, for the equation of slaves with domestic animals and market value was not lost upon slave children'.²⁰

Whilst the majority of references to slave breeding in the interviews refer to the forced marriage of their parents, some interviewees, who were young at the time of emancipation had still experienced forced breeding themselves. Lulu Wilson of Dallas, Texas reported that both she and her mother were used for breeding:

My maw says she took with my paw and I was born but some time passed and didn't no more younguns come and so they said my paw was too old and wore out for breedin' and they wanted her to take with this here other buck. So the Hodges set the nigger hounds on my paw and run him away from the place and maw said he went to the free state. So she took with my step paw and they must of pleased the white folks that wanted niggers to breed like livestock 'cause she birthed nineteen children. I was bout thirteen or fourteen...The doctor told me that less'n I had a baby, old as I was and married, I'd start in on spasms. So it twan't long 'til I had a baby.²¹

Catherine Green of Texas similarly revealed that she was made to marry in her early teens.²² Book-length accounts of children sold from their mothers leave little doubt of the profit to be made from purchasing a young slave in anticipation of their labour potential as an adult. Slave traders would encourage the slave buyer to look at the bodily signs of the future potential of young enslaved children. There was particular money to be made from light-skinned young girls, as can be encountered in the

²⁰ Parent and Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery, p. 386-7.

²¹ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 190.

²² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5 Part 4, p. 1571.

narrative of Solomon Northup, and the anticipation of the future selling price of the young light-skinned slave girl, Emily.²³

While some enslaved girls did experience abuse at a young age, the average age of those who had personally been made to ‘marry’ or had been forced to have sex for the purpose of rearing slaves is over 26 years at emancipation. As with all testimony, therefore, the older the former slave at emancipation, the increased likelihood that they would be able to give more information about sexual issues. The personal accounts of the older slaves include that of Henrietta Butler, who was used as an enslaved wet nurse. She told Flossie McElwee, a white female interviewer that

My dam ol’ Missus was mean as holl...She made me have a baby by one of dem mans on de plantation. De ole devil! I gots made over’ time I think about it. Den dey took de man te war. De baby dies, den I had to let dat ol’ devil’s baby suck dese same tiddies hanging right here, She was allus knockin’ me around, I worked in the house nursing.²⁴

Others who were older at emancipation gave more detailed accounts of forced marriage, and the economic potential of rearing slaves. Lizzie Grant who had been a slave in West Virginia but had moved to Texas before the Civil War told B. E. Davis that she and her husband were ‘put together’:

Maser made me marry him as we were going to raise some more slaves. Maser said it was cheaper to raise slaves than it was to buy them....So our young Maser put us to live together to raise from just like you would stock today. They never thought about it either. They never cared or thought about

²³ See Chapter Six for further discussion of Emily. Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 86-7.

²⁴ Enslaved wetnursing was a practice closely linked to the forced breeding of enslaved people and could represent a number of overlapping exploitations of the enslaved woman’s body. *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 545.

our feeling in the matter, of course we got used to one another and never thought anything about the way they put us to live.²⁵

Rose Williams of Texas was personally involved in a eugenic-style calculation by the master and mistress. Born in 1849, she was forced to have children with another slave.

De nex' day, I's go to de missy an' tell her w'at rufus wants to do. De missy says dat am de Marster's wishes. She says, "Yous am a po'tly girl an' Rufush ama a po'tly man. De Marster wants youens fo' bring fo'th po'tly chilluns.

Williams described her master as a 'nigger trader'.²⁶ These cases demonstrate that while enslaved children were prematurely sexualised and some would be forced to have sex from the age of thirteen, the older interviewees were far more likely to mention forced breeding. Had the 1930s interviews been conducted sooner, the percentage of interviewees who had more detailed knowledge of forced breeding is likely to have been much higher.

ii. Gender of interviewees

Table 8.1 below shows that female interviewees were significantly more likely than males to mention forced breeding. While enslaved men were sexually exploited as 'studs', an enslaved woman could be forced to bear her master's children as well as those of other enslaved men. Enslaved women, then, were far more likely to have experience of forced breeding than enslaved men. Significantly too, particular issues were more likely to be brought up with men, and vice versa. In the section 'breeders', 'studs' and 'livestock' later in this chapter, the discussion of 'breeders' is

²⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 1553.

²⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5 Part 4, p. 170.

Table 8.1. Effect of gender on the mentioning of slave breeding in a 1930s WPA interview

	Number of male interviewees	Percentage of male interviewees	Number of female interviewees	Percentage of female interviewees
All interviews (769)	415	54	354	46
Interviews mentioning forced breeding (81)	29	35.8	52	64.2

Note: Four interviewees in total sample do not mention their gender. These interviews have been omitted from the 769 mentioned above.

led almost exclusively by the testimony of formerly enslaved women, whereas the opposite can be said of the frank discussions of men who were used as what the formerly enslaved commonly described as a ‘stud’. Additionally, ‘studs’ only seem to have been discussed with male interviewers; this was obviously not an appropriate topic of conversation with a white female in the 1930s.

These patterns suggest a significant undercount of the instances of forced breeding amongst both female and male interviewees. If an all-female interview sample had been used, a much higher percentage of interviews that mention forced breeding would have been found. Similarly, as ‘studs’ were mainly discussed by men, and only in interviews conducted by male interviewers, it is likely that a much higher number of references to ‘studs’ would have been found in a sample of male interviewees with male interviewers.

iii. Occupation of interviewees

Occupation made little difference to the likelihood of an interviewee having discussed some form of slave breeding. In most cases the proximity that a slave had to the master, either on a small slaveholding unit, or as a domestic slave, significantly increased the likelihood of a former slave's awareness or experience of sexual violence, but in the case of forced breeding, it is clear that the master took a direct interest in the sexual pairings of his entire enslaved workforce.

Other factors linked to occupation are the size of the slaveholding unit and the urban or rural location of the slaveholding unit. Adrienne Davis wrote that 'the physical

Table 8.2 Relationship between the occupation under slavery of 1930s interviewee and the mention of slave breeding

	Number of interviewees in total sample	Percentage of interviewees in total sample	Number of interviewees in sample mentioning forced breeding	Percentage of interviewees in sample mentioning forced breeding
Domestic	251	32.5	26	32.1
Field	253	32.7	25	30.9
Domestic and field work	9	1.2	0	0
Unknown	240	31	27	33.3
Too young	20	2.6	3	3.7
Total	773	100	81	100

Note: Results in table are for Louisiana and Texas interviews combined

geography of plantations, often vast spaces, isolated from each other and denser populations, was ideal for those who sought to control the entire lives of their workforce'.²⁷ Despite this, results have shown that proportion of urban slaves that mention slave breeding is very similar to that of rural slaves. Aside from the physical geographical location of an urban slaveholding unit, they were often smaller in terms of slave numbers. With little (if any) land to work, slaves would generally have been domestic or skilled, and there would seem to be no immediate need for a steady increase in slave numbers. Owing to the conditions of US slavery, slaveholding communities implicitly accepted the power of the master to do as he wished with his enslaved people. There was no clear need for isolation from other slaveholding people, or indeed, from non-slaveholding whites for a master to control the life of his enslaved workforce. To add to this, Table 4.12 compared the subset of interviews in which the former slave mentioned some form of forced breeding with the subset where the issue was not discussed. Results in the table showed that forced breeding was more commonly mentioned by those who had lived on a large slaveholding unit, yet the number of interviewees who lived on a small slaveholding unit was also significant. Both numbers and testimony reveal that there was an awareness of the profit to be made from the reproductive potential of slaves on all slaveholding units, large or small.

It is possible that the abolitionist myth of the 'stud farm' could have directed scholarship away from the smaller-scale slave-breeding enterprises on small and/or urban units. Michael Tadman has speculated that 'it is probable that on larger

²⁷ A. Davis, 'Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harrassment', in C. A. MacKinnon and R. B. Siegal (ed.) *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law* (New Haven, 2004), p. 461.

slaveholdings, with a fuller internal marriage market, masters usually found it convenient to leave the slaves to choose their own partners'.²⁸ As urban slaveholding units were generally smaller than rural plantations it is probable that the master would have deemed it necessary to find a partner for the enslaved woman in order to produce valuable offspring. Jim Johnson of Texas, who was born in 1851 on a small urban unit, told his interviewer:

don't know nothin' 'bout my pa 'cept his name was Tom Glover an' he belonged to some Glovers back at Charleston. After I gets big 'nough I asks mother 'bout who my pa was, but she don't talk much 'bout him 'cept to say he belong to neighbours what was named Glover an' she an' him was put together.²⁹

In this case the master seems to have hired a 'stud' to impregnate Johnson's mother. Sam Meredith Mason who was born in 1858 in Austin, was another urban slave who mentioned slave breeding. He remembered that 'A good, well-built man was hired out among a bunch of wimmen so as to produce good, healthy chillun'.³⁰ Mason, again, testified to the use of studs on smaller units where enslaved women had less opportunity to form relationships independently.

This demonstrates that those on small units were aware of forced marriages and forced breeding and also aware of the master's desire to have more enslaved children. US Historian Catherine Clinton wrote that, quite frankly, the business of slave reproduction was 'too vital' to be left to the slaves themselves.³¹ If this is true

²⁸ Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, p. 129.

²⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 2014.

³⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, p. 2595.

³¹ C. Clinton, "'Southern Dishonor': Flesh, Blood, Race, and Bondage", in C. Bleser (ed.), *In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900* (New York, 1991), p. 54.

then the size of the plantation or the fact that it was in a rural or urban environment is of little significance. While selective breeding, as discussed later in this chapter would have an impact on the marriages of some enslaved people on a large unit, for those enslaved people who had lived on smaller slaveholdings, the likelihood of interference was significantly increased.

iv. Indications of scale from directed questioning

The list of questions that the WPA interviewers were provided with and editorial deletions at the state level both significantly shaped the interviews. Chapter Six discussed the likelihood that certain interviewers strayed from the list of questions to follow a particular theme that they deemed more important or more noteworthy than others. Texan interviewer Fred Dibble, for example, seemed to have a particular interest in white fathers, judging from increased frequency with which his interviewees revealed this information to him. Through comparison of unedited interviews that contain slave-breeding references with the edited versions, we can see that the state editors were quite accepting of individual instances of, for example, white fathers or ancestors, but wanted to leave out references to widespread interracial sex or information that would lead the reader to think that forced breeding and sexual abuse was endemic in the system of slavery. Similar patterns emerge with interviewers who were more likely to record forced breeding. B. E. Davis (a white male from Texas) recorded some form of forced breeding ten times in his interviews, when he conducted just 34. This proportion is far higher than all others who recorded the issue.

B. E. Davis was a white male who worked in Madisonville, Texas. Twenty-one of the interviews he conducted were edited at the state level, and eighteen out of the 34 original interviews contained at least one sexual issue. As well as the discussions of forced breeding, this included one discussion of rape, one mention of a white father, two discussions of resistance to forced breeding by the use of contraception such as cotton root, and a significant number of five interviewees who discussed interracial relationships in the present day, a topic rarely encountered in the 1930s interviews. The discussion of such sensitive topics with Davis indicates that he was able to gain the trust of the elderly interviewees. While it seems clear that he strayed from the list of questions provided by the central Writers' Project office in Washington, the frequency with which the former slaves reported these issues to Davis indicate that a vast undercount is operating in the interview data of other 1930s interviewers.

The information edited out of certain Texas interviews can offer a glimpse into the kinds of issues that other interviewers may have chosen not to discuss with the former slave, or not to include in the written transcription of the interview. As discussed in Chapter Three, the interviews conducted by the Texas Writers' Project are particularly interesting: from these we can analyse what issues were deemed more worthy of censorship. Chapter Three showed that the issue most likely to be completely removed from an interview with a former slave was forced breeding. While many instances of forced breeding were left in the interviews, the editing at the state level was not carried out by a sole editor. Forced breeding could have been a particular source of shame in the South. Michael Tadman argued that the constant threat of sale of enslaved family members completely undermines the argument for

benevolent slaveholder paternalism: perhaps the WPA editor was aware that the forced breeding and separation of families undermined a romanticised ideal.³²

Analysis of the omitted information shows that the sentences edited out of the interviews frequently contained information that would perhaps have offended the audience or the social mores at the time. Forced breeding may not have been acceptable reading in the 1930s, and this is further supported by the very specific gender dynamics of the interview situations in which this topic would be mentioned. Editors were quite accepting of individual instances of white fathers, or ancestors but, as was noted earlier, wanted to leave out references to widespread inter-racial sex, or information that would lead the reader to think that forced breeding and sexual abuse were endemic in the system of slavery. The interview of Parilee Daniels was edited so it did not contain the name and description of her master as 'slave crazy'.³³ Perhaps there were known descendants of this man who the editors did not want to offend or cause embarrassment to.

Other editorial deletions include Mary Gaffney's discussion of forced marriages for her and her mother, and a frank discussion of selective breeding by Katie Darling. Darling told her interviewer that 'Niggers didn't court like they do now, Master would pick out a po'tly man and a po'tly gal and jist "put 'em to-gether. What they wanted was the stock'. This important evidence of sexual abuse was missing from the version of the interview sent to Washington.³⁴ Thomas Johns, a former Texan slave told his interviewer that

³² M. Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, p. xxx.

³³ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part 3, p. 1028.

³⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 3, pp. 1441, 1442.

If an owner had a big woman slave and she had a little man for her husband', and de owner had a big man slave, or another owner had a big man slave, den dey would make de woman's little husband' leave, and dey would make de woman let de big man be with her so's dere would be big children, which dey could sell well. If de man and de woman refuse to be together, dey would get whipped hard, maybe whipped to death. [On whipping] Course even if it did damage de slave to whip him, dey done it, 'cause dey figured 'kill a nigger, breed another--kill a mule, buy another.³⁵

This entire passage that discussed the raising of slaves specifically for sale, the separation of marriages, punishment for not submitting to such marriages, and the disposability of slaves in a manner compared to livestock was deleted from the edited interview. The editors of the interviews were by no means trying to cover up sexual issues completely. State editors were quite accepting of individual instances of, for example, white fathers or ancestors, but often shrank from allowing material that suggested that sexual abuse was endemic in the system of slavery. Rather than being systematic and universal, editing practices seem to have been based on the individual beliefs of the white editor who was responsible for each individual interview.

Themes of forced breeding in 1930s interviews

i. Breeders, studs and livestock

As the average age of the 1930s interview sample was low at emancipation, the dominant discussions regarding forced breeding commonly concerned the interviewee's parents. Fifty per cent of all references (see Table 8.3), were to a

³⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1952.

mother who was a breeder, a father who was a 'stud', or to the forced marriage of parents. While all three references relate to a callous sexual interference into the life of the enslaved person's parent, the details in these references are actually very different in nature.

Around ten per cent of references in the forced breeding sample related to the forced 'marriage' of the interviewees parents. This indicates that the former slaves' parents

Table 8.3. Types of references to forced breeding

Type of reference	Number of interviewees who mentioned issue	Percentage of subsample of 81 interviewees who mentioned forced breeding
Mother was 'breeder' or father was 'stud'	30 (20 mothers and 10 fathers)	37
General awareness of forced breeding	20	24.7
Interviewee forced to marry/used as a stud/used as a breeder	15	18.5
Parents were forced to marry (including one case of grandparents forced to marry)	12	14.8
Eugenics	11	13.6
Master or overseer fathering children for profit	8	9.9
Comparison to livestock	6	7.4
Certain slaves used just for breeding	2	2.5
Resistance/birth control	3	2.5

Note: Some interviewees discussed more than one of the issues noted in this table so numbers in the second column equal more than the total of 81 interviews as a whole which mentioned forced breeding

were made to live together as man and wife in a more permanent arrangement, and while the effects of this were likely to have been extremely distressing for those involved (especially if the enslaved man or woman already had somebody whom they considered to be their 'husband' or 'wife'), such references are not quite so revealing of the commodification process that enslaved people went through, as references to their mothers and fathers as 'breeders' or 'studs'. These types of references make up almost 40 per cent of all references to forced breeding in the sample. Implicitly they demonstrate the interviewee's awareness of their own commodification as a product of a system in which it was deemed acceptable to produce children for the market in the same way that cattle or horses were reared. Manda Cooper, born in 1840 and enslaved in Louisiana told her interviewer that her mother 'never worked in the field. She had twins one time, so the old master taken care of her. She brought him more money having children than she could working in the field'. None of Cooper's siblings had the same father as her. She told her white female interviewer that 'They would pick out the biggest nigger and tell her they wanted a kid by him. She had to stay with him until she did get one'.³⁶ This kind of separation of 'breeders' from 'field slaves' was also mentioned by formerly enslaved woman from Louisiana, Francis Doby, who told Robert McKinney, a black male employed by the Louisiana Writers' Project, 'De master he had two kind if niggahs: one foe de breedin', and de other for de workin' in de fields.'³⁷

Others described their mothers in terms of the number of children that they gave birth to under slavery. Ellen Brownfield and Octavia Fontenette, amongst many

³⁶ M. Cooper interview in *Mother Wit*.

³⁷ Francis Doby interview, *Mother Wit*.

other formerly enslaved people, described their mother as having given birth to an unusually large number of children, as many as sixteen to thirty-three births.³⁸ These children may not all have been fathered by multiple men. Mary Homer of Texas (though born in Tennessee in 1856) told her white male interviewer Sheldon Gauthier that 'My mammy have 15 chilluns dat am bo'n on de Marster's place. Deys not all by de same father'.³⁹ Parilee Daniels, born and raised in Texas was very aware of the abuse of her mother. She told B. E. Davis that the 'Master placed a man with her mother because he wanted another male slave....'he was slave crazy'. Her owner Joseph Daniels was seemingly keen to build up his number of slaves.⁴⁰

Julia Woodrich's narrative is particularly moving. Her master sexually exploited women of different generations in her family in various ways. Woodrich had lived in Lafourche, Louisiana, and described her mother as 'a good breeder' who had 15 children. Not only that but the master Guitlot Baugolis made Woodrich's sister, one of the children 'bred' on the plantation, a sex slave. The master 'would come an' got my sister, make her take a bath an' comb her hair an' take her down in the [slave] quarter all night'⁴¹

While historical works on forced breeding have described the 'rewards' offered for a large number of children, these are significantly, only mentioned in one interview, that of a male slave, Hagar Lewis, born in Smith County, Texas in 1855.⁴² Lewis,

³⁸ WPA-Ex-Slave Narrative Project (at State Library of Louisiana); *TAS SS2, Mississippi Narratives*, Vol. 5, p. 1847.

³⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 1790.

⁴⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4 Part 3, p. 1028.

⁴¹ WPA-Ex-Slave Narrative Project (at State Library of Louisiana).

⁴² Southern agricultural journals from the antebellum period do mention award systems, though rarely with reference to forced breeding. See J. O. Breeden, *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, 1980), pp. 239, 257-265.

told his interviewer, a white male, that '[t]hey paid my mother for every child she had that was big enough to work'. Lewis' mother had sixteen children while enslaved. She was domestic slave and so was working at the same time as she had the sixteen children. Such an extreme physical toll is unlikely to have been undertaken lightly. If Lewis' mother was indeed motivated by financial payment or other material reward, this suggests callousness toward the high number of children that she was birthing. She would have condemned her children to a life of slavery where they would either be sold away from her, or kept on a plantation where the slaves were obviously deprived to the extent that an enslaved woman was desperate enough to undergo such physical and emotional labour in attempt to appease her own situation. Additionally, such frequent pregnancies would indicate that the enslaved mother was not allowed to take care of her own child for extended periods, as any close relationship where the mother was allowed to breastfeed her own child regularly would mean that she was likely to have been subject to lactational amenorrhea.⁴³

Importantly, Michael Tadman has also found that while abolitionists had assumed that the 'importing states' of the Lower South were dominated by natural decrease among slaves, in areas of the South except for a small number of sugar parishes in Louisiana, third-world population patterns of high birth rates and high infant mortality were present.⁴⁴ While slaveowners put measures in place to encourage or force their slaves to reproduce many children, as in the case of Hagar Lewis' mother, infant care was not given close attention. The systematic breeding of slaves

⁴³ Lewis interview, *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 3, p. 4; for a discussion of the slaveholders' knowledge of lactational amenorrhea see M. J. Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

⁴⁴ M. Tadman, 'The Demographic Cost of Sugar', p. 1560.

commodified enslaved people to the extreme, but the intense care and attention needed by enslaved infants was unlike any other type of care required by any other 'commodity'. Slaveholders, despite their keenness for slave reproduction and perhaps because of their unwillingness to recognise the needs of enslaved people as a whole, overlooked the intensity of care needed to nurture a human being from infancy to childhood.

The indifference of slaveowners to the emotional health of enslaved people was demonstrated in 1930s interviews through descriptions of 'studs'. This description signified the slaveowners' indirect sexual abuse of enslaved men and women, but also the frequent denial of a father to the enslaved child. The abolitionist, James Redpath, remarked that a slave he had met on his travels through the South knew little of the world, yet he was privy to one item of information that was 'not generally known by slaves...he did know who his father was!'⁴⁵ Fogel and Engerman wrote that in spite of 'many thousands of hours of research' no evidence for 'stud plantations' have been found.⁴⁶ The cliometricians, however, overlooked smaller-scale breeding enterprises and a long-term investment in the future labour potential of any children produced. Testimony of the formerly enslaved from the 1930s commonly contains the word 'stud' when referring to a man who was used to father a large number of children, who would very often go on to have no relationship with those children and whose offspring amounted to many young enslaved people. Despite the limitations built into the WPA sources, Table 8.3 above shows a significant number of interviewees who mentioned that they were a 'stud', or that

⁴⁵ Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, p. 89.

⁴⁶ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 79.

their father had this role. The interviewees describe the value that was placed on larger men, and the denying of wives and children to smaller men.

Three of the interviewees had been ‘studs’ themselves. Elige Davison who had moved to Texas from a small farm in Richmond, Virginia told B.E. Davis that he had been ‘married once 'fore freedom, with home weddin'. Massa, he bring some more women to see me. He wouldn't let me have jus' one woman. I have 'bout fifteen and I don't know how many chillen. Some over a hundred, I's sho.⁴⁷ Davison had one woman whom he considered to be a ‘wife’, but he was also made to impregnate the other women on the plantation. Moses Jeffries, who had lived close to New Orleans while a slave, undertook a similar role, though his master seemed to allow Jeffries a degree of choice in a potential sexual partner. He told his black male interviewer, Samuel S. Taylor that his master would buy ‘any woman’ that he wanted.⁴⁸ Harre Quarls lived on a small farm in Texas where all the slaves lived in the master’s home. He told interviewer B. E. Davis that he had three ‘wives’ under slavery.⁴⁹ Jephtha Choice, who was born in 1835 and worked as a domestic slave, told Clarence Drake that he was ‘handsome and therefore in demand for breeding’.⁵⁰

Gregory Smithers, in his 2012 work on ‘Slave Breeding’, wrote that ‘Within the prescribed boundaries of southern slave society...some men felt physically empowered by their role as the plantation “stud”’.⁵¹ While the examples above demonstrate that the elderly former slaves had a pride in the physical prowess of

⁴⁷ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 298.

⁴⁸ *TAS SS2*, Arkansas Narratives, Vol. 6, p. 1939

⁴⁹ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 3, p. 222.

⁵⁰ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 1, p. 217.

⁵¹ Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, p. 107.

their younger selves, this does not necessarily indicate pride or enjoyment in having been used as a ‘stud’, where they would be forced to rape an enslaved woman and were unlikely to have had any meaningful relationship with the children produced. Thomas Foster has written that ‘[c]ontinuing to overlook the victimization of men in such sexual assaults not only denies the full extent of that sexual abuse but also continues dangerously to draw on long-standing stereotypes that position black men as hypersexual’. Foster discussed a case in which an enslaved man was forced to rape a free woman of colour at gunpoint for the enjoyment of his master, in a case such as this, the black man would have had to deal with the moral (and legal) consequences, but he also had his manhood usurped’.⁵² Slavery has been described as a process of emasculation because of the sheer scale of the sexual abuse of enslaved women, enslaved men could not be ‘men’ because they were unable to protect their women, but in fact enslaved men had little control over their own sexuality or sexual potential.⁵³

While gender shaped the experience of enslaved women in what bell hooks described a ‘sexist-racist oppression’, enslaved men who forced enslaved women to have sex under the orders of the master were similarly victims of a system in which they were powerless.⁵⁴ Both Thomas Foster and Emily West describe a case in the Texas WPA collection, also referred to in the opening pages of the present chapter, in which Rose Williams was forced to fight off the advances of ‘Rufus’ an enslaved man with whom the master wanted her to breed children. Rose described Rufus as a ‘bully’, and employed a number of methods to discourage his advances, including

⁵² Foster, ‘The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery’, pp. 445, 454.

⁵³ See D. Gray White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman*, p. 146; D. Ramey Berry. *Swing the Sickle*, p. 81

⁵⁴ hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman?*, p.18.

giving him a 'shove' and hitting him over the head with a poker. Rufus did not fight back but told her that 'dey's gwine larn you somethin''. While Rufus' unwanted advances certainly come under the category of attempted rape, the issue is complicated by the external forces working on Rufus' behaviour. Rufus' warning to Rose relating to her punishment would indicate that he had received a similar threat.⁵⁵

Evidence shows that enslaved men and women fought for control over their own bodies in a number of ways, Sergio Lussana, for example, described the reclamation of the male enslaved body through organised and unorganised fights on plantations. The choice of entering into one of these fight, as well as the choice made to potentially damage what the master saw as the capital value of body, underscored a sense of control for the enslaved men over their physical selves.⁵⁶ The objectification of enslaved men through the focus on their ability to procreate without allowing opportunity to take on a paternal role is highly likely to have had a severe effect on the mental health of enslaved men.

This is especially true in light of evidence from the 1930s interviews relating to the paternal detachment when the former slaves had been fathered by a 'stud', and what we know about the importance placed on fatherhood by enslaved men from the work of Herbert Gutman and Emily West.⁵⁷ Additionally, enslaved men, as can be seen through the 1930s interviews, were acutely aware of the trauma of the sexual abuse

⁵⁵ Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men', p. 457, West, *Chains of Love*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ S. Lussana, 'To See Who Was Best on the Plantation: Enslaved Fighting Contests and Masculinity in the Antebellum Plantation South', *Journal of Southern History* Vol. 76, No. 4 (2010), pp. 901-922.

⁵⁷ H. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (Oxford, 1976); West, *Chains of Love*, esp. pp. 43-79.

of enslaved women. By forcibly impregnating the enslaved women, they themselves were simultaneously rapists and secondary victims of rape.

Paternal detachment was also described by Aunt Pinkie Kelly who had been a slave in Brasseria County, Texas. She told her interviewer,

Yes I don't know so much 'bout my papa. I know his name was Dan, but folks called him 'Good-cheer,' an' he druv oxen, an' one day when I was little they show me him an' tell me he's my papa, an' so I guess he was. But I can't tell much 'bout him 'cayse chillen then didn't know their papas like chillen do now.⁵⁸

Similarly, Rosa L. Pollard, born in Ohio, told B. E. Davis that 'half of us young negroes didn't know who our fathers was. They did not allow us to become attached to our mothers and fathers'.⁵⁹ Jim Johnson, mentioned previously, was curious about his father. He told Clarence Drake, a white man, that his mother and father were 'put together', he didn't get the opportunity to meet his father, as his father had simply been used as a 'stud'. His mother was a domestic slave and her owners sexually interfered in her reproduction to the extent that they arranged for her to breed with an enslaved man belonging to some neighbours.⁶⁰

Another example can be found in the narrative of Jacob Branch who had lived in Louisiana during slavery. He referred to his father as a 'breeder'. He told Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey that

⁵⁸ *TAS*, Vol. 4, Part 2, p. 253.

⁵⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, p. 3117.

⁶⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 2014.

De Marster, he tell who can git mai'ied, an' who can't. Him select de po'tly an p'lific womens, an de' po'tly man, an' use sich fo' de breeder an' de father ob de womens chilluns. De womens dat am selected am not 'lowed to marry. De chilluns dat am bo'n dat way don' know any father. De womens have nothing to says 'bout de arrangement. If she am po'tly an' well formed, deys fo'rcd her wid de breeder. My mammy had de sperience.

Jacob Branch was sold when just three years old to another slave-owner in Louisiana, so that his master quickly saw a financial benefit from his small-scale breeding programme.⁶¹ Zeno John, also formerly enslaved in Louisiana, told Fred Dibble that his parents had been 'put together'. He recalled,

when de marsters see a good big nigger sometime dey buy him for a breeder. My daddy was much of a man, yessir. My mother was a good size woman. She warn't so tall like my daddy, but she mo' sorter fat. Befo' he die he say he had sebenty chillen, gran' chillen and great grand-chillen.⁶²

Some enslaved men were reported to have had so many children that it would have been impossible for them to undertake a paternal role. Lewis Jones of Fayette County, Texas told Sheldon Gauthier that his father was a 'breeder'. Gauthier recorded,

How many brudders an' sistahs I's have? Lawd a mighty! Now, I's will tell yous 'cause yous ask an' dis nigger gives de facts as 'tis. Dat am w'at yous wants, 'taint it?Now dere am my mammy. My pappy have 12 chilluns by her an' 12 by Mary...

Jones continued that his father had 50 children on the slaveholding by five women.⁶³

⁶¹*TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 405.

⁶² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1948.

⁶³ *TAS* Vol. 4, Part 2 p. 237.

Other former slaves described the specificities of the system put in place by the master for the ‘stud’ to impregnate enslaved women. Mary Ann John, who had lived in Opelousas, Louisiana, while enslaved told her interviewer that the women were sent to a man on the plantation to be impregnated. She told her interviewer that her master: ‘sho did have some slaves’.⁶⁴ Sam Meredith Mason who had lived as an enslaved person in Austin, Texas, reported that: ‘[a] good, well-built man was hired out among a bunch of wimmen so as to produce good, healthy chillun’.⁶⁵ George Austin, another person who had been formerly enslaved in Texas, reported that his father was a stud. He was used ‘wid de diffe'nt womens on de place, den am hired out to de diffe'nt plantations 'roundabout 'cause him such a fine big nigger an' bound to build up Marster's slave stock of niggers’.⁶⁶ Sam Jones Washington of Texas described his father as a ‘travellin nigger’ too. His master’s own plantation was small, and Jones was hired out as a ‘stud’.⁶⁷ Julia Malone of Texas was fathered by a man who was used to ‘father to sev'ral womens on de place. He was a big man an' my mammy was a big woman. I am not de runt’.⁶⁸ The process of ‘hiring out’ men among different plantations in order that they would impregnate enslaved women is a cruel modification of the cross-plantation marriage system described by Emily West. While West described the social distance created between owners and enslaved people through the practice of ‘abroad’ marriage, the exchange of enslaved people in the short term for the purpose of reproduction underscored their lack of autonomy over their own bodies in any given space.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Project Collection, Special Collections, State Library of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

⁶⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, p. 2595.

⁶⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 104.

⁶⁷ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 138.

⁶⁸ *TAS*, Vol.5, Part 3, p. 43.

⁶⁹ West, *Chains of Love*, pp. 157-59.

There is a close correlation between the accounts of those who had a more general awareness of forced breeding; and those who personally had a forced marriage, had been used as a 'breeder' or 'stud', or who described themselves as a product of a forced sexual relationship between their parents. This indicates that there was a significant tradition within the black community of the discussion of these abuses.

Testimony from the 1930s demonstrates the belief that the master felt assured of his power over the enslaved person to the same extent that he did with his livestock.

Mia Bay has written that 'African Americans confronted racial slavery as an institution that blurred the line between man and beast'; formerly enslaved people completely rejected any paternalistic ideology by asserting that their status lay completely outside of the familial realm, and was more similar to the relationship between that of slave-owners and their domestic animals.⁷⁰ This is especially clear from the WPA sample. Josephine Howard of Texas told her interviewer that her parents were put together 'jes' like dey is horses or cattle'.⁷¹ Mary Young of Texas linked enslaved people to cattle in order to describe the paternal detachment that arose from this practice, comparing young enslaved people to cattle too: '[w]e then were just like cattle are now. We never hardly knew who our father were'.⁷²

A significant number of former slaves made this same link between forced breeding and paternal detachment, Millie Williams, born in 1851 in Texas, told her interviewer that 'dey jus' put 'em together lak dey do cattle an' hoss's. Shuck's,

⁷⁰ M. Bay, *White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 119.

⁷¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part. 4, p. 1806.

⁷² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 10, Part. 9, p. 4314.

nobody know's who der father waz.⁷³ Others described the children raised on the slaveholding unit as young livestock. Andy Williams of Texas, born in 1859, told Mrs Ada Davis, a white woman that the white folks only cared about raising 'plenty ob little colts, calves an' pickaninies'.⁷⁴

James Green who had lived in Texas during slavery described a whole range of abuses that centred on 'forced breeding' practices. Green told his interviewer that his master

breeds de niggers as quick as he can, like cattle cause dat means money for him. He chooses de wife for every man on de place. No one had no say as to who he was goin' to get for a wife. All de weddin' ceremony we had was with Pinchback's finger pointin' out who was whos' wife. If a woman wern't a good breeder she had to do work with de men, but Pinchback tried to get rid of women who didn't have chillen. He would sell her and tell de man who bought her dat she was all right to own' 'But de ngger husbands weren't the only ones dat keep up havin' chillen. De mosters and the drivers takes all de nigger girls day want. One slave had four chillen right after the other with a white moster. Their chillen was brown, but one of 'em was white as you is. But dey was all slaves just de same, and de niggers dat had chillen with de white men didn't get treated no better. She got no more away work dan de rest of 'em.

The master and the overseer forced the enslaved people to breed, as well as raped the enslaved people themselves. This was in order to produce more enslaved people to

⁷³ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 166.

⁷⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 10, Part 9, p.4065.

work on the large plantation. Five interviewees in the overall sample specifically mentioned the overseer on their plantation producing offspring with the enslaved women because they were valuable. Fred Brown of Louisiana told his interviewer that the overseer would father children with healthy women, though Jessie Pauls' father, who was a Native American overseer, had 'big trouble' with the master when Pauls was born as 'Marster Sneed want the niggers to mate an' not daddy wid de niggers'.⁷⁵ These observations are revealing of the machinations of a system that fused profit-maximisation with, not just the labour of human-beings, but calculations of sexual potential and the ability to convert human flesh into capital.

Significant too is James Green's revelation that if a woman did not have children then she was forced to do work with the men, ungendered by her inability to produce children for the master. Deborah Gray White wrote that infertile women could be expected to be treated like 'barren sows', passed from one unsuspecting buyer to another.⁷⁶ This terminology employed by White again indicates how the comparison of enslaved people to livestock was so common that it has entered not just the vocabulary of the former slaves but the historian too.

Green told his interviewer that if a woman could not have children then the master would 'sell her and tell de man who baught her dat she was all right to own'. Ariela Gross discussed antebellum court cases relating to slave sales and warranties. She wrote that few buyers of enslaved women went to court to complain that enslaved women were poor 'breeders', though concern for pregnancy and reproductive health ran very high.⁷⁷ In Green's case, the master John Pinchback, relied on the enslaved

⁷⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol.2, Part 1, p. 464; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8 Part 7, p. 3031.

⁷⁶ White, *Aren't I a Woman*, p. 101.

⁷⁷ Gross, *Southern Character*, pp. 128-9.

women not to report her own condition. While Walter Johnson, in particular described the slave owners' pride in his supposed ability to 'read' the enslaved person's body, gynaecological issues were almost always invisible.⁷⁸ One formerly enslaved man, Jordan Smith, who was sold from Georgia to a plantation in Texas, described a scene at a slave market where the slavebuyer would try to calculate the breeding potential of a woman from her physical strength:

[a] buyer would walk up between the two rows and grab a woman and try to throw her down, and feel of her to see how she was put up. If she was pretty strong, he would say to the trader, 'Is she a good breeder?' 'How much is she worth?' If the girl was 18 or 19 years old and put up good she was worth about \$1,500. Then the buyer'd pick out a strong, young Nigger boy 'bout the same age and buy him. When he got them home he say to them, 'I want you two to stay together. I want young niggers'. He wouldn't take no 'mount of money for that kind.⁷⁹

The master's calculation of the value of enslaved people through their implementation of forced breeding would have reinforced, to the enslaved person, their status as a commodity. This also ensured that enslaved people were aware that they could be sold at any time. The enslaved people on the same unit as interviewee Peter Mitchell lived under a constant threat. Mitchell remembered that his master 'kep' twenty-five houses wid fam'lies. Marster kep' jes' 'nuf to wuk de lan' an' sol' de res', like sellin hosses.⁸⁰ In this case any birth could equal a sale as soon as soon as

⁷⁸ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 135-161.

⁷⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3637.

⁸⁰ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 3, p. 114.

the enslaved child reached an age at which they could perform productive labour.

WPA interviewee Chris Franklin believed that the whole white family were complicit in the breeding of slaves for the market, or to work on the slaveholding unit. Chapter Five referred to white masters who sold their enslaved offspring. Even if the primary motive in the rape was not economic, the sale of the resulting children cannot have failed to have created a link between rape and profitability in the slaveholders mind. Chris Franklin who had lived his enslaved life in Louisiana told Fred Dibble of Texas that ‘Dey was lots of places whar de young marsters have heirs by darkey gals. Dey sell ‘em jes’ like de other slaves. Dat was pretty common. It seem like de white women didn’t mind dat. Dey didn’t object ‘cause dat mean more slaves.’⁸¹

This section has discussed the reframing of men and women by their reproductive potential through descriptions of ‘breeders’, and ‘studs’. The gendering of enslaved people based on reproductive potential meant that when men or women were unable to ‘breed’ sufficiently, they had their gender revoked. On top of the sexual abuse inherent in forced breeding was a severe emotional abuse that denied enslaved people a right to a family, or interrupted family life and often enforced an alienation of fathers from their children.

ii. Selective breeding, forced marriage and forced separation

The previous chapter explored the mental torment experienced by Louisa Picquet when she thought about the moral implications relating to her status as a sex slave.

⁸¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 4, Part. 3, p. 1402.

She described one time when she would rather have ‘died’ than have a sexual relationship with a man who was not her husband.⁸² Herbert Gutman described the enslaved family as ‘the basic unit of social organisation that owners encouraged ‘because it was in their economic advantage to do so’.⁸³ While this was true, former slaves did not always report having lived on nuclear family units. Mattie Williams told Alfred E. Menn in Texas that ‘de day freedom rung out, our pappy went one way, and our mammy went another way. In a way, pappy had two wimmin durin’ slavery. It seemed lak dat when one woman had a child, den de other'n would have a child. I want to tell yo' the plain facts’.⁸⁴

Despite this, many formerly enslaved people in the 1930s did report that they, or more commonly, their mother had a long-term ‘marriage’ with an enslaved man. In these cases, the enslaved person was sometimes ‘gifted’ to another. The language of property and possession is employed by Betty Simmons who had lived in Texas under slavery. She told Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey that ‘I git marry in slav'ry time. I marry George Fortescue, one of the marster' niggers. De ol' marster he jes' give me to him’.⁸⁵ Simmons lived and worked in a small store belonging to her master. Fannie Norman’s parents also lived on a small slaveholding unit, and her mother was forced to live with her father. Norman reported that she was born a few months after her mother was purchased, ‘so youse see how ‘twas wid my family’.⁸⁶

⁸² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 19.

⁸³ Gutman, *Reckoning with Slavery*, p. 12.

⁸⁴ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 10, Part 9, p. 4102.

⁸⁵ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 19.

⁸⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, p. 2927.

Masters did not hesitate to separate couples either. This can be seen in the interviews carried out by Octavia V. Rogers Albert in the 1870s. Albert asked Stephen Jordan:

"Did he give you one [a wife], too, Uncle Stephen?" "Why, yes, child, he gave me mine, too." "What did you say?" "Well, what could I say, but take her and go along? But I tell you, child, there was great sorrow on the place that day. Many of us had wives or husbands on neighboring plantations; I myself had my wife on another plantation. The woman my master gave me had a husband on another plantation. Everything was mixed up. My other wife had two children for me, but the woman master gave me had no children. We were put in the same cabin, but both of us cried, me for my old wife and she for her old husband. As I could read and write I used to write out passes for myself, so I could go and see my old wife; and I wrote passes for the other men on the place, so they could go and see their wives that lived off the place."⁸⁷

The forced marriage caused emotional torment, Jordan was forced to have a sexual relationship with the woman 'given' to him by the master but would still go to see the woman whom he considered to be his wife. He and his 'new wife', however, were able to offer each other emotional support which could have been an important way of coping with the reality of their situation (See Conclusion for further discussion).

Situations like the one described by Stephen Jordan could have consequences for the children born of such relationships. Chapter Five described children born of rape as secondary victims. The same could be said of the children born of a different kind of

⁸⁷ In Albert (ed.), *The House of Bondage*, pp.107-8.

forced sex, an indirect rape of both the child's mother and father by the master.

Polly Shine of Louisiana remembered that her parents were older when they were 'put together' and did not want a child. Exhausted from their work in the field her parents had little time for Polly who described her young life as 'lonely'.⁸⁸ The reproductive life cycle of Polly's parents had been interrupted and Polly's childhood suffered as a result.

Fannie Tippin described the ease with which masters and mistresses would put the enslaved together, '[m]os' times masters and misses would jus' pick out some man fo' a woman an' say 'Dis yo' man', an' say to the man 'Dis yo' woman'.⁸⁹ But if the master had the power to put a slave couple together, he would also have the power to separate them. Hannah Jameson, who had lived in Texas during slavery, reported that her father was sold and her mother was simply 'given' another husband and William Matthews, who had been a slave in Louisiana, told his interviewer that 'if an unhealthy buck take up with a portly gal, the white folks sep'rate them'.⁹⁰

In the quotation above, Matthews introduces the theme of selective breeding of enslaved offspring. J. W. Terrill, born in 1838, described a more sinister form of this whereby the master would 'put the woman to bed with this Negro man and then the other one to find out which one would be suited together the best'.⁹¹ Willie Williams, also from Louisiana, recalled that some slaves were refused marriage.

[y]ous see, de marster am anxious fo' to raise good big niggers, de kin' dat am able to do lots ob' work, an' sell fo' a heap ob' money of hims wants to

⁸⁸ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3511; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3407.

⁸⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3878.

⁹⁰ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 6, Part 5, p. 1933; *TAS SS2*, Vol. 7, Part 6, p. 2610.

⁹¹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 9, Part 8, p. 3772.

sell. Hims have ‘bout ten wenches dat hims not ‘lows to gits mai’ied. Deys am big st’ong womens dat de doctah zamins fo’ de health. Den de marster selects de big nigger an’ de doctah zamines him, too. Dat nigger do no w’ok, but watch dem womens, an’ he am de husban’ fo’ dem all. De Marster whi was a raisin’ some fine niggers.⁹²

Williams described the ‘raising’ of a certain type of slave for the domestic slave trade. The master in this case subjected the women to what must have been a depressing and emotionally devastating cycle of pregnancy, motherhood and separation from children.

iii. Resistance

Louisa Sidney Martin of Louisiana gave an insight into the psychological trauma that resulted from the intrusions into the sexual lives of slaves. She told Octave Lilly, a black interviewer from the Dillard Writers’ Project, that ‘[i]f a man wanted yo, whether you wanted him or not, you better be foun in his house in de morning. You know dat was dirty, you gotta have a man whether you want him or not.’⁹³ The enslaved workforce, however, never lost the desire to control their own reproductive destiny and to limit the slaveholder’s power through various measures. It is this that caused Adrienne D. Davis to write that ‘the enslaved workforce may have been one of the first in the US to mount active community resistance to widespread sexual harassment’.⁹⁴

⁹² *TAS SS2*, Vol. 10, Part 9, p. 4154; *TAS SS2*, Vol.10, Part 9, p. 4135.

⁹³ Dillard Project (at UNO)

⁹⁴ Davies, ‘Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment’, p. 14.

If forced breeding is viewed as one element in a range of sexually abusive practices that were used to exert social as well as sexual control over the slave community, the practice reinforced that no part of the enslaved woman's body was her own. But, as has been a constant theme in the testimony of the formerly enslaved throughout this thesis, enslaved women did value their own sexuality – enough to fight for it if needed. Some slave women such as Ellen Rogers of Texas told Fred Dibble and Bernice Grey that

[d]ey whip me once to bre'k me up from lovin' a man. Ol' man Solomon he whip me. Dey already hab anuder man pick out for me. I jes' wouldn' eben look at dat uder man no matter how much dey whip and slash so at las' dey 'low me had my way for once and I git de man I want. Dat was Rogers. I allus was smart.⁹⁵

There is a clear tragedy in Rogers' description of herself as 'smart' for taking a whipping that was aimed to coerce her into sexual submission. Some women chose another less visible resistance.

Contraception and abortive practices were sometimes referred to in 1930s interviews as something used to resist slaveholder power. A number of former slaves mentioned that women would chew cotton root, and indicated that enslaved women were well aware of the profit that their offspring would bring to the master and therefore actively withdrew their 'reproductive capital'. The former slaves also mention the secrecy surrounding the cotton root. William Coleman told the interviewer:

⁹⁵ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 8, Part 7, p. 3359.

Why son, all our negro slave women they really got wise and like to have depopulated the negro race in this old south by chewing cotton root...it was a long time before master found out what they were doing. When he did he would almost kill a negro woman if he caught her chewing cotton-root⁹⁶

Other former slaves such as Anna Lee revealed that they had ‘done quit breeding’ before the end of slavery in order to ‘depopulate’ the country of the ‘Negro race’.⁹⁷

Historian Richard Follet wrote that the slaveholder’s designation of the bondswoman’s body as a vehicle for reproduction ‘encapsulated the relations of subordination and patriarchal hierarchy that planters strove to impose upon their female slaves’. Enslaved women ‘not only understood that their childbearing capacity was seen in terms of producing capital, but they were sufficiently opposed to this function to actually avoid conception’.⁹⁸ They resisted slave breeding by taking control of their reproductive capacity. Mary Gaffney of Texas explained that she deliberately ‘cheated’ master by having no children during slavery;

I just hated the man I married but it was what Maser said do. When he came to Texas he took up big lots of land and he was going to get rich. He put another negro man with my mother, then he put one with me. I would not let that negro touch me and he told Maser and Maser gave me a real good whipping, so that night I let that negro have his way. Maser was going to raise him a lot more slaves, but still I cheated Maser, I never did have any slaves to grow and Maser he wondered what was the matter. I tell you son, I kept cotton roots and chewed them all the time but I was careful not to let

⁹⁶ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 864.

⁹⁷ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 3, Part 2, p. 864.

⁹⁸ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, p. 66.

Maser know or catch me, so I never did have any children while I was a slave.⁹⁹

After freedom Mary Gaffney had five children. References to contraception are often coupled with the idea of ‘cheating’ master, demonstrating that contraception was a tool of resistance under a system where the female slave did not have the innate right of control of her own body.

As the enslaved family was such a powerful source of strength for enslaved people, the tussle between firstly, the slave’s need for the supportive and loving family that Louisa Picquet in the previous chapter held so dearly, and secondly, the hatred of enslavement and the awareness that they were perpetuating the institution through their reproduction, must have been horrific. The case of Margaret Garner, whose experience Toni Morrison used as the basis for the novel *Beloved*, and who attempted to murder her children rather than allow them to live a life subjected to cruelty under slavery, demonstrates the immense psychological trauma that the enslaved woman faced.¹⁰⁰ Few enslaved people mentioned rewards for ‘breeding’ women. Common though were descriptions of violence against enslaved people who refused a sexual partner, or the hatred and resistance of ‘breeding’ practices.

⁹⁹ *TAS SS2*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 1441.

¹⁰⁰ See A. Reyes, ‘Rereading a Nineteenth-Century Fugitive Slave Incident: From Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* to Margaret Garner’s Dearly Beloved’, *Annals of Scholarship*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1990), pp. 465-86; and M. E. Frederickson & D. M. Walters (eds.), *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana, 2013).

Conclusion: Sexual exploitation and the trauma of forced breeding

John Sneed who had been enslaved in Texas, told a story that demonstrates, in an extreme way, the cultural trauma of familial detachment experienced by the slave community through the separation of the enslaved family by the domestic slave trade. Sneed remembered that ‘[o]n two plantations near ours, dere was two boys sold from dere mothers an' when dese boys got grown dey was brought back an' married to dere own mothers, De women knowed de men by scars dat got on dem when dey was babies.’¹⁰¹ This quotation, like many included in this chapter, specifically links forced breeding with the trauma of the domestic slave trade

Michael Tadman has argued that the slave trade, or the threat of sale undermined any sense of a benevolent paternalistic bond between master and slave.¹⁰² Walter Johnson built on this and described the slaveholders’ recognition that the reproduction of their social position depended on the biological reproduction of the people they owned. He mentioned a ‘forcible joining of families’ in which the ‘fortunes of the white line depended on the furtherance of the black’. The capital potential in the conversion of a ‘crop of slaves’, according to Johnson is what has been espoused by the ‘gullible’ as evidence of paternalism.¹⁰³ Propagandist supporters of slavery were indeed keen to hide the use of the domestic slave trade and insisted that slaves were seldom sold except in cases of debt or crime. James Redpath, an antislavery writer in the late 1850s, wrote that even if this were true, ‘debts are so common among the unthrifty Southrons, that this cause alone must

¹⁰¹ *TAS*, Vol. 5, Part 4, p. 47.

¹⁰² Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*, p. xxx.

¹⁰³ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, p. 194.

separate hundreds of families each year'.¹⁰⁴ Redpath thus equated the luxurious lifestyles of Southern families with their commodification of human beings.

While the large population of 'mulatto' children was often used (in the antebellum period) as evidence of the rape of enslaved women by their white masters, sexual abuse of women through forced sex with black men was not quite so visible. In fact, the natural reproduction of the enslaved community on any given slaveholding could have been used to demonstrate the contentedness of enslaved people to outsiders.

Charles Lyell, a Scottish geologist travelling the South, asked a woman

whether she was the slave of a family of our acquaintance. She replied merrily 'Yes, I belong to them, and they belong to me'. She was, in fact, born and brought up on the estate.¹⁰⁵

The close bond between the slaveholding family and those born on the estate are especially referred to in relation to black children whom Lyell wrote were 'brought up daily before the windows of the planter's house and fed in sight of the family'. Lyell spent little time on any one plantation and his encounters with the slaves were those which were likely to have been engineered by the slaveowners. Lyell described the '[h]ome born feelings' perceived to have developed among those slaves who lived in close proximity to the slave owners. He was also impressed by the sense of duty felt by slaveholders towards their slaves and felt admiration for any

¹⁰⁴ Redpath, *The Roving Editor*, p. 227.

¹⁰⁵ Lyell, *Travels in North America*, Vol.I, p. 169. Travel accounts of the southern states clearly demonstrate the desire of slaveholders to present themselves as benevolent paternalists. The private letters of a young Liverpool merchant, William Rathbone VI, start by expressing anti-slavery sentiments to his parents. After being entertained and influenced by his slaveholding hosts, however, he later wrote to his mother that all the slaves he had seen so far all seemed 'contented and healthy'. W. Rathbone to E. Rathbone, 1 June 1842, Sidney Jones Library, University of Liverpool.

slaveholder who was actively working towards the amelioration of the condition of his slaves.¹⁰⁶

This projected image of benevolent paternalism was part of slaveowners' self-image too. Advice given in agricultural journals from the antebellum period often combine seemingly benevolent advice on how to ensure the wellbeing of enslaved children, with casual remarks on future economic gain. One planter from Virginia wrote an article in which he advised other planters of the importance of the impression that enslaved children made on outsiders. He noted '[a] lot of ragged little negroes always gives a bad impression to strangers....Talk to them, take notice of them, it soon gives them confidence and adds greatly to their value'.¹⁰⁷ Any 'benevolence' shown was ultimately self-serving for the masters; it improved their self-image, projected an image of benevolent slaveholding onto visitors, and ultimately increased profits. Enslaved children in the United States seemed to be aware of this: evidence of the 'home born feelings' described by Lyell is very rare in the testimony of former enslaved people.

Orlando Patterson described slavery as 'social death', a 'permanent violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonoured persons', though the testimony of the enslaved in the United States does not fit in with this definition. Enslaved people in the United States closely fostered ties of family, kinship and community, even when the social conditions put in place by the master aimed to bring the enslaved child into the world as a commodity unentitled to familial

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁷ Breeden, *Advice Among Masters*, p. 284.

attachment. Enslaved people were nevertheless acutely aware of the lack of respect the master had for enslaved families, and that they could be put ‘in his pocket’, as Louisa Picquet expressed.¹⁰⁸

This chapter has pointed to a higher rate of slave breeding than any other previous study. It demonstrates that forced breeding was an important issue not just for slaves in the Upper South, but also for those in the Lower South. The perpetuation of slavery rested on the continued natural increase of the enslaved population, so forced breeding was unrelated to physical location. The forced breeding of slaves defined enslaved people by their gender but was based exclusively in terms of their reproductive capacity: gender and any right to a family were revoked for those who were unable to reproduce. Enslaved children were prematurely sexualised through calculations of their future reproductive potential, but also psychologically affected by knowing the mechanisms of forced breeding from an early age. Testimony in this chapter has shown too that it was not just the slaveholding male who was interested in the forced breeding of slaves: slaveholding women were sometimes involved too, either by arranging marriages or on occasion forcing enslaved women to have a child at the same time as her in order that the enslaved woman could act as a wet nurse. Slaveholding people were simply very aware of the profit to be gained from the reproductive capacity of the enslaved person, and forced breeding was a natural part of a system of slavery that was aimed at gaining maximum profit out of human beings that had been reduced to commodity status. The commodity status can be clearly seen in the references to the ‘making’ of slaves by the master in the opening

¹⁰⁸ O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 13; Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p.19.

section of this chapter. All the sexual issues mentioned in the slave interviews from rape, slave breeding, to enslaved concubines of course have the potential to increase the master's wealth in enslaved persons, and slave breeding was just one offence in a sequence of sexual interferences into the lives of the enslaved.

Conclusion

This thesis has discovered that sexual violence was endemic in the US South: it pervaded the everyday lives of enslaved people under a system in which a range of sexual abuses had become legitimised and institutionalised. The abuse was intergenerational in nature for both the abusers and the abused; and it was through this intergenerational cycle that abuse became naturalised for white abusers, and that the black community learned to prepare, adapt, and support the huge number of victims who suffered this abuse and all of its enduring consequences. I have argued that this formed a 'culture of abuse', where the abuse of enslaved women was unquestioned and culturally reproduced in the South.

There are several significant features of this thesis. The quantitative framework has allowed me to get closer to an accurate calculation of the scale of sexual abuse of enslaved women. The large body of enslaved testimony analysed for this study has indicated a higher level of sexual interference into the lives of enslaved people than any other previous work. This quantitative element of the project has allowed me to establish the scale of various abuses, but also to establish which conditions, social spaces and situations were most conducive to the sexual abuse of women. This quantitative work, combined with a close reading of the texts of interviews and narratives, has made it possible to get closer to understanding the nature of this abuse and to understanding the experiences of enslaved women who lived under the threat of a whole spectrum of sexual abuses in their everyday lives. This source base has also allowed me to gain an understanding of white slaveholder society and the extent to which abuse was normalised and legitimised among slaveholding people; old and

young, male and female. A further feature of this thesis is the evidence provided for analysing the coping strategies put in place by the enslaved community.

Scale and nature of abuse

Toni Morrison, who wrote the novel *Beloved*, described her intentions to remove the veil that the formerly enslaved had put over ‘proceedings too terrible to relate’.¹

Testimony of sexual violence is, indeed, a problematic area. In cases of rape there will always exist, amongst abusers and the abused, a certain degree of concealment.

This thesis, however, has demonstrated that there has always been a space within the black community for discussing the sexual abuse of women under slavery. A feature of black testimony of slavery in the United States, however, is that it has so often been either aimed at a white audience or collected by white interviewers or academics.

In response to the problem of white-filtered evidence, this study has made significant methodological advances. The methodology detailed in Part One of this thesis has allowed a more accurate calculation of the scale of sexual abuse than ever before.

This methodology looks specifically at factors that could cause an undercount or overcount of abuse in 1930s ex-slave interview testimony. By looking closely at the ages of interviewees who discussed some form of abuse, as well as at the level of detail that they gave, it became clear that interviewees who had been older at emancipation were far more likely to mention some form of abuse. When they did,

¹ T. Morrison, ‘The Site of Memory’, in W. Zinsser (ed.), *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir* (Boston, 1987), pp. 101-124.

their comments gave far more information on the woman and the situation involved. The race of the interviewer was also significant. Abuse was mentioned far more often in interviews conducted by black males (there were few black female interviewers in the sample), and the information that the black male interviewer recorded was far more revealing of the real impact of the abuse on the enslaved community.

Abuse was rarely mentioned in interviews collected by white females, but certain white males, this study has found, almost certainly employed a degree of directed questioning on certain sexual issues, forced breeding for example. Specific issues would show up far more commonly in the samples of interviews conducted by these interviewers than could be explained merely through sampling bias. Sexual issues were not on the list of questions that the WPA interviewers were given, so it is worth noting, therefore, how much opens up when there was an interviewer who was closely interested in finding out about issues that are central to any given study. If issues that specifically related to sexual abuse had been on the list of questions given to all interviewers, the scale of abuse revealed in the testimony of formerly enslaved people would have been much higher.

The 1930s interviews as a source group present substantial methodological and interpretative challenges, yet the evidence from these interviews has led to a quantitative core around which this study has been shaped. While numbers on many issues in the sample have been small, the combination of the evidence from the interviews and the earlier mainly nineteenth-century narratives fit together to give a

basis for a better understanding of the experience of the enslaved. There was a high percentage chance of an enslaved person having a white father, and the reframing of references to white fathers as direct evidence of rape reveals the extreme risk of rape faced by all enslaved women. Proximity was a major risk factor for enslaved women, with women on small plantations and domestics facing the highest risk of some kind of sexual exploitation or interference by the white master.

Forced breeding was endemic in the system, and the majority of references to 'slave breeding' or 'forced breeding' refer to the master using males as 'studs' or pairing slaves on the plantation. This meant that a large number of enslaved men underwent some form of sexual exploitation, forced to have sex in order to increase the workforce for the master's financial gain. The reproductive capacity of enslaved men was clearly exploited in a ruthless fashion alongside that of enslaved women.

This project broadly frames sexual violence against enslaved women in terms of a continuum of often-overlapping forms of abuse. Abuse rarely fits into a discrete category: enslaved women who were held in sexual slavery could also be described as long-term victims of rape; and while enslaved women were raped by white men, they often experienced reproductive exploitation concurrently as the white man could benefit financially from the offspring born of his rape. Though this study has focused on the rape of enslaved women by white men, enslaved men were also victims of sexual abuse in cases of forced breeding that have been discussed. All figures obtained from this sample indicate higher levels of abuse than other studies, and additionally, figures listed are only low baseline figures. Especially after taking

the skew factors into account, the results listed in this thesis suggest the commonplace nature of sexual interference in the lives of enslaved people.

A culture of abuse

Under slavery, white enslavers calculated the sexual potential of young children from an early age. In the slave market, white male buyers assessed young light-skinned girls for signs of their future desirability. Similarly, white buyers made long-term calculations of profit from the future reproductive potential of young girls (a finding that adds to recent debates on capitalism and slavery). Pre-teenage females purchased for domestic work frequently became victims of abuse through their proximity to the master. Intergenerational patterns of abuse in the evidence presented in this study meant that the susceptibility of a young child for abuse was often determined from birth. Chapter Four shows that those who had a closer relationship to the white master, either as domestic slaves, or who lived on a smaller slaveholding unit, were most at risk of sexual abuse. Children born of the rape of mothers who worked as domestics were also highly likely to become domestic slaves themselves, and this continued the abusive cycle.

Notions of ‘consent’ and ‘grooming’ were also explored in Chapter Five, and these apply to both enslaved children and older enslaved women. ‘Consent’ is not a term that can be used when referring to enslaved people, especially considering what is known about the abusive and coercive practices linked to sexual abuse. Consent is based on a free and informed choice, without fear of repercussions (such as violent or

emotional punishment), and therefore the conditions simply did not exist whereby an enslaved woman, or girl, could meaningfully consent. There is also the strong possibility that enslaved women and children were often 'groomed' by the master. While a complete lack of legal and social recourse for enslaved victims of sexual abuse meant that a white-male abuser did not need to undertake a process of grooming future victims, some perhaps did in order to maintain their own self-image of benevolent slaveholding.

Owing to the conditions of a culture in which sexual abuse was normalised, abuse could exist openly amongst the white family, in particular white male relations. This study contains examples of white fathers who encouraged their sons to abuse enslaved women, men who lent money to siblings in order to purchase women for sex, and other strong clues that slaveholders were aware of family members who had sexually abused their enslaved women. White children were also aware of abuse on their slaveholdings through the presence of light-skinned enslaved children, especially when these children shared the same house. The jealousy and rage of their white slaveholding mothers could have amplified this situation. The testimony of the formerly enslaved described plantation mistresses as either jealous tyrants or 'kind' women who took the child born of rape by their white family member into their house. In the latter case, the child was always brought into the home to work for their white family. The primary rape victims rarely received such support. Even when the slaveholding woman took the child into the house, she was giving legitimacy to the abuse that white male family member had committed, and turned this abuse into 'benevolence'. Young slaveholding girls also grew up in this

environment, and this is likely to have severely affected their long-term psychological wellbeing.

As mentioned above, evidence from the narratives points to intergenerational cycles of abuse, for both the abused and the abusers. White children grew up with slavery and sexual abuse part of their domestic environment. Through this process, the ideas and language that were linked to abusive practices were passed between white males from generation to generation. Abuse of domestics and of enslaved women with light-skin became 'normalised'. Sexual interference was so common that slave-owners saw no harm in manipulating sexual relationships between enslaved people in order to maximise profits. Language was used in the market place to implicitly link some women with sexual labour; the language of the abusive culture meant that descriptions of light-skin, lack of experience of 'hard work', and a descriptions of domestic labour would indicate the suitability of an enslaved person for sexual abuse without explicit reference. The 'culture of sexual abuse' in the context of US slavery existed in the language, ideology and actions of slaveholding people. It justified the sexual exploitation of women and embraced it on an unthinkable scale.

Looking at common terminology gives a sense of the complexity of the issue of sexual abuse in the slaveholding South. What was termed 'concubinage' in the nineteenth century has continued to be described as such in modern historiography. The term itself is indicative of the hetero-patriarchal ideology that made the system of institutionalised sexual abuse possible in the first place. Describing abused women as 'concubines' obscures the gravity of the crime committed against them, as

well as invoking a sense of consent and immorality. This study has reframed ‘concubinage’ as ‘sexual slavery’, a more accurate description of the powerlessness of enslaved women who were forced into sexual labour.

Chapter Five revealed extended networks of abusive white slaveholders but also gave indications of smaller localised networks that were connected through marriage and family. Actions and slaveholding ideology allowed participation in sexual abuse, either for a short time as part of a life cycle, or as a lifestyle choice that would continue even after marriage to a white woman. Wider networks of abusive slaveholders was reflected in the domestic slave trade through which women, such as Louisa Picquet, were trafficked as sex-slaves. A woman’s vulnerability to sexual abuse was not reducible to appearance, age, or skin tone but the abuse of women of certain skin tones and occupations was more systematised and formalised than any other. The lighter skin possessed by some sex slaves meant that men could, and did sexualise their bodies and character: their abuse had been normalised within southern culture.

Survival

While the calculation of risk factors throughout this thesis has relied on testimony of victimisation, this same testimony came largely from the women who had survived sexual abuse, or more commonly, their offspring. This thesis is therefore based on the testimony of survivors. This study has found indications of the ways in which enslaved women could, and did, emotionally survive a range of sexual violence

under slavery, and these means of survival can be separated into resistance (before or during the abuse) and coping strategies (after the abuse), though some measures crossed into both categories.

iii. Resistance

While the sexual abuse of women under slavery has been described as a form of social and political control, testimony contained in this thesis has demonstrated that enslaved women resisted abuse in various ways. There were few incidences of direct physical resistance in the testimony of the enslaved, the risks of physical retaliation were just too overpowering. Just two of the enslaved female victims of abuse mentioned in this project attempted to run away, but there were other less explicit forms of resistance that included the control of reproduction, avoidance strategies to limit the frequency or risk of abuse, and even willing submission -- a cognitive measure that allowed enslaved women a sense of agency when the risk of direct physical resistance was too high.

Reproductive resistance was mentioned in Chapter Five and Chapter Eight: enslaved women used birth control methods (most commonly cotton root) in order to prevent themselves from giving birth to the child of the master, or to stop the master from profiting from slave rearing practices. Abortifacients could also be used, and through these, enslaved women were forced to inflict physical injury on themselves, and potentially harm any future reproductive capacity in order to resist the reproductive control of their master. These women were outwardly unable to resist

sexual interference, but contraception could be used as a silent alternative when the only option was to live under a veneer of ‘consent’.

Another means of resisting the rape of predatory white men was to take another white man as a sexual partner and protector, as in the case of Harriet Jacobs with ‘Mr Sands’ mentioned in Chapter Five. While this was also likely to be an exploitative relationship on some level, the act of choosing one’s sexual partner allowed a sense of autonomy when the concepts of ‘will’ and ‘agency’ were complicated by slavery.

Louisa Picquet revealed that there were points in her life when she chose to submit to her sexual abuse: first when she was a young child with Mr Cook, and secondly, when her next master threatened to ‘blow her brains out’ if she ran away from him.² Many enslaved women, especially sex slaves, could have demonstrated a kind of ‘learned helplessness’ as a way of resisting absolute domination when their other options were very limited.³ When the victim of sexual abuse was a child, ways of contesting abuse were even more confined. Picquet demonstrated, however, that even young enslaved girls found ways to resist. Picquet hid from her abuser, Mr Cook, as well as purchasing a dress with money that he had mistakenly given her while drunk in return for her sexual submission.⁴

² Picquet, *The Octoroon*, p. 20.

³ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, p. 181.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

When the testimony in this project is considered in light of a number of resistance strategies that ranged from direct physical resistance to chosen submission, it becomes clear that few women (if any) can be considered passive victims.

iv. Coping strategies

Overall, it is very difficult to gauge the impact of sexual violence on the lives of enslaved people. There are no ‘effects’ of sexual violence that can be measured, and every woman would have reacted differently to the abuse depending on its context, how she defined that particular experience, and her actions in its aftermath. In the same way that enslaved women were never really passive victims of sexual abuse, they were not passive in dealing with its consequences either.

Psychological studies have demonstrated that trauma occurs when an individual encounters a new and very prominent experience, incompatible with the person’s established beliefs and models.⁵ This thesis has established that the abuse of enslaved women existed on a cultural level, and little stigma, if any, was attached to victims of abuse. As abuse was so endemic in the southern United States, it was unlikely to be ‘incompatible’ with established world-views, this could be a reason why post-traumatic stress disorder, and other trauma and stress disorders are seldom alluded to in the testimony of the formerly enslaved.

⁵ Veas-Gulani, *Trauma and Guilt*, p. 30.

Abuse is often hidden -- but testimony reveals that in the US South sexual abuse was discussed, albeit with great reluctance and deep sadness, within the black community. The enslaved community knew the scale of abuse and it became a horrific, but quite normalised, part of being enslaved and female. Supportive networks surrounded enslaved survivors of abuse and aided the maintenance of close relationships with both men and women.

There is strong evidence in the interviews of Octavia V. Rogers Albert of female friendships formed by identification with, and the sharing of experiences of sexual abuse. Charlotte Brooks, for example, was a victim of rape by the master's son but also knew close details of the sexual and physical punishment of a young enslaved domestic worker by the name of Ella that would indicate a sharing of experiences. Another formerly enslaved woman, 'Aunt Lorendo', told Albert of a conversation she had with an abused enslaved woman called 'Hattie' who had run away; Hattie came to Lorendo to discuss her abuse and to ask for some food.⁶ Louisa Picquet was also connected to a mainly light-skinned network of people who were either children born of rape, or had lived lives of sexual slavery. Louisa's mother was a rape victim, as was her future husband's mother and first-wife. Picquet's narrative builds a picture of a slave sub-community that was understanding, supportive, and resilient.

While studies of children born of rape cite problems with attachment to children amongst mothers who gave birth to their rapist's child, enslaved children that were later interviewed by the WPA were so in touch with the experiences of their mothers, it seems highly unlikely that attachment issues were widespread. While children

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-20, 29.

born of rape in many societies have been ostracised, and stigma attached to and felt by the primary rape victim, this did not happen under US slavery. Just two of formerly enslaved people out of the entire sample of nineteenth and twentieth century testimony described an inability to form attachment to a family member because of their white parentage.

Overall, when facing sexual abuse on such a large scale, families had to adapt to separations, and mothers often had to cope alone when raising children born of rape; but sympathy and support were rarely denied to victims of abuse and their offspring. Families often had to be reconfigured when a parent was separated, or a biological father was not allowed the opportunity to raise his children because of forced breeding practices, but families in various forms continued to thrive nonetheless.

While this section has offered some initial indications on how enslaved people could survive sexual violence, there would have been others, who despite the support of the community, were not able to physically or emotionally survive. Some women did die from their experience of sexual abuse, as described in Chapter Five with the case of a young domestic slave, Ella, killed by her jealous mistress.⁷ Some enslaved women would have been devastated by the secondary effects of their abuse. The clearest testimony of this is Solomon Northup's account of Eliza, the sex slave who had her children sold away from her, the youngest who had been the daughter of her master and was destined for a life of sexual slavery. After enduring abuse herself, Eliza nevertheless felt a deep attachment to her children. After their separation

⁷ Albert, *House of Bondage*, p. 29.

‘Grief had gnawed remorselessly at her heart’, which broke with the ‘burden of maternal sorrow’. Northup wrote that as a direct result of this Eliza became weak and dilapidated and eventually died.⁸

Testimony in this thesis points to a remarkable level of survival amongst rape victims but it is common sense that the testimony came from those who were emotionally able to testify. When abuse was short-term some women would have actively ‘forgotten’ the rape, or repressed the memory of it; such women were unlikely to tell anyone about the rape afterwards. By not confronting the reality of their experience and without any support, they were likely to experience behavioural and emotional consequences that were not understood by themselves or by their peers.⁹ Amongst women who did not disclose details of their sexual abuse to others, sexual violence may have been at root of other mental health problems. ‘Forgetting’ may only have been a ‘temporary palliative’, and the impact of abuse could therefore have been manifested in less obvious ways.¹⁰ An avenue for future inquiry should be the long-term psychological effects of sexual abuse on formerly enslaved people, and the community as a whole.

Overall, this thesis has pointed to a high level of sexual abuse in Louisiana and Texas. The methodological advances in working with the 1930s WPA interviews alongside nineteenth century narratives of the formerly enslaved has allowed for important indications of the scale and nature of sexual violence that existed on a

⁸ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, pp. 53, 88, 159.

⁹ Kelly, *Surviving Sexual Violence*, pp. 170-2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

continuum for enslaved people. In this final section I have offered some indications of how enslaved people might have survived this violence, but the short-term and long-term psychological consequences of sexual abuse are open to further study.

While this project has relied on the language of victimisation in order to make calculations on the scale of certain abuses, the testimony overwhelmingly speaks to women who survived sexual abuse, physically and emotionally. The narrative of sexual violence in Louisiana and Texas, therefore, centres on the endemic scale of abuse and the power exercised by slaveholding males, and various measures that enslaved women took to physically and psychologically take control of their own bodies.

Bibliography

Primary sources

1. Interviews of the Federal Writers' Project

i. Published

R. Clayton, (ed.), *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project* (New York, 1990)

G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Series One*, Vols. 1-7, (Westport, 1972)

G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Series Two*, Vols. 8-19, (Westport, 1972)

G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series One*, Vols. 1-12, (Westport, 1979)

G. P. Rawick, (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series Two*, Vols. 1-10, (Westport, 1979)

L. Saxon, E. Dreyer and R. Tallant (eds.), *Gumbo Ya-Ya: A Collection of Louisiana Folk Tales* (Gretna, 1987)

ii. Unpublished

Earl Long Library, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

Octave Lilly Interviews, Dillard Project Collection

Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Federal Writers' Project Collection

John B. Cade Library, Louisiana Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Project Collection

State Library of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Project Collection

iii. Online collections

Louisiana Digital Library

Louisiana Works Progress Administration Interviews

2. Narratives/autobiographies of the formerly enslaved

Most of the accounts listed below are available online at ‘Documenting the American South’ (<http://docsouth.unc.edu>)

Albert, O. V. R., *The House of Bondage, or, Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (Oxford, 1988), originally printed in the *The South-western Christian Advocate*, January-December 1891

Brown, W. W., *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave. Written by Himself* (Boston, 1847)

Bruner, P., *A Slaves Adventures Toward Freedom. Not Fiction, But the True Story of a Struggle* (Oxford, OH, 1918)

Hamilton, J., *"My Master," The Inside Story of Sam Houston and His Times, by His Former Slave, Jeff Hamilton, as Told to Lenoir Hunt.* (Abilene, 1992; originally published Dallas, 1940)

Henson, J., *Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself* (Boston, 1849)

Jacobs, H., *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York, 2001; originally published Boston, 1861)

Joseph, J. *The Life and Sufferings of John Joseph, a Native of Ashantee, in Western Africa: Who Was Stolen from His Parents at the Age of 3 Years, and Sold to Mr. Johnstone, a Cotton Planter, in New Orleans, South America* (Wellington, 1848)

Lewis, J. V., *Out of the Ditch: A True Story of an Ex-Slave* (Houston, 1910)

Mallory, Col. W., *Old Plantation Days* (Hamilton, Ontario 1902)

Northup, S., *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853* (Auburn, NY, 1853)

O'Neal, W., *Life and History of William O'Neal, or, The Man Who Sold His Wife* (St Louis, MO, 1896)

Picquet, L., *Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon, or, Inside Views of Southern Domestic Life* (New York, NY, 1861)

Truth, S., *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (Boston, 1850)

Walker, W., *Buried Alive (Behind Prison Walls) for a Quarter of a Century: Life of William Walker* (Saginaw, MI, 1892)

Watson, H. *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave* (Boston, 1848)

Wilkerson, Major, J. *Wilkerson's History of His Travels & Labors, in the United States, As a Missionary, in Particular, That of the Union Seminary, Located in Franklin Co., Ohio, Since He Purchased His Liberty in New Orleans, La* (Columbus, OH, 1861)

Williams, J., *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, Who Was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (Boston, 1838)

3. Other primary sources

i. Published

American Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South, Vol. 2, (Montgomery, 1858)

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (eds.), *Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade in the United States of North America: Being Replies to Questions Transmitted by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, for the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade Throughout the World. Presented to the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Held in London, June, 1840 / By The Executive Committee Of The American Anti-Slavery Society* (London, 1841)

Child, L. M., *The Quadroons* (Boston, 1842)

Fremantle, A. J. L., *Three Months in the Southern States April-June 1863* (London, 1863)

Kemble, F., *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-39*, J. A. Scott (ed.), (Athens, 1984; originally published London, 1963)

Lyell, C., *Travels in North American: With Geological Observations on the United States, Canada, and Nova Scotia* (Uckfield, East Sussex, 2007; originally published London, 1845)

Menn, A. E., *Texas As it is Today* (Austin, 1925)

Menn, A. E., *Let's go to Texas* (Houston, 1935)

Menn, A. E., *The Cuero and DeWitt County Story* (Cuero, 1955)

Powdermaker, H., *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York, 1939)

Redpath, J., *The Roving Editor, or, Talks with Slaves in the Southern States*, J. R. McKivigan, (ed.), reprinted edition (University Park, PA, 1996; originally published London, 1845)

Shepherd, W. G., (ed.), *The Complete Odes and Epodes of Horace* (London, 1983)

WPA Louisiana Writers' Project, *Louisiana: A Guide to the State* (Baton Rouge, 1941)

WPA Louisiana Writers' Project, *The New Orleans City Park: Its First Fifty Years, 1891-1941* (New Orleans, 1941)

WPA Louisiana Writers' Project, *They Saw Louisiana, 1519-1765* (New Orleans, 1941)

The Spanish in Louisiana and A Tour of the French Quarter for Service Men (New Orleans, 1941)

WPA Louisiana Writers' Project, *New Orleans City Guide* (New Orleans, 1938)

WPA, *Texas a Guide to the Lone Star State* (San Antonio, 1940)

WPA Virginia Writers' Program, *The Negro in Virginia* (New York, 1940)

Weld, T. D., *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839)

Vann Woodward, C., and E. Muhlenfeld, (eds.), *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries* (New York, 1984)

ii. Unpublished

Earl Long Library, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

Marcus Christian Collection

Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Octave Lilly Jr. Papers

Sydney Jones Library Special Collections, University of Liverpool

Rathbone Papers

iii. Online collections

Amherst Libraries, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts
(<http://scua.library.umass.edu/umarmot>)

DuBois Papers

Ancestry.com

1920 US Census, Justice Precinct 3, Travis, Texas; Roll: T625_1852; Page: 13B;
Enumeration District: 93; Image: 218

1944 Austin City Directory

1820 Census, St Martin, Louisiana; Page: 159; NARA Roll: M33_31; Image: 154.

1850 Census, St Martin, Louisiana; Roll: M432_240; Page: 154A; Image: 312.

1850 Census, Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana; Roll: M432_232; Page: 257B;
Image: 521.

1850 Census, Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana; Roll: M432_232; Page: 258B;
Image: 523

1850 Census, Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana; Roll: M432_232; Page: 267B;
Image: 541.

1850 Census, Western District, Lafayette, Louisiana; Roll: M432_232; Page: 238A;
Image: 482.

1860 Census, Ward 10, Terrebonne, Louisiana; Roll: M653_425; Page: 87; Image:
415

1880 Census, Lake Peigneur, Vermilion, Louisiana; Roll: 473; Family History Film:
1254473; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 014; Image: 0356.

1900 Census, Police Jury Ward 2, Saint James, Louisiana; Roll: 580; Page: 2A;
Enumeration District: 0053; FHL microfilm: 1240580

Archive.org

The Octoroon: A Play in Four Acts by Dion Boucicault

Martineau, H., *Society in America*, Vol. 2 (London, 1837)

Library of Congress (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>)

American Memory Collection: WPA Photographs

Thomas Jefferson Exhibition. 'Life among the Lowly, No. 1," *Pike County [OHIO] Republican*, March 13, 1873

Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers

Liberator (Boston, MA)

New York Herald (New York, NY)

Southwestern Christian Advocate (New Orleans, LA)

Perseus (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>).

Xenophon, *Hellenica*

University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia
(<http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>)

Historical Census Browser

United States Census Bureau (<http://census.gov/>)

United States Census 1850

United States Census 1860

United States Census 1870

Rossiter, W. S., *A Century of Population Growth: From the First to the Twelfth Census of the United States: 1790-1900*

[Fort Worth County Archives \(forthworthtexasarchives.org\)](http://forthworthtexasarchives.org)

WPA Correspondence

[Houston Public Library \(http://digital.houstonlibrary.org\)](http://digital.houstonlibrary.org)

WPA Maresh Files

[University of North Texas Digital Library \(http://digital.library.unt.edu\)](http://digital.library.unt.edu)

The WPA Dallas Guide and History

Secondary sources

Alexander, P. C., and S. L. Lupfer, 'Family characteristics and long-term consequences associated with sexual abuse', *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 235-245

Alexander, P.C., 'The differential effects of abuse characteristics and attachment in the prediction of long-term effects of sexual abuse', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 346-362

Andrews, W., *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography 1760-1865*, (Chicago, 1986)

Argibay, C. M., 'Sexual Slavery and the Comfort Women of World War II', *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, Vol. 21, Issue 2 (2003), pp. 375-389

Bailey, D., 'A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery,' *Journal of Southern History*, 46 (1980), pp. 381-404.

Baptist, E., 'Cuffy," "Fancy Maids," and "One-Eyed Men": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 5 (2001), pp. 1619-1650

Baptist, E., *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York, 2014)

Baptist, E., 'The Migration of Planters to Antebellum Florida: Kinship and Power', *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1996), pp. 527-554

Barkley Brown, E., "'What Has Happened Here': The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics', *Feminist Studies* Vol.18, No. 2 (1992), pp. 295-312.

Barkley, R. R., and M. F. Odintz (eds.), *The Portable Handbook of Texas* (Denton, 2000)

Barr, A., *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas 1528-1995* (Norman, OK, 1996)

Bay, M., *White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (Oxford, 2000)

Beckert, S., *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, 2014)

Belknap, J., *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime, and Justice*, 3rd Ed. (Belmont, CA, 2007)

Betzig, L., 'Roman Polygamy', *Ethnology and Sociobiology*, Vol. 13 (1992), pp. 309-49

Blassingame, J.W., *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972)

Blassingame, J.W., *Black New Orleans* (Chicago, 1973)

Blassingame, J.W., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977)

Block, S., *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 2006)

Bourdieu, P., and J. C. Passeron (translated by R. Nice), *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2nd Ed. (London, 1990)

Bourke, J., *Rape: Sex, Violence, History* (Berkeley, 2007)

Brennan, K. A., and P. R. Shaver, 'Dimensions of adult attachment, affect regulation, and romantic relationship functioning', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 21, (1995), pp. 267-283.

Brown, S. A., *Washington: City and Capital* (Washington, 1937)

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

- Bruce Jr, D.D., 'Slave Narratives and Historical Understanding', in J. Ernest (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 59-60
- Burgess, A., and L. Holstrom, 'The Coping Behavior of the Rape Victim', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 133, No. 4 (1976), pp. 413-18
- Camp, S., *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, 2004)
- Campbell, R., C.E. Ahrens, T. Sefl, S. M. Wasco, & H.E. Bames, 'Social reactions to rape victims: Healing and hurtful effects on psychological and physical health outcomes', *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 16 (2001), pp. 287-302
- Campbell, R.B., *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1989)
- Carby, H., *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford, 1987)
- Cashin, J.E., *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York, 1991)
- Chivers-Wilson, K.A., 'Sexual assault and posttraumatic stress disorder: A review of the biological, psychological, and sociological factors and treatment', *McGill Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 9, No.2 (2006), pp.111-118
- Clark, E., *The Strange History of the American Quadroon: Free Women of Color in the Revolutionary Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, 2013)
- Clayton, R.W., 'The Federal Writers Project for Blacks in Louisiana', *Louisiana History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1978), pp. 327-335
- Clinton, C., "'Southern Dishonor": Flesh, Blood, Race, and Bondage', in C. Bleser (ed.), *In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900* (New York, 1991), pp. 52-68
- Clinton, C., *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York, 1982)
- Cocks, H.G., and M. Houlbrook, 'Introduction', in H.G. Cocks and M. Houlbrook eds., *The Modern History of Sexuality* (Houndmills, 2006), pp. 1-18
- Coleman, A.M., *A Dictionary of Psychology*, 3rd ed (Oxford, 2014)
- Crawford, S., 'The Slave Family: A View from the Slave Narratives', in C. Goldin and H. Rockoff (eds.) *Strategic Factors in Nineteenth Century American Economic History: A Volume to Honor Robert W. Fogel*, (Chicago, 2008), pp. 331-350
- Darcy, R., & R. C. Rohrs, *A Guide to Quantitative History* (Westport, CT, 1995).

David, P.A., et al., *Reckoning with slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976)

Davidson, J., *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1998)

Davidson, J. W., & M. H. Lyttle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York, 1992)

Davis, A.Y., 'Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', *Black Scholar*, Vol.3, No. 4 (1971), pp. 2-15

Davis, A.D., "'Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle": The Sexual Economy of American Slavery', in S. Harley (ed.), *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work* (New Brunswick, 2002), pp. 103-127

Davis, A.D., 'Slavery and the Roots of Sexual Harassment', available at http://www.law.fsu.edu/faculty/2003-2004workshops/davis_bckgrd.Pdf, accessed 5 May 2012

Deyle, S., *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Cary, NC, 2005)

Dormandy, T., *The Worst of Evils: The Fight Against Pain* (New Haven, 2006)

Dossett, K., Gender and the Dies Committee Hearings on the Federal Theatre Project, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2013), pp. 993-1017

DuBois, W.E.B., *The Negro* (Mineola, NY, 2001; originally published New York, 1915)

Dusinberre, W., *Strategies for Survival: Recollections of Bondage in Antebellum Virginia* (Charlottesville, 2009)

Dusinberre, W., 'Power and Agency in Antebellum Slavery', *American Nineteenth Century History* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011), pp. 139-148

Bryan, V.H., *The Myth of New Orleans in Literature: Dialogues of Race and Gender* (Knoxville, 1993)

Elkins, E., *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago, 1968)

Ellison, M., 'Resistance to Oppression: Black Women's Response to Slavery in the United States', *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 4:1 (1983), pp. 56-83

Escott, P.D., *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill, 1979)

- Feeney, A., and P. Noller, 'Attachment and sexuality in close relationships', in J. H. Harvey, A. Wenzel, and S. Sprecher (Eds.), *The Handbook of Sexuality in Close Relationships* (Mahwah, NJ, 2004), pp. 183-202
- Fogel, R., *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York, 1989)
- Fogel, R., and S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (London, 1974)
- Follet, R., *Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge, 2005)
- Foster, F.S., 'Ultimate Victims: Black Women in Slave Narratives', *Journal of American Culture* Vol. 1, Issue 4 (1978), pp. 846-854
- Foster, F.S., *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives*, (Madison, 1987)
- Foster, T.A., 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011), pp. 445-464
- Foucault, M., *History of Sexuality* (London, 1979)
- Fox-Genovese, E., *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, 1988)
- Fox-Genovese, E., 'Slavery, Race, and the Figure of the Tragic Mulatta, or, The Ghost of Southern History in the Writing of African-American Women', *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 49, Issue 4 (1996), pp. 791 -818
- Franklin, J.H., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York, 1949)
- Franklin Frazier, E., *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, 1939)
- Fraser, R., *Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved in North Carolina* (Jackson, 2007)
- Fredrickson, G.M., *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism and Social Inequality* (Middletown, 1989)
- Frederickson, M.E., & D. M. Walters (eds.), *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana, 2013)
- Freedman, E. B., *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation* (Cambridge, MA, 2013)
- Freyre, G., *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (Berkeley, 1986)

Fulton, D., *Speaking Power: Black Feminist Orality in Women's Narratives of Slavery* (Albany, 2006)

Gabbin, J.V., *Sterling A. Brown: Building the Black Aesthetic Tradition* (Charlottesville, 1985)

Genovese, E.D., "Our Family White and Black": Family and Household in the Southern Slaveholders' World View', in C. Bleser (ed.) *In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South 1830-1900* (New York, 1991), pp. 69-87

Genovese, E.D., *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1972)

Glymph, T., *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York, 2008)

Gordon-Reed, A., *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York, 2008)

Graber, M.A., *Dred Scott and the Problem of Constitutional Evil* (New York, 2006)

Gross, A., *Double Character: Slavery and Mastery in the Antebellum Southern Courtroom* (Princeton, 2000)

Gutman, H., *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (Oxford 1976)

Gutman, H., and R. Sutch, 'Victorians All? The Sexual Mores and Conduct of Slaves and Their Masters', in *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study into the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976), pp. 134-162

Gutman, H., *Slavery and the numbers game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana, 1975)

Harrold, S., *American Abolitionists* (New York, 2001)

Hartman, S.V., *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America* (Oxford, 1997)

Hessler, M.S., 'Marcus Christian: The Man and His Collection', *Louisiana History*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1987), pp. 37-55

Hine, D.C., 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West', *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1989), pp. 912-20

Hodes, M., 'Introduction: Interconnecting and Diverging Narratives', in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York, 1999), pp. 1-9

Hodes, M., *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South* (New Haven, 1997)

Hoganson, K., 'Garrisonian Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Gender 1850-1860', *American Quarterly*, Vol. 45, no.4 (1993), pp. 558-95

hooks, b., *Ain't I A Woman* (London, 1982)

Jennings, T., "'Us Colored Women Had to Go Though Plenty": Sexual Exploitation of African-American Slave Women', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1990), pp. 45-74

Johnson, W., 'The Slave Trader, the White Slave, and the Politics of Racial Determination in the 1850s', *Journal of American History* Vol. 87, No.1 (2000), pp. 13-38

Johnson, W., *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999)

Johnson, W., 'On Agency', *Journal of Social History* (2003), pp. 113-124

Johnson, W., *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA, 2013)

Jones, N. T., 'Rape in Black and White': Sexual Violence in the Testimony of Enslaved and Free African Americans' in Winthrop D. Jordan, (ed.), *Slavery and the American South* (Jackson, Miss., 2003), pp. 93-108.

Kaye, A., 'The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth Century South and the Atlantic World', in *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (2009), pp. 627-650

Kelly, L., *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Cambridge, 1988)

Kennedy, C., *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives: The Women of Charleston's Urban Slave Community* (Bloomington, 2005)

Killian, L.M., *Black and White: Reflections of a White Southern Sociologist* (New York, 1994)

Killias. M., 'The Emergence of a New Taboo: The Desexualization of Youth in Western Societies Since 1800', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, No. 8 (2000), pp. 459-77

King, W., "'Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things": The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls and Young Women in Slavery and Freedom', *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 99, No.3, pp. 173-96

Konig, D.T., P. Finkelman & C. A. Bracey (eds.), *The Dred Scott Case: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Race and Law* (Athens, OH, 2010)

Lanning, J., and J. Lanning, *Texas Cowboys: Memories of the Early Days* (College Station, TX, 1984)

- Lecaudey, H., 'Behind the Mask: Ex-Slave Women and Interracial Sexual Relations', in P. Morton, ed., *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past* (Athens Ga., 1996)
- Lewis, J., (ed.), 'Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings Redux', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No.1 (2000), pp. 121-210
- Lockley, T., *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia 1750-1860* (Athens, 2001)
- Lussana, S., 'To See Who Was Best on the Plantation: Enslaved Fighting Contests and Masculinity in the Antebellum Plantation South', *Journal of Southern History* Vol. 76, No. 4 (2010), pp. 901-922.
- Morrow Long, C., *Mistress of the Haunted House* (Gainesville, 2012)
- Mangione, J., *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943*, (Philadelphia, 1983)
- Marx, B.P., 'Lessons Learned from the Last Twenty Years of Sexual Violence Research', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20 (2005), pp. 225-230
- McAlindon, A.M., *'Grooming' and the Sexual Abuse of Children: Institutional, Internet, and Familial Dimensions* (Oxford, 2013),
- Mcdaniel, W.C., 'Remembering Henry: Refugee Slaves in Civil War Texas', unpublished conference paper given at the Organization of American Historians conference, Atlanta GA, April 13 2014
- McDaniels-Wilson, C., 'The Psychological Aftereffects of Racialized Sexual Violence', in M. E. Fredrickson, D. M. Walters & D. Clark Hine (eds.) *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana, 2013), pp. 191-206.
- McInnis, M., *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago, 2011)
- Mendiola, K.W., 'Reading Ex-Slave Narratives: The Federal Writers' Project in Travis County, Texas', *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas*, Vol. 28 (1997), pp. 38-54
- Meshkovska, B., 'Female Sex Trafficking: Conceptual Issues, Current Debates, and Future Directions', *Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 52, Issue 4 (2015), pp. 380-395
- Millward, J., "'The Relics of Slavery': Interracial Sex and Manumission in the American South', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 31:3 (2010), pp. 22-30

- Morgan, J.L., "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder": Male Travellers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770, *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 54, No. 1 (1997), pp. 162-192
- Musher, S.A., 'Contesting "The Way the Almighty Wants It": Crafting Memories of Ex-Slaves in the Slave Narrative Collection', *American Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No.1 (2001), pp. 1-31
- Musher, S.A., 'The Other Slave Narratives: The Works Progress Administration Interviews', in J. Ernest (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 101-118
- Myers, A.C., "'Sisters in Arms": Slave Women's Resistance to Slavery in the United States', *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 5 (1996), pp. 141-174
- Nelson, S.R., 'Who Put Their Capitalism in My Slavery?', *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2015), pp. 289-310
- Howard Owens, L., 'The African in the Garden: Reflections about New World Slavery and Its Lifelines, in D. Clark Hines, (ed.), *The State of Afro-American History Past, Present, and Future* (Baton Rouge, 1986), pp. 25-36
- Irvin Painter, N., *Southern History Across the Color Line* (Chapel Hill, 2002)
- Parent, A.S., and S. Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1993), pp. 363-401
- Peabody, E., 'Narratives of Fugitive Slaves', reproduced in C. T. Davis and H. L. Gates Jr., (eds.), *The Slave's Narrative* (New York, 1985), pp. 19-27
- Perdue, C.L., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville, 1992)
- Pernick, M., *Calculus of Suffering: Pain, Professionalism and Anaesthesia in Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York, 1985)
- Perrin, L.M., 'Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Reproduction in the Old South', *Journal of American Studies*, 35:2 (2001) pp. 255-274
- Phillips, U.B., *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labour as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York, 1928)
- Portelli, A., 'What Makes Oral History Different' in R. Perks and A. Thomson, eds, *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998), pp. 63-74
- Potts, H.E., *A Comprehensive Name Index for the American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, 1997)
- Powell, L.N., (ed.), *New Orleans City Guide* (New Orleans, republished 2009)

Pullman, L., and Seto, M.C. 'Assessment and Treatment of Adolescent Sexual Offenders: Implications of Recent Research on Generalist Versus Specialist Explanations', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 36, No.3 (2012), pp. 203-209

Raimon, E.A., *The 'Tragic Mulatta' Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Slavery Fiction* (New Brunswick, 2004)

Ramey Berry, D., *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Urbana, 2007)

Rawson, B., 'Roman Concubinage and Other De Facto Marriages', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 104 (1974), pp. 279-305

Reagan, L., *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (Berkeley, 1997)

Roach, J., *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996)

Rodgers, S.E.J., 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery: White Women, the Slave Market and Enslaved People's Sexualized Bodies in the Nineteenth-Century South', in D. Ramey Berry & L. Harris (eds.), *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (Oxford, forthcoming)

Rogers, R., and David Pilgrim, *Sociology of Mental Health and Illness*, 4th ed. (Maidenhead, 2000)

Rothman, T., *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson* (Athens, 2014)

Reaves, W.E., *Texas Art and a Wildcatter's Dream: Edgar B. Davis and the San Antonio Art League* (College Station, 1998)

Rothman, T.J., *Notorious in the Neighbourhood: Sex and Families Across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787-1861* (Chapel Hill, 2003)

Salter, A., *Transforming Trauma: A Guide to Understanding and Treating Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (Newbury Park, CA, 1995)

Salter, A., *Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders: Who They Are, How They Operate, and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children* (New York, 2003).

Schafer, J.K., *Slavery, the Civil Law and the Supreme Court of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1997)

Schafer, J.K., 'Life and Labour in Antebellum Louisiana', in B. H. Hall and J. C. Rodrigue, *Louisiana: A History*, 6th ed. (Chichester, 2014), pp. 156-96

- Schechter, P.A., *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001)
- Schweninger, L., *Families in Crisis in the Old South: Divorce, Slavery and the Law* (Chapel Hill, 2012)
- Schiebinger, L., *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA, 2004)
- Schwartz, M.J., *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Old South* (Cambridge, 2006)
- Schwartz, M.J., *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, 2000)
- Smith, D.B., 'Jezebels, Matriarchs and Welfare Queens: The Moynihan Report of 1965 and the Social Construction of African-American Women in Welfare policy', in A. L. Schneider and H. M. Ingram (eds.), *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy* (New York, 2005), pp. 243-60
- Smithers, G.D., 'American Abolitionism and Slave-Breeding Discourse: A Re-evaluation', *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 33, No. 4, December 2012 pp. 551-570
- Smithers, G.D., *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence and Memory in African American History* (Gainesville, 2013)
- Sommerville, D.M., "'Moonlight, Magnolias, and Brigadoon"; or "Almost Like Being in Love:" Mastery and Sexual Exploitation in E.D. Genovese's Plantation South', *Radical History Review*, Vol. 88. pp. 68-82
- Sommerville, D.M., *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2004)
- Spear, J.M., *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, 2009)
- Spindel, D.J., 'Assessing Memory: Twentieth Century Slave Narratives Reconsidered', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 27 (1996), pp. 247-61
- Stampp, K.B., *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1956)
- Stearns, P., 'History of Emotions: Change and Impact' in M. Lewis, J. M. Havilland-Jones and L. Feldman Barrett (eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (Guildford, 2008), pp. 17-31
- Stevenson, B.E., *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York, 1996)

Stevenson, B. E., 'Gender conventions, Ideals and Identity Among Antebellum Virginia Slave Women, in D. B. Gaspar and D. Clark Hine (eds.), *More Than Chattel* (Bloomington, 1996), pp. 169-83

Stevenson, B.E., 'What's Love Got to Do With It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women', *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 98, Issue 1 (2013), pp. 99-125

Stutzman, M., 'Rape in the American Civil War: Race, Class and Gender in the Case of Harriet McKinley and Perry Pierson', *Transcending Silence...*[e-journal] (Spring 2004)

Sutch, R., 'The Breeding of Slaves for Sale and the Westward Expansion of Slavery, 1850-1860', in S. L. Engerman and E. Genovese (eds.), *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 173-210

Tadman, M., 'The Persistent Myth of Paternalism: Historians and the Nature of Master-Slave Relations in the American South', *Race Relations Abstracts*, 23 (1998), pp. 7-23

Tadman, M., *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, 1989)

Tadman, M., 'The Demographic Cost of Sugar: Debates on Slave Societies and Natural Increase in the Americas', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No.5 (2000), pp.1534-74

Tenzer, L.R., *The Forgotten Cause of the Civil War: A New Look at the Slavery Issue* (Manahawkin, 1997)

Thomas, J,W., *Lyle Saxon: A Critical Biography* (Birmingham, AL, 1991)

Thomson, A., 'Oral History', in A. Green and K. Troup, eds, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 230-252

Thompson, B., 'Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 336-360

Troutman, P., 'Black' Concubines, 'Yellow' Wives, 'White' Children: Race and Domestic Space in the Slave Trading Households of Robert & Mary Lumpkin and Silas & Corinna Omohundro'. Unpublished paper presented at the Southern Association of Women's Historians Sixth Conference on Women's History, Athens, GA. 5 June 2003

Tyler, R., and L. R. Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas* (Buffalo Gap, 2006)

Ullman, S.E., 'Social reactions, coping strategies and, self-blame attributions in adjustment to sexual assault', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 20 (1996), pp. 505-526

Van Ee, W., and R. J. Kleber, 'Growing Up Under the Shadow: Key Issues in Research on and Treatment of Children Born of Rape', *Child Abuse Review*, Vol. 22, Issue 6, pp. 386-397

Vees-Gulani, S., *Trauma and Guilt: Literature on Wartime Bombing in Germany* (New York, 2003)

Vizard, E., et al, 'Children and Adolescents Who Present with Sexually Abusive Behaviour: a UK Descriptive Study', *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, Vol.18, No.1 (2007), pp. 59-71

Wade, R.C., *Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860* (Cary, NC, 1967)

Weiner, M., *Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina 1830-80* (Urbana, 1998)

Wertheimer, A., *Consent to Sexual Relations* (Cambridge, 2003)

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

West, E., 'Dolly, Lavinia, Maria, and Susan: Enslaved Women in Antebellum South Carolina, *South Carolina Women, Volume 1: Their Lives and Times* (Athens, 2009), pp. 127-42

White, D.G., 'Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 8 (1983), pp. 248-61

White, D.G., *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York, 1999)

Winks, R. (ed.), *Four Fugitive Slave Narratives* (Boston, 1969)

Woodward, C.V., 'History from Slave Sources', *American Historical Review* Vol. 79, No. 2 (1974), pp. 470-481

Yarborough, F., 'Power, Perception, and Interracial Sex: Former Slaves Recall a Multiracial South,' *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 71 (2005), pp. 559-89

Yetman, N., 'The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection', *American Quarterly*, Vol.19, No.3 (1967), pp. 534-53

Yetman, N., 'Ex-Slaves Interviews and the Historiography of Slavery', in N. Yetman (ed.), *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*, 2nd Ed. (New York, 2000), pp. 357-86

Zackodnick, T.C., *The Mulatta and the Politics of Race* (Jackson, 2004)

Other online sources

Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia (<http://www.ferris.edu/JIMCROW/>)
Accessed 14 January 2015.

D. Pilgrim, 'The Tragic Mulatto Myth'

Texas State Historical Association
(<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsm61>). Articles accessed 15
December 2014.

'WPA Dallas Guide and History' (article)

'A. Maceo Smith' (article)

Unpublished theses

Clayton, R.W., 'A History of the Federal Writers' Project in Louisiana', Unpublished PhD thesis, Louisiana State University (1974)

Crawford, S., 'Quantified Memory: A Study of the WPA and Fisk University Slave Narrative Collections,' unpublished PhD, University of Chicago (1980)

Ferguson, R., 'The Mulatta Text and the Muted Voice in 'Louisa Picquet: The Octoroon' Revising the Genre of the Slave Narrative', Unpublished PhD thesis, Marquette University (1995)

Kifer, R.F., 'The Negro Under the New Deal 1933-1941', Unpublished PhD thesis (University of Wisconsin, 1961)

Pound, D.O., 'Slave to the Ex-Slave Narratives', Unpublished MA thesis (Northwestern University, 2003)

Troutman, P.D., 'Slave Trade and Sentiment in Antebellum Virginia', Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of Virginia (2000)