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THE ATLANTIC MIND: ZEPHANIAH KINGSLEY, SLAVERY, AND THE POLITICS OF RACE IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

by

MARK J. FLESZAR

Under the Direction of Dr. Jared Poley and Dr. H. Robert Baker

ABSTRACT

Enlightenment philosophers had long feared the effects of crisscrossing boundaries, both real and imagined. Such fears were based on what they considered a brutal ocean space frequented by protean shape-shifters with a dogma of ruthless exploitation and profit. This intellectual study outlines the formation and fragmentation of a fluctuating worldview as experienced through the circum-Atlantic life and travels of merchant, slaveowner, and slave trader Zephaniah Kingsley during the Era of Revolution. It argues that the process began from experiencing the costs of loyalty to the idea of the British Crown and was tempered by the pervasiveness of violence, mobility, anxiety, and adaptation found in the booming Atlantic markets of the Caribbean during the Haitian Revolution. Tracing Kingsley's manipulations of identity and race through his peripatetic journey serves to go beyond the infinite masks of his self-invention and exposes the deeply imbedded transatlantic dimensions of power.

INDEX WORDS: Atlantic world, Caribbean, Haiti, East Florida, Slavery, Race, Protean, Identity, Colonization, Enlightenment

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by

MARK J. FLESZAR

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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2009

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by

MARK J. FLESZAR

Committee Co-Chairs: Jared Poley
H. Robert Baker

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
May 2009

For my parents, family, and friends.

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Smith, and Robert Tinkler. Special thanks to Daniel L. Schafer, whom I did not have the pleasure to meet until this project was nearly finished. As all who study Kingsley are, I am indebted to him for his pioneering scholarship efforts.

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"Some people hide things which they think other people don't like. I never conceal anything."

Zephaniah Kingsley, New York City, 1842

INTRODUCTION

THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF A BRUTAL MACHINE

The Atlantic world in the Age of Revolution was marked by violence, mobility, anxiety, and adaptation. It was simultaneously beautiful and brutal. The tropical climates and dense foliage of the Caribbean locales, the green landscapes and timbered forests of the North America and European continents, and the exotic and varied topography, cultures, and animals of West Africa obscured the pervasiveness of Atlantic world violence, death, and deception. In the endless search for profits, planters, merchants, and other astute businessmen like Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. crisscrossed cultures, continents, and hemispheres. Indeed, no place seemed to be off limits for such ventures.[1]

The issue of cosmopolitanism concerned philosophers in the Late Enlightenment era. Frequently seen in a decidedly negative light, it often meant a "nationless" or rootless individual without fixed or ascertainable loyalties. As defined by the *Encyclopédie*, cosmopolitan often "signif[ies] a man who has no fixed abode or a man who is not a foreigner anywhere."[2] The movement of an assorted population across imaginary national boundaries—racial, cultural, political, and otherwise—had profound consequences. Above all, philosophers worried incessantly about the protean character of a world without boundaries. Divorced from a rigid body of laws, they argued that "crisscrossers" invariably brought the "stain" of their travels home. The circum-Atlantic experience profoundly influenced the travelers' worldviews, for

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[1] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 190-216; Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 3-43.

[2] Quoted in Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 245-26n86.

good or ill, and gave them "a universality of experience" that was common to their diverse lot.[3] Luxury goods from the East came to port as part of a stabilized transatlantic web of trade. But comparatively few Europeans wished to argue with the massive profits from slave sugar.[4] The Atlantic world instead offered many a complex and brutal system of business predicated on exploitation.

Where goods went, people went. The paths became well trod into clear, even predictable patterns. Successive waves of migration forged communication lines across vast stretches of ocean and land, providing crucial links to financial support and religious, cultural, and political influences from home.[5] The life of merchant, slavetrader, and plantation owner Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. (1765-1843), like many others, illustrates the risks and rewards of the Atlantic world in the Age of Revolution. Poised between opposing external forces, Kingsley and other crisscrossers learned to adapt to their ever-changing locales in order to thrive. Between processes of life and death, wealth and poverty, stability and uncertainty, identity became remarkably (and necessarily) fluid. "What I am depends on who I need to be" became the order of the day. National identity to religious affiliation was malleable; the flux of international

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[3] Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 72-121.

[4] Voltaire, of course, is a notable exception. In *Candide* (1759), he features a memorable exchange between the title character and a slave in Surinam. In response to Candide's question over the slave's "horrible condition," the unnamed slave replied: "When we work in the sugar mills and catch our fingers in the grinder, they cut off our hand. When we try to escape, they cut off our leg. I've had both punishments. It is at this price that you eat sugar in Europe." Daniel Gorden, ed., *Candide* (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 1999), 83.

[5] J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), xiii-xviii; Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 59-111; Peter Coclanis, "*Drang Nach Osten*: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History," *Journal of World History*, 13.1 (Spring 2002), 169-82; David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 11-27; Stephen J. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 1-7, 204-38; My work is more or less a modest attempt to follow the prodding of Peter A. Coclanis's call "to open up the concept of Atlantic history a bit." Coclanis, "Atlantic World or Atlantic/ World?" *Williams & Mary Quarterly*, 63.4 (October 2006), 741.

market relations demanded anticipating power shifts.[6] It operated, in so many words, according to its own internal logic.

One of the more poignant critiques of Atlantic crisscrossing by French *philosophe* Denis Diderot appears in the Abbé Raynal's *A History of the Two Indies*. Reprinted countless times after its 1770 debut (the same year that the Kingsleys set sail for a new beginning in North America) through the mid-nineteenth century, Diderot's blistering account of colonization and the more disagreeable results of Europe's interactions with the Far East and the New World was ahead of its time. Colonization created waves of violence and destruction to property and persons. Humanity in the Enlightenment, he showed, was anything but civilized. "Long-distance voyages have given rise to a new species of nomad," Diderot argued.

> I am referring to those men who travel to so many lands that they end up belonging to none, who take wives where they find them, and take them only to satisfy their brute needs. I am referring to those amphibians who live on the surface of the sea, and only come on to the land for moments at a time; for whom one habitable shore is as good as another; who really have neither fathers, nor mothers, nor children, nor brothers, nor relations, nor friends, nor compatriots; who no longer experience the most tender and sacred of bonds; who leave their own country without regret, and never return to it without being impatient to leave again; and who have been made ferocious by their continual contact with a fearful element. Their probity cannot survive crossing the line, and they acquire riches in exchange for their virtues and their health.[7]

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[6] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), 144-45, 148, 150, 152-53, 212-13; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 37-40; the classic statement on the individual and the market during Kingsley's time is Benjamin Franklin's immensely popular *Autobiography*.

[7] Peter Jimack, ed., *A History of the Two Indies: A Translated Selection of Writings from Raynal's* Histoire philosophique et politique des etablissements des Europeens dans les Deux Indes (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 278; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 70-107, offers a poignant indictment of the Enlightenment and the *Histoire*; Catherine A. Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory: Beyond Slavery and Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 23-56, serves as a well-rationed counter to Trouillot and suggests that the arguments in the *Histoire* should be viewed in their context, which made their criticisms quite radical.

Atrocities committed abroad in the name of omnipotent market motives, justified by a code of exploitation and an apparent absence of ethics, were the stern realities that propelled the Atlantic world. It required the intellectual capacity to shape shift and adapt to the ever changing surroundings; it required, therefore, what might be construed as an "Atlantic Mind."[8]

Like others of his time, Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. was both creator and creation of that world. A quick student of the system and devout reader of works on political economy, he found himself creating and recreating his self-identity at will to great economic success. However, Kingsley was unable to reconstitute the ideal Enlightenment-ordered worldview. The disparate strands of ideological and cultural influences that overlapped and enveloped him during his circum-Atlantic travels left him "bewildered" with a chaotic, fundamentally unstable "moral sense."[9] In the end, he remained little more than a bundle of cultural refractions, unresolved philosophical tensions, weighed down with blatant deception.[10]

Uncovering the history of Zephaniah Kingsley's fragmented worldview and self-recreation is of crucial concern. As is often the case, the bulk of Kingsley's public writings

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[8] Some of the key texts that have contributed to my understanding (as well as supplied much of the anthropological terminology used throughout this work) in addition to those in above footnote 5, are: Ira Berlin, "From Creole to Africa: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 53.2 (April 1996), 251-88; Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Charles Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections of Cultural Mixture," *diacritics*, 29.3 (Fall 1999), 40-62; the outstanding collection of essays in Juanita De Barros, Audra Diptee, David V. Trotman, eds., *Beyond Fragmentation: Perspectives on Caribbean History* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006).

[9] The terms are Lydia Maria Child's in assessing Kingsley in "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII," in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press, 2000), 112.

[10] Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 2004), 1-19, 24-28; Elisa Larkin Nascimento, *The Sorcery of Color: Identity, Race, and Gender in Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 9-41; Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 92-116; Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Scotland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1-8; Celeste Ray, "Transatlantic Scots and Ethnicity," in Celeste Ray, ed., *Transatlantic Scots* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005), 21-38.

conceal more than they reveal. Complex and seemingly benevolent, his ideological system and beliefs about race and slavery were contorted by many subsequent interpretations.[11] By wedding Florida fiction to an incomplete and superficial reading of Zephaniah's life and times, the oral record and historical record have ominously merged. In a 1996 article, Daniel L. Fountain warned of the dangers that the unfortunate turn of events has had on the present. "The distortions of Kingsley's life in the historical record are deeply disturbing because they have influenced significantly the interpretation of slavery in antebellum Florida," Fountain writes. "Past efforts to fit Kingsley as only slightly outside the Southern mainstream imply an ideological homogeneity that never existed and ignore deep regional divisions that led East Florida to oppose the idea of statehood in 1837."[12]

If anything, Fountain understates the problem. The distorted tale of Zephaniah Kingsley obscures the brutal reality of power, race, and sexual relations across the color line that was the Atlantic world slave system. It obscures the unspeakable horror of the capture, confinement, and shipment of some twelve million people from the continent of Africa to the Americas. It obscures the plain fact that Kingsley—not despite, but because of—his role as a learned, enlightened patriarch, used the twin forces of physical and psychological warfare to keep his bondmen obedient and productive. Try as it may, modernity cannot exercise the demon of

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[11] The path as it concerns historical misinterpretation can be traced to Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (Originally published 1918; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, reprint 1966), 294-95; and Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro in Our History*, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: Assoc. Publishers, 1922), 106; Carita Doggett Corse, *The Key to the Golden Isles* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1931); Philip S. May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist (1765-1843)," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 23 (January 1945): 145-59; Faye L. Glover, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Nonconformist, Slave Trader, Patriarch," M.A. Thesis, Atlanta University, 1970; numerous other works of fiction exist as well but are beyond my present concerns.

[12] Daniel L. Fountain, "The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley," *The Southern Historian*, 17 (1996), 42.

slavery from its sordid past. Certainly the Kingsley Myth should no longer be called into service to do so.[13]

What follows is an attempt to trace the formation and fragmentation of the Atlantic Mind through the life of Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. *The Atlantic Mind* is based on several archival sources previously unknown in Kingsley research as well as newer studies in Atlantic world history. It does not, of course, presume to be an exhaustive biography. Kingsley's fascinating life was lived more in the shadows than light; as such, much of it remains necessarily hidden. However, I have attempted to keep the subject himself in frame as much as possible. Kingsley's travels place him as a vital component of the complex communication links of information and goods across the Atlantic as a foot soldier of empire and the slave trade. In articulating his own variation of the evolving organic concept of the proslavery argument and its increasingly sectional identity, he was also one of many ardent defenders of slavery whose words and ideas would ultimately lead to southern secession and the unspeakable tragedy of civil war. Tracing Zephaniah Kingsley's manipulations of identity and race through his peripatetic journey serves to go beyond the infinite masks of his self-invention and expose the deeply imbedded transatlantic dimensions of power.

[13] Antoinette T. Jackson with Allan F. Burns, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve: Ethnohistorical Study of the Kingsley Plantation Community* (Atlanta: Cultural Resources Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 2006), 17; J. P. White, "Christmas at the Plantation," *The North American Review*, 278 (November/December 1993), 8-9.

CHAPTER ONE

A DIVERGENT FATE: ZEPHANIAH KINGSLEY, JR. AND SELF-REINVENTION IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ATLANTIC

For the Kingsleys of Bristol, England, the economic situation at home was depressing. The port of Bristol experienced unprecedented growth in transatlantic trade revenue. Fortunes were regularly made and lost. Merchant Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr., the family patriarch, found himself in the latter category. London, he knew, was both expensive and intensely competitive for merchants. Gathering what remained of his goods, Zephaniah Sr. sought a new start in the promising market of British South Carolina.[1] Before the American Revolution, colonial South Carolina was among the wealthiest locales in the British Empire. Through an elaborate web of transatlantic market connections, many of the most astute business minds acquired small fortunes. Merchants in particular were especially ruthless and calculating participants. With the rupture of war, those like Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. had a spectacular rise and fall. In little more than two decades, the Atlantic markets at once destroyed one generation of wealthy, seemingly secure Royal subjects and spawned another generation reared on violence, mobility, anxiety, and adaptation. The diverging fates of father and son were thus intertwined; each owed its destiny to the other. Before the end of the eighteenth century, Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. had heeded the lessons of his father and embarked on a brutal, never ending quest for wealth. Consciously losing his identity in the process, he reinvented parts of himself to better adapt to the high stakes game of Atlantic commerce.

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[1] Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 2; Kenneth Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 22-23.

Born of the "theater of intercultural interaction" that was the Seven Years' War, the eighteenth-century Atlantic world was one of revolution. As the French, British, and Spanish forces fought that protracted conflict across continents and entire hemispheres, the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 permanently altered the fate of the western world.[2] At once, the staggering combination of complex diplomatic shuffling, international power politics, a transatlantic economy, and a seemingly all-pervasive Enlightenment mentality helped forge a remarkably diverse world marked by movement and cultural mixing. Atlantic markets and an assortment of people perennially searching for wealth and economic independence were at the center of that world.[3] Most participants failed, though some grew quite wealthy. The fates of the latter travelled and inspired others in a vast, complex network of communications that represented a real and crucial component of developing transatlantic ties.[4]

Before the American Revolution port cities like British Charlestown, South Carolina, buzzed with the hustle and bustle of transatlantic commerce. Amidst the arrival and departure of ships, an influx of merchants and sailors sought opportunities that urban life in Charlestown afforded. From the taverns to counting houses, its many visitors called on family, friends, and

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[2] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage, 2001), xxii (term), 503-06; J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 292; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 282, 283; Robin Blackburn. *The Making of New World Slavery* (New York: Verso, 1997), 495; Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 59, 86, 198.

[3] S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 1-12, 92-125; Joyce Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 27, 29, 23-65; Laurent Dubois, "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History*, 31.1 (February 2006), 1-14; Greg Dening, "Deep Times, Deep Spaces: Civilizing the Sea," in Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun, eds., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13-33.

[4] Julius S. Scott III, "'The Common Wind': Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1986; Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), see especially Chapters 5-7.

business contacts in a complex system that linked continents and cultures across great distances. Lured by the promise of wealth in the British Colonies and the opportunity to escape burdensome debt, many poor European emigrants risked a long and difficult journey to North America. Europe's merchants were especially vulnerable as well. Bound to complex international economies and often at the mercy of Mother Nature, they often found themselves overextended. For many such merchants in the eighteenth century, the Colonies seemed to offer opportunities in land, eager consumers, and plenty of capital.

Leaving their home in Bristol, thirty-six year old merchant Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. and family emigrated to Charlestown, South Carolina in 1770, "carrying over a Cargo Goods with an intention to Establish himself there."[5] Charlestown was a locus of power and concentrated wealth and an open door to the bustling Atlantic world economy. The winds and waters of the Atlantic brought with them an array of people, ideas, hopes, emotions, and rumors of revolution. For many the city was a place of business and new opportunities; for countless African slaves arriving in chains, the stop was but another place in a never ending voyage.[6]

One of eight children, Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. was the first son and second child born to Zephaniah and Isabella Kingsley on December 4, 1765, at their Wine Street home in Bristol. In time he too recognized Charlestown's strengths, its weaknesses, and later made it a frequent stop in his travels. His father, listed in a local Bristol directory as "linen draper, textiles(s)," was bankrupt by December 1768.[7] Born in 1734 in Lincolnshire, the elder Kingsley had married

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[5] "Loyalist Case No. 1153, Zephaniah Kingsley [Sr.]," in Alexander Fraser, ed., *Ontario Legislative Assembly Sessional Papers: Volume XXXVII, Part XII: First Session of Eleventh Legislature of the Province of Ontario, Session 1905* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1905), 1198.

[6] Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7, 121-22, 125.

[7] Daniel L. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. and Fort George Island: New Evidence on Elusive Subjects," *Jacksonville Historical Report & St. Andrews Bulletin*, (January 1996), 5, citing records found in London;

Scottish spinster Isabella Johnston at the Anglican Church of St. Mary le Bow on September 29, 1763, a rather surprising choice given the Kingsleys' lengthy Quaker lineage. At the time Zephaniah Sr. was a registered member of Allhollows Parish on Bread Street.[8] Historian Daniel L. Schafer suggested that the choice perhaps reflected the influence of Isabella's Anglican family, for Isabella herself subsequently converted to the Quaker faith and remained so until her death.[9]

For a struggling textile merchant Charlestown was an attractive locale. At the time it was one of the premier British ports in North America. British South Carolina, as was the case with the French colonies too, had roughly doubled its cotton fabric consumption in recent decades.[10] The city therefore offered Kingsley's textile business an expanding market. Difficulties still remained. Increasing tensions between Britain and its American colonies, for one thing, complicated the ebb and flow of commerce by disrupting the rhythm of transatlantic trade. Growing contempt on both sides of the Atlantic compounded problems of distance and government participation. The addition of financial strain fomented revolution as colonists in Boston, Massachusetts first rejected parliamentary measures and then resorted to arms.[11]

Zephaniah Sr.'s occupation is listed in marriage license records at St. Mary le Bow and in England's *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1768, which also lists his bankruptcy.

[8] Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. and Fort George," 5.

[9] Will of [Mrs.] Isabella Kingsley, 21 April 1805, New Hanover County (Wilmington), North Carolina. Copy from New Hanover County Will Book A-B, 248, in Zephaniah Kingsley File, St. Augustine Historical Society, St. Augustine, Florida (SAHS). Isabella died in 1814.

[10] Robert S. DuPlessis, "Cloth and the Emergence of the Atlantic Economy," in Peter A. Coclanis, ed., *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 77; Edward Pearson, "Planters Full of Money: The Self-Fashioning of the Eighteenth-Century South Carolina Elite," in Jack P. Greene, ed., *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 307.

[11] John M. Murrin, "Political Development," in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 42-43, 46-47.

The Kingsleys' new home of Charlestown had plagued the Crown for its "slow burn" technique of exercising, quite unapologetically, its own autonomy in nullifying imperial edicts for at least a decade by 1770. In fear for their property and persons, colonists bullied Charlestown's two Stamp Act collectors into abandoning their collection duties—both within a week's time in October 1765. Even the city's courts clashed over proper procedure during this period, as pro- and anti-Stamp Act officials managed to stall, and, in some cases, cancel proceedings altogether in the face of government authority. Such outright defiance proved only a mild foreshadowing of the hostility to come.[12] The family of new arrivals was, unbeknownst to them, walking into the beginnings of the revolutionary struggle in North America that would alter their lives indefinitely. Before the end of the struggle for American Independence, the Kingsley family suffered from Zephaniah Sr.'s Loyalist ideology and firm convictions. Along with thousands of other Loyalists, he was banished from the province and left heavily indebted.[13]

South Carolinians found an earlier route to their disdain for Parliamentary authority: the political structure of the colony crumbled earlier than elsewhere in the colonies. The so-called Wilkes Fund Controversy threatened to tear the Royal Government of South Carolina apart as early as a year prior to the Kingsleys' arrival. Reprimanded by the Ministry in Britain after the Commons House of South Carolina sent £1500 sterling in support of English "martyr" John Wilkes, the ensuing debates were fierce and quickly spiraled. According to Bernard Bailyn, Wilkes' significance was his symbolic defiance of a corrupt Parliament, as colonists perceived by the prevailing ideal of classical republicanism. Bypassing specific Crown orders forbidding

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[12] Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, reprint 1970), 76, 119-20; Edmund S. Morgan and Helen S. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution*, New Edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 162, 182-83.

[13] Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 224-25.

colonists to issue funds without authorization, the Commons House subsequently refused any subordinate position on the matter.[14] For staunchly loyal British subjects like Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr., subverting Parliament was simply unthinkable.

Passed on September 4, 1770, the colonial House Assembly's "Resolves," a series of denouncements of the unlimited Parliamentary power, cited "usage and practice" as "an undoubted right" to exercise such power. The issue persisted. At once challenging and consequently altering the relational dynamics of the colonial "periphery" to its distant government "core" over the nagging question of sovereignty. It was a slippery slope. In J. G. A. Pocock's words, as "Americans began to talk about corruption, the situation rapidly passed out of intellectual control."[15] By February next, no further legislation passed the Commons. Consequently, Royal Government in South Carolina continued to function in name only.[16]

The colony's political tone lapsed into a heap of mistrust and blatant abuse. Critics of Parliament like Arthur Lee, for one, categorically attested "That the Colonies are discontented and disturbed—that Government is embarrassed, from one End of the Continent to the other—are Facts, which cannot be controverted." Sir Egerton Leigh, whom Lee answered in pamphlet response, acknowledged only dogged obedience to Parliament and Crown. An example of the "Supreme Legislature" is found only in the British, says Leigh. The colonies in such context were clearly "Subordinate." Leigh reinforced his point thus: "The Colonies are not Conquests

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[14] Jack P. Greene, ed., *The Nature of Colony Constitutions: Two Pamphlets on the Wilkes Fund Controversy in South Carolina by Sir Egerton Leigh and Arthur Lee* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 3-55; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Enlarged Edition (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, reprint 1992), 110-11.

[15] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Second Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, reprint 2003), 507.

[16] Jack P. Greene, ed., *The Nature of Colony Constitutions*, 3-55; Greene, "The Wilkes Fund Controversy in South Carolina" and "Resolves of the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly, September 4, 1770," in Jack P. Greene, ed., *Colonies to Nation, 1763-1789: A Documentary History of the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., reprint 1975), 174-77.

but English Plantations"—implying that all the economic and social peculiarities of South Carolina (and the colonies generally) were *peculiar* to be sure, but they *were* very much at the mercy and whim of a power an ocean's length away.[17] The heart of the matter was relatively simple in Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr.'s mind. The peculiar character of Britain's colonies was the primary reason Englishmen like himself left Britain to take full advantage of.

The idea of the colonies as simply marginalized outposts of the British Empire was implicit in the mud slinging. Good for little more than revenue from their plantation economies, but privileged (at least in theory) simply to be allowed to refer to themselves as subjects of the Britain, many American slaveowners resented what they considered the Crown's blatant neglect. Despite the wealth that South Carolina generated for the empire, the Crown consistently refused to send support to deal with the problem of a swelling enslaved labor force. For white South Carolina slave masters outnumbered by a "black majority" the situation was, despite being of their own making, a matter of life and death. The view from London was therefore somewhat condescending in their eyes, and more than a little naïve, given the precarious racial imbalance. Clearly, the slaveowners reasoned, the Crown cared little or fundamentally misunderstood the social reality. Either way they determined the alternatives as unacceptable. For England's part, their own population of Africans according to best estimates amounted to no more than 5,000 individuals in all—but a fraction of the four to one ration of black to white in the Carolina Lowcountry at the time.[18]

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[17] Sir Egerton Leigh, "Considerations on Certain Political Transactions of the Province of South Carolina… (1774)," in Greene, ed., *Nature of Colony Constitutions*, 117, 131 (quote); Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 182-87, attempts to unravel the ambiguity of the era's terminology.

[18] Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 166; Vincent Carretta, *Equiano the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 381n23; Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 48.

A substantial African population was a necessary consequence of the ruthlessly exploitative plantation economy that enriched both colony and Crown. At the time of the Kingsleys' arrival Charlestown had the third busiest port in North America and a population of about 10,000 British subjects. The urban export-oriented transatlantic economy, best known for its slave produced rice and indigo crops for Britain's mercantilist textile industry, was entirely dependant on both slave labor and Great Britain for its continued financial success. Following a three year ban importation ban on slaves into the colony, the numbers rapidly increased, reaching into the thousands each year after its 1769 resumption. Slaveowners clearly invested greater portions of ideological and capital resources into the plantation economy like never before. Thanks to a burgeoning plantation frontier moving outward from the Charlestown center, fertile land, improved market access, and the promise of wealth made the colony ripe for opportunity. Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. and family thus arrived at a prodigious economic moment.[19]

Zephaniah and his wife Isabella appear to have entered the merchant trade soon after the family's arrival.[20] An ad in the *South Carolina Gazette* of 1773, for example, finds Kingsley advertising "his store in Bedon's Alley."[21] Merchants prospered by forging consumer and business contacts in crucial markets. Although the evidence is somewhat spotty, it does suggest that the Kingsleys were quite mobile during their residence in Charlestown. The birth of their

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[19] Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 148-77; David A. Smith, "Dependent Urbanization in Colonial America: The Case of Charleston, South Carolina," *Social Forces*, 66.1 (September 1987), 2, 6, 8, 9-12, 17, 19-22. Smith suggests that in the four year period from 1768-72, Charleston sent 48 % of its total exported goods directly to Great Britain, while bringing in 42 % of its total imported tonnage from the same. This dependence, the author argues, did not rescind even after the American Revolution; and Charleston's inability to compete with the increased prominence of Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia as well as a discouraged, anti-investment elite, accounted heavily for its economic downfall in the early nineteenth century; Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 63-4.

[20] Conveyances Books, Register of Mesne Conveyance, S363001, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia (SCDAH).

[21] *South Carolina Gazette*, August 23, 1773; see also *South Carolina Gazette* November 29, 1773.

sixth child, Elizabeth, in Kent is one such clue.[22] As a relatively new arrival in Charlestown, it is likely that such travel helped secure funds and prospective connections as well as fulfilled familial obligations for his "large family." Zephaniah Jr., as well, perhaps reveals the extent of such travels when he later remarked while in Liverpool (England), "I have not once been able to absent myself to inquire after those companions of my youth and dearest connections."[23]

At the dawn of the American Revolution the Kingsleys appeared not to have slowed their travels. Martha, the last child of Zephaniah and Isabella, was born August 10, 1775, in New Jersey. The Kingsleys appeared to have remained there for some time, for the October *South Carolina and American General Gazette* reported that, "On Tuesday last arrived here from Philadelphia in the Sloop *Bentham* William Moore, Master, Mr. Zephaniah Kingsley and family, ---and others."[24] Possibly as a result of such extended absences, Zephaniah Sr. forged and maintained lucrative merchant connections. The absence was more probably a calculated respite after being publicly implicated with two other merchants of importing tea from London, contrary to an ongoing boycott, in November 1774. The incident ended only after local officials pressured the accused to follow its Boston brethren, dumping the tea into the harbor.[25] In spite of the disruptive war with England, for a time he was able to capitalize on the American occupation of Charlestown and took to buying several properties from South Carolina to

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[22] Elizabeth was born April 29, 1772 in Rochester in Kent, and registered at the St. Nicholas meeting of the Society of Friends. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. and Fort George," 5.

[23] Zephaniah Kingsley [Jr.] to James Hamilton, Liverpool, February 28, 1805, James Hamilton Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (DU).

[24] *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, October 16-20, 1775.

[25] Account from the Monday, November 28, 1774 issue of the *South Carolina Gazette* reprinted in A. S. Salley, ed., "Letters from Hon. Henry Laurens to his son John, 1773-1776," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 3.4 (October 1902), 212-13n5.

Georgia. As Zephaniah Sr. later testified, the properties were all purchased "on speculation hoping the times would come round."[26]

In August 1775 Kingsley drafted a Memorial for titles to four tracts of South Carolina land totaling over 1,500 acres in Craven and Berkley Counties. About that same time he paid some £3000 to erect a "good brick house" of three stories on Broad Street in Charlestown. By 1781 he had amassed no less than ten land properties. For many Loyalists, the war appeared an ominous threat to the security of such holdings and they fled the province. Merchants like Kingsley bought the land titles from the fleeing owners for much less than their pre-war worth. According to a long-time acquaintance of Kingsley's, for a time land was sold at a drastically reduced rate. "All lands sold cheaper from 1776 to 1778," said Alexander Garden, "but they rose on the Evacuation of Philadelphia on the Idea that Gt. Britain meant to Evacuate all America." During that time, the elder Kingsley bought perhaps a half dozen assorted properties.[27]

One such property Kingsley purchased in Beaufort, for example, was seized from American merchant Daniel De Saussure. The property contained "two good Houses…one made use as a dwelling house. The other a dry-goods store...." In addition, the property featured no less than "a Kitchen, dairy, Wash House, smoke House, Coach house, Stables and other Buildings all in good repair built of Tabby and walled round with the same Materials...." The

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[26] Zephaniah Kingsley [Sr.] Loyalist Examination Transcripts, South Carolina Volumes from New York Public Library Transcripts of American Loyalist Examinations and Decisions, RW3169, Volume 52: 488-95, SCDAH; An abbreviated and annotated version of the elder Kingsley's Loyalist transcripts are also featured with slightly different wordings in some places in the personal notes of Daniel Parker Coke, a prominent attorney and appointed commissioner, collected and edited by Hugh Edward Egerton, ed., *The Royal Commission on the Losses and Services of American Loyalists, 1783 to 1785, being the Notes of Mr. Daniel Parker Coke, M.P. one of the Commissioners during that Period* (New York: Burt Franklin, reprint 1971), 96-7.

[27] Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200; Peter Wilson Coldham, ed., *American Migrations, 1765-1799: The Lives, times and families of colonial Americans who remained loyal to the British crown before, during and after the Revolutionary War, as related in their own words and through their correspondence* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000), 706.

store, Kingsley noted in his claim, "will hold 100 [barrels] of Rice".[28] Such descriptions indicate the vastness of Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr.'s varied enterprises at the time, while foreshadowing a similar pattern of anticipating the risks, profit, and threats to wealth followed by Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. a generation later.

The presence of tabby structures in the Southern Lowcountry more often meant the presence of African slaves. Long found in remnants of European, Spanish, and African building styles, the rather novel process was repeated throughout many plantation layouts for its durability, inexpensive quality, and relative ease of construction.[29] From his time in Charlestown, Zephaniah Kingsley Sr. no doubt made a fortune in part from African slavery. The exact number of slaves owned by Kingsley is not known. Thomas Skottowe, a former South Carolina resident, later told the British government that Kingsley owned "several."[30] One such rice plantation Kingsley owned near Savannah, Georgia, had "about 1100 Acres" of "rich Rice Swamp" and "Negro houses for at least 150 Negroes and several other Buildings."[31] At the time Kingsley apparently had slaves scattered in Jamaica and throughout the Southern Lowcountry,

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[28] Kingsley Loyalist Examination, 476, SCDAH; Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, George C. Rogers, Jr., *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume 1, 1514-1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 245. Incidentally, the authors mistake Zephaniah Sr. for Zephaniah Jr., placing the father later in Florida.

[29] Thomas Spalding, "On the Mode of Constructing tabby Buildings, and the Propriety of Improving Our Plantations in a Permanent Manner," *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs*, December 1830. Spalding, of Sapelo Island, Georgia, was later an acquaintance of the younger Kingsley and son of Loyalist James Spalding. Kingsley himself made liberal use of the tabby for his own slave cabins, which can still be seen at Kingsley's Fort George Island plantation located north of Jacksonville, Florida. On the fascinating life of Spalding draw from minimal sources see E. Merton Coulter, *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1940).

[30] Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200; Fraser's transcripts evidently misread Thomas Skottowe for "Skeltows" and even "Skelton."

[31] Kingsley Loyalist Examination, RW3169, 52: 477, SCDAH. On the same plantation were additional residence buildings for slaves as well, which would possibly account for a higher figure than 150 total slaves.

probably upwards of 200 or more in number; he deeded the remaining chattel "to his Children" effective at the war's end.[32]

The Kingsleys were Quakers but never refrained from holding slaves themselves.[33] As a whole, Quakers gradually shifted from eighteenth century ambivalence to a unified antislavery stance later in the nineteenth century, particularly after purging dissenters. Quakers in South Carolina never achieved a uniform position on the issue. Successful Quakers such as Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. invariably "faced a constant tension between [their] religious ideals and worldly affairs."[34] As some scholars have noted, such tensions manifested themselves in a spectrum of ways. Many sought to remedy Quakerism's main beliefs with slaveholding; others apparently interpreted their own convictions selectively; and still others turned away from the institution. In spite of the persistence of slaveholding in the Kingsley family and the devout religious stance of at least some of the members, these tensions might have forced Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. to in fact sidestep religion altogether; this would make sense given the context in the American South, where many local meetings gradually withered or simply left the region. Although not barred from attending, many Quakers faced extraordinary pressure to rescind their property in human chattel.[35] Later in life, a defiant Kingsley mockingly suggested that "he still loves to attend

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[32] Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr., Power of Attorney to Carthart & Mowatt, June 1785, Hugh T. Hazen Collection of Ward Chipman Papers, New Brunswick Museum, Saint John (NBM); Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200.

[33] A Quaker visitor to Charlestown in 1772, William Dillwyn, met Zephaniah Sr. and Isabella Kingsley at the local Society of Friends Meeting on December 6 and 20 of that year. See A. S. Salley, ed., "The Diary of William Dillwyn," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 36.2 (April 1935), 34 and; *Ibid*., 36.3 (July 1935), 75; as a merchant Kingsley Sr. was also complicit in delivering up runaway slaves. The notice of "Two Negro Fellows named *Jack* and *Cooper*" belonging to a William Hanahan appeared in the January 25, 1781 *Royal Georgia Gazette* offering "A reward of Three Guineas each will be given for said Negroes, on their being delivered to...Mr. Zephaniah Kingsley in Charlestown...."

[34] A. Glenn Crothers, "Quaker Merchants and Slavery in Early National Alexandria, Virginia: The Case of William Hartshorne," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 25 (Spring 2005), 49, 69, 71, 77.

Quaker meetings; particularly silent ones, where he says he has planned some of his best bargains."[36]

As a port integrated into the transatlantic economy, Charlestown's citizens benefitted from ties to the slave trade and their landscapes carved of sprawling agricultural plantations. Zephaniah Kingsley Sr. certainly had little practical reason to contest owning slaves. Black labor fed and clothed his family with the profits made from rice and indigo, providing a higher quality of life for them than most contemporaries could hope for. The immediate concern of a "black majority" in the Lowcountry, after all, probably fostered some semblance of white unity on the issue as it was. Particularly in urban settings, the large numbers of slaves that Charleston imported helped create a profitable situation but certainly fraught with danger.[37] The threat of revolt increased as swelling slave populations and revolutionary rhetoric accumulated along with Atlantic world specie in these "urban export-processing zones," ripe with "their polyglot flows of sailors and merchants, their irreducible dependence upon a broader world full of subversive ideas and threatening possibilities."[38]

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[35] Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 138-39; Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 81, 250-51, 274-76; Herbert Aptheker, "The Quakers and Negro Slavery," *Journal of Negro History*, 25.3 (July 1940), 341; on Quakers generally, see Rufus M. Jones' classic study, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1911); and Sydney V. James, "The Impact of the American Revolution on Quakers' Ideas about Their Sect," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 19.3 (July 1962), 360-82.

[36] Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr., "Last Will and Testament (1843)," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 111, 118. Kingsley also went further in specifically demanding that after his death, his body not be associated with *anything* religious in nature, from ceremony to burial.

[37] Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), see Chapters 2, 5, 8, 10.

[38] Walter Johnson, "Clerks All! Or, Slaves with Cash," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26 (Winter 2006), 650-51; Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, Second Edition (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 225-26.

To the north, the Old Dominion passed the "Virginia Declaration of Rights," asserting its own power in the face of British encroachments on the rights of colonial British citizens. Virginia's response seemed to spell disaster as both northern and southern colonies appeared to respond more or less in unison. The reality was decidedly more complicated than the alarmed perceptions of the English 3000 miles away.[39] Merchants quickly became targets of colonial retaliation. Often heavily indebted, colonists owed their hard earned future endeavors to a group increasingly perceived as culturally foreign. Unfortunately, many merchants like Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. collectively bore the brunt of American frustration as they were, due to the perceived cultural clannish behaviors of many of its Scottish component particularly, viewed as opportunistic, parasitic outsiders that tried to "enslave" the colonists.[40]

In Charlestown, events were more complicated than in the Upper South colonies. Taken by the British in May 1780, the port cities of Charlestown and nearby Savannah both retained large Loyalist populations throughout the war. During the Charlestown siege Zephaniah Sr. "was obliged by the Americans to act as an Oversee of their Negroes." From threat of banishment, he later claimed that duty to his family compelled him to comply. By June, Zephaniah Sr. and a host of others signed an address pledging their loyalty to the Crown and sincerely hoped "to be readmitted to the character and condition of British subjects...."[41] In the

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[39] Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 62, suggests more unison on this point due to market influences and similar republican ideological influences stemming from the English Dissenters and the like.

[40] Norman K. Risjord, *Jefferson's America, 1760-1815, Second Edition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 128-31; Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 54; Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), xiii-xxi. See for example, the plight of Jacob Hite of Virginia in 1773-74, whose deed to Cherokee lands was revoked and left him without ability to pay his debts to merchant James Hunter. Hunter himself had debts in England whose ability to repay them was predicated on Hite paying his debt first. The local sheriff posse attempted to arrest and jail Hite, who retaliated with a gang of his armed slaves—all fearful of sale at auction. Hite escaped but his slaves did not. They were sold at auction as feared. The Revolution intervened thereafter.

[41] "Address of Inhabitants of Charlesto[w]n to General Sir Henry Clinton and Vice-Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot, 5 June 1780," in K. G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783: Volume XVIII,*

face of the successful American-French triumph at Yorktown that formally ended hostilities in October 1781, the British still controlled Charlestown through the following December. A bitter struggle between Loyalists and Patriots continued in South Carolina long after England's capitulation.[42]

Dispersed throughout the countryside, South Carolinian "patriots" refused to lay down their arms. They convened their own government on January 8 at Jacksonboro, despite British attempts to quash it. Passing several resolutions and carrying on the business of running a counteroffensive, the makeshift government passed a number of confiscation acts. Dividing a compiled list of "Tories" into six classes, the legislature subsequently published their names in Charlestown's *Royal Gazette* of March 20, 1782. Among the names listed in the third such class—"Those who petitioned to be armed in defence of the British Government, after the conquest of this Province"—was Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr.[43]

The purpose of the published list was ostensibly to harass and threaten those Loyalists that acted against their former friends and neighbors. The *Royal Gazette* reported that "The following has been sent to us from the country, as a correct list of those persons whose estates have been confiscated by an act of the Rebel Assembly at Jacksonburgh." The elder Kingsley by all accounts remained a stalwart Loyalist throughout the American occupation. His loyalty, Loyalist James Simpson said, came "from principal [sic]." For example, while many Loyalists were taken prisoner by local colonial authorities, Kingsley had "supplied about £200 to certain

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Transcripts 1780 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1978), 102-04; Zephaniah Sr. was also listed as a Private on the muster roll on at least one occasion as well: "An alarm being fired on Wednesday 2nd Decr. 1778...." The group, of which Private "Zepheriah [sic] Kingsley" was present, "After having being reviewed by the President and Privy Council, discharged at nine O'Clock." *The South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, 10.2 (Spring 1982), 64.

[42] Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 258, 268-69.

[43] *Royal Gazette*, March 20, 1782.

prisoners in imprisonment," according to one witness's estimation.[44] If that were not enough to bring disfavor by the local government, he likely made fewer friends during the British reoccupation of Charlestown in 1780, when Kingsley said that he "was appointed one of the persons to examine into and distinguish between the Loyal and disaffected Inhabitants."[45] In so many words, his behavior made Kingsley "exceedingly obnoxious to the Rebel Part."[46] The elder Kingsley's stalwart principles effectively meant the end of the family's prosperity and arguably provided Zephaniah Jr., especially, with a valuable lesson in the risks of standing for a particular cause.

The British occupation of Charlestown ended in December 1782. The remaining year in the city was a time of tremendous hardship and uncertainty for the Kingsley family. Throughout the war, Zephaniah Sr. had been imprisoned no less than three times. He had nearly £2100 "in Rice[,] dry goods[,] and Tobacco" seized from his stores by colonial soldiers, and was "otherwise ill treated both in person and property on Account of his attachment to the British Government...."[47] By April he had had enough, offering "To be sold cheap for cash only. The stock of Kingsley and Taylor, chiefly linen drapery, etc." The *Royal Gazette* later that month likewise carried a notice that he would soon depart

> for England with his family by the next opportunity; He therefore intreats [sic] every person who is indebted to himself, Kingsley and Taylor, Kingsley and Oats or Rabon Crinsoz & Co., immediately to pay the same; and every person who has any demand upon himself, or any of the above Copartners, are desired to call for payment.[48]

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[44] Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1198.

[45] Kingsley Loyalist Examination, 486, SCDAH.

[46] *Ibid*., 496-97, SCDAH.

[47] *Ibid*., 472, SCDAH.

[48] *Royal Gazette*, August 30, 1782.

To make matters worse, that fall American authorities began seizing Kingsley's assets one by one. Although hoping to pay off a sizeable portion of his outstanding debts, Zephaniah Sr. was repeatedly frustrated in attempts to sell his remaining property. Under the terms of confiscation, Loyalist properties were exempt from settling debts. The policy was meant to financially paralyze and punish those that were considered betrayers of the American cause. "These unhappy and Distressful Circumstances have not only rendered your Memorialist incapable of satisfying his Creditors," Kingsley wrote to Crown commissioners, "but have likewise left him totally destitute of any present means of Subsistance [sic]."[49]

In the months following the American's success at Yorktown and the steady approach of General Nathanael Greene's colonial army to the city gates, the British evacuated Charlestown in mid-December 1782. Kingsley "was obliged to fly from Charles Town at the late Evacuation of the place" and had his remaining assets seized according to the South Carolina Assembly's Act for the Confiscation of Estate (dated February 26, 1782).[50] After depositing his property titles in the hands of his wife, Isabella, Zephaniah Sr. left South Carolina for Bristol with the formal evacuation without his family, finally arriving in late January.[51]

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[49] Kingsley Loyalist Examination, 474, SCDAH.

[50] *Ibid*., 473, SCDAH; *Royal Gazette*, March 20, 1782; Risjord, *Jefferson's America*, 165; on South Carolina and the Southern Campaign of the Revolution, see Carl P. Borick, *A Gallant Defense: The Siege of Charleston, 1780* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); on the increasing marginalization of Charleston in the nineteenth century, Lorri Glover, *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds among the Early South Carolina Gentry* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 143.

[51] *Ibid*., 488, SCDAH; Henry Laurens to Elias Vanderhorst, February 4, 1783, in David R. Chesnutt and C. James Taylor, eds., *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume 16: September 1, 1782-December 17, 1792* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 139-40, mentions the arrival of Kingsley Sr. and other Charlestown Loyalists at Bristol, which Laurens noted was part of Vanderhorst's previous letter; the contested titles to Kingsley Sr.'s lands were subsequently given by Isabella to her husband's former partner, "a Mr. Taylor," also a Loyalist, who was allowed to remain in Charlestown because he had apparently not actively participated in opposing the American occupation force.

After earlier property confiscations, Kingsley had perhaps hired out or temporarily placed several slaves in the hands of others lest he lose their value to colonial seizure. It is probable that at some of the elder Kingsley's property went to Jamaica with friends or acquaintances there exiled; Kingsley's Bristol connections, among others, had a lengthy connection to the island.[52] Some time later, he attempted to recoup the bulk of his remaining debts and property then at Kingston through a local merchant house. Only two such slaves that appeared in his property claims, "Kelsey a good Carpenter" and "Lucie an exceedingly good Washer," were specifically named in Jamaica as of June 1785.[53]

With their possessions strewn across the former British colonies, Southern Loyalists like the Kingsleys were rarely welcomed as refugees. Thousands of Loyalists, particularly after the British evacuations of Savannah and Charlestown, sailed directly for England; and still others were destined for sites as varied as the British Floridas, New York, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Complications over the nagging details of the British surrender remained. Although the majority of the "official" fighting ended after Yorktown, it was not until the Treaty of Paris in 1783 that diplomatic matters temporarily settled the issues of national boundaries. For example, refugees in East and West Florida and on the Mosquito Shore at the Bay of Honduras faced the prospect of emigrating yet again within a short time. The Spanish after all

[52] Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade*, 22.

[53] Kingsley Sr. to Carthart & Mowhat, June 1785, NBM; Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200; Kingsley Loyalist Examination, 482, SCDAH; in some cases sales of Kingsley's confiscated lands began *before* he had left South Carolina. For example, in the case of his Black Swamp rice plantation in Saint Peter's Parish near Savannah, John Fenwick had surveyed the property by the end of August 1782 and subsequently purchased about 750 acres of the vast estate. The mortgage and promissory note to the State Commissioners from Fenwick is in John Fenwick to Commissioners of the Loan Office, May 5, 1786, Commissioner of the Papers Medium Loan Mortgages, State Treasurer, S218157, 1: 134; SCDAH; Fenwick's own survey of the confiscated estate dated 25 August 1782 is in the Barrington S. King Papers, M1067, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. King was related to the King family of St. Simons Island, Georgia, a frequent destination for Zephaniah Jr. and his family relations.

regained both areas, prompting a mass exodus of British settlers from the area, to the frustration of many.[54]

Along with its initial population of Loyalist emigrants, Jamaica overall attracted the largest group of refugees of any locale. Given the impromptu influx of a second wave of settlers, the island eventually received something approaching 5,200 Loyalists in all. For merchants like Zephaniah Kingsley Sr., Jamaica at one represented a lucrative market for goods and extensive sources of credit; but in the post-war economy, the island had a pitiable dependency on foreign support for its survival.[55] As such, many refugees took advantage of British policies and went to Latin America, while those that continued to reside in Jamaica more often than not appeared to encroach financially and politically upon the island elites. And though it was a less than ideal financial arrangement for many concerned, the Caribbean coast of Latin America had at least been economically tied into the Jamaican merchant trade for some time.[56] Loyalist John Forbes no doubt reflected the sentiments of those like the Kingsleys that suddenly faced an uncertain future in an unknown destination: "From being settled and entirely to my wish…I am to be turned adrift, and again seek a resting place."[57]

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[54] St. John Robinson, "Southern Loyalists in the Caribbean and Central America," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 3-4 (1992), 205-10.

[55] Kingsley Sr. to Carthart & Mowhat, June 1785, NBM; Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200; Caroline Watterson Troxler, "Refuge, Resistance, and Reward: The Southern Loyalists' Claim on East Florida," *Journal of Southern History*, 55.4 (November 1989), 564.

[56] Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 20, 28, 29, 41, 50, 72, 73, 87.

[57] Quoted in Daniel L. Schafer, *St. Augustine's British Years, 1763-1784* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 2001), 249, see Chapter 14 generally for an excellent account of the emotionally charged exile experience; See Patrick Tonyn to Lord Sydney, St. Augustine, December 14, 1784, in Joseph Byrne Lockey, ed., *East Florida, 1783-1785: A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of Them Translated* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), 332-34, lodging a formal complaint from Loyalists at Nassau that found themselves in "disagreeable situations," after the evacuation. Tonyn said that "their suffering and their losses have been great, which they bore with patience and fortitude highly to their honour." They were unwelcomed by Nassau authorities, as the emigrants reconstituted kinship networks and were perceived as threats to the established order of business and the power structure.

Nevertheless, the Kingsleys ultimately settled at the British colony of New Brunswick. Like thousands of other Loyalists, rebuilding family finances was paramount for Zephaniah Sr. In late 1784 he had written Loyalist Gideon White on several occasions about his merchant goods overdue from London. Months had passed with no word from the firm of Maltby & Sons. Kingsley begged White to use every opportunity to discover their expected arrival.[58] He had, after all, a sizeable debt in America plus the accruing interest. The Crown promised compensation for Loyalists, but the prospects would likely be far off. Britain acquired Canada in the formal treaty that ended the Seven Years' War in 1763. Scottish settlers in particular poured into Nova Scotia as it was then known to escape crushing economic conditions. The area was therefore a good choice, as it housed a major port and served as a center for cultural and political refuge.[59] The vast port was constructed around mid-century and, according to one estimate, could house approximately 1000 ships. Some Loyalists of the American Revolution emigrated to the area before the evacuation period; they apparently chose the site for its proximities to both New York and New England, as well as its "emptiness." British surveyors were generally pleased with the territory as they found neither the Catholic Church nor French presence in the area to combat, culturally or militarily, while abundant sources of timber and codfish supplied food and shelter.[60]

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[58] William Abbott to Gideon White, Halifax, July 27, 1784; Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. to Gideon White, Saint John, September 3, 1784; Kingsley Sr. to Gideon White, Parr Town, October 4, 1784, Gideon White Family Papers, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

[59] Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 56-60; Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988) 237-38, 428-29.

[60] Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (New York: Ecco, 2006), 228-30. The pre-immigration population was approximately 10,000 in Nova Scotia; Bernhard Knollenberg, *Origin of the American Revolution, 1759-1766*, Revised Edition (New York: Free Press, 1965), 1, 8-10, 14; W. O. Raymond, *Glimpses of the Past: A History of the River St. John, A.D. 1604-1784* (Saint John, New Brunswick: n.p., 1905), 4-5, 345.

At New Brunswick, Kingsley and other Loyalists faced a daunting number of objectives. As new settlers to a frontier settlement, creating viable communities, recouping losses, and starting anew for many seemed impossible.[61] For the elder Kingsley, New Brunswick's port thankfully still brought in some wealth and influence. While in London addressing his Loyalist claim, Zephaniah Sr. importantly reconstituted and strengthened the vast kinship networks that merchants required. Although the bulk of his energy was devoted to finances, Kingsley Sr. and others also looked to the future. In 1785, for instance, he was one of a half dozen Memorialists to petition New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor Thomas Carleton for establishing a university there.[62]

By 1785, Kingsley had appeared in London on a few occasions and had a lawyer pressing recovery of a significant portion of his forfeited estate that was unforthcoming. To complicate matters, the Kingsley family was fractured by the patriarch's banishment from South Carolina. Isabella Kingsley, who proved to be a strong and astute businesswoman, was likewise determined to press for her family's financial security. Remaining in Charleston without her husband, she petitioned local authorities to "Humbley implor[e] that [he] may be allowed to Return" only weeks after his banishment. Isabella asked leniency on behalf of "her children—who are most of them natives of this Country and Citizens of the State." In the event that her demands were refused, she pleaded with authorities not to sell her husband's confiscated properties for want of funds.[63]

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[61] New Brunswick was so designated in 1784 and divided into eight counties.

[62] Petition of Memorialists to Lieutenant Governor Thomas Carleton, 1785, copy in Zephaniah Kingsley File, SAHS. Part of the provisions emphasized the duties of the petitioners as parents raising sons in the new province; Zephaniah Sr. had, in addition to Zephaniah Jr., two more sons, Johnston (b. May 4, 1767) and George (b. October 11, 1768) that could have attended university therein; the petition is reproduced in its entirety also in Joseph Wilson Lawrence, *The Judges of New Brunswick and Their Times*, edited by Alfred A. Stockton (Saint John, New Brunswick: n.p., 1907), 265-66.

Historian Caroline Troxler suggests that South Carolina Loyalists like Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. typically left without their families.[64] As such, the elder Kingsley probably welcomed the arrival of his son, Zephaniah Jr. soon after settling. The younger Kingsley, at nearly eighteen years old, had perhaps remained in the English capital pursuing an education By August 1783 Zephaniah Jr. arrived at Charleston with a cousin from London, eventually rejoining his father in Saint John, New Brunswick.[65] Growing more despondent with his separation from his family, Kingsley Sr. petitioned the South Carolina House of Representatives in the "hope that his past Conduct will be forgot and that by the interposition of your Honorable House, he may be again admitted to return, trusting that his future deportment will in some measure atone for his past Conduct." Likewise appealing the cause of "humanity" and the plight of his wife and children that remained in the state, he admitted that "by the Infirmities of old Age which is hourly increasing on him, he is rendered incapable of providing for them." On the appeal's reverse, an official noted Kingsley's aid to British prisoners of war during the occupation and dismissed the petition.[66]

Available evidence of the Kingsleys' Canadian residence is quite sparse and entirely one-sided. Much of what survives is oriented towards legal matters and the picture is at predictably cutthroat and full of economic desperation. The few letters of Zephaniah Sr., for example, are

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[63] Isabella Kingsley to the House of Representatives, Charlestown, 28 January 1783, S165015, Item 343, SCDAH.

[64] Troxler, "Refuge, Resistance, and Reward," 567.

[65] For the arrival of Zephaniah Jr. and "a nephew of Mr. Kingsley [Sr.]" aboard the ship *Roman Emperor* from London, see *South Carolina Gazette*, August 27, 1783; residence of father and son is in Esther Clark Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1981), 298; given that it is acknowledged that Zephaniah Jr. went to London for an education at some point in the 1780s, it is likely the educational process was finished or nearly so upon his return to Charleston. His return from London in 1783 would have made him just shy of his eighteenth birthday.

[66] Zephaniah Kingsley Sr. to South Carolina House of Representatives, Parr Town, River Saint Johns, Nova Scotia, 6 November 1784, S165015, Item 49, SCDAH (underlined in original).

littered with legal complaints, injunctions, land applications, and petitions for redress. The portrait is less than stellar, but highlights the risks entailed by the Atlantic markets. More to the point, Zephaniah Sr.'s uncertainty and frustration that emerges from the surviving evidence perhaps points to a source for the younger Zephaniah's later business ventures. Effectively forced from their home, the Kingsleys found themselves punished for the patriarch's stubborn adherence to ideas of loyalty to governments and rigid identities based on principle. In regards to his Loyalist claims, Zephaniah Sr. obtained at least a small sum from the English Crown as a "zealous Loyalist." However, his running debt in New Brunswick, according to initial estimates, approached £10,000 within the first two years.[67] For "his steady adherence to and support of the British Constitution & Government," Kingsley's once "very liberal and handsome Fortune" was gone. He had "sacrificed the fruits of all his former Labour," the elder Kingsley later said. As George Otto Trevelyan explained of Loyalists like himself, they "were tortured, by a double patriotism; for they were condemned to stand by, idle and powerless, while the two nations, which they equally loved, were tearing at each other's vitals."[68]

By the end of the 1780s, Zephaniah Sr. had resumed his merchant trade from New Brunswick. However, that venture was starting to pose complications for him. Credit was always problematic for merchants. A rather bitter and perhaps typical situation for appeared in several newspapers in 1789. Having publicly accused former New Brunswick resident Joseph Wheaton of failing to pay on notes due to him, Kingsley's newspapers "defamatory publication"

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[67] See the documents in the Hazen Collection of Chipman Papers, NBM; Case of Zephaniah Kingsley, 1200; Mathew Byles to Edward Winslow, 19 December 1785, Saint John, New Brunswick, Winslow Family Papers, MG H2, Volume 25, Number 4, Archives and Special Collections, Harriet Irving Library, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

[68] Kingsley Loyalist Examination, 472, 474, SCDAH; Trevelyan quoted in Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974), 385. Bailyn's portrait of Hutchinson and the Loyalists demonstrates the anguish, anxiety, and bitterness that many faced after the American Revolution.

was countered by the accused in mid-July. Wheaton argued that the matter had been settled in the first week of June and produced a witness to the fact. Citing ample proof to contradict the public denouncement, the subsequent *New-York Packet* of July 18 wisely, if without explanation, neglected to reprint Kingsley's standing accusation. "The papers signed Zeph. Kingsley, are omitted at present, for certain reasons," the paper reported. "The gentleman who left said papers, will please to call upon the printers."[69] The outcome of the matter is unknown. Possibly forced to bear another loss, Zephaniah Sr. appears to have let the matter alone even as he continued to press old Charleston debts through lawyers and creditors.[70]

Long after his death Isabella Kingsley was still bringing suit over her husband's confiscated lands as late as 1807.[71] The claims seemed to elicit a flurry of responses from landholders and participants in events decades beforehand, impervious to the cataclysmic event that spelled ruin for some and spoils for others.[72] Several aspects of Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr.'s repeated failures in the high stakes game of transatlantic mercantilism are at least clear: ideological principles are restrictive and dangerous; anticipating successful economic opportunities requires flexibility and a host of wealthy and powerful connections; and above all, the cultural fluidity of the Atlantic required identity adaptation to an ever changing set of

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[69] *The Daily Advertiser*, July 15, 1789; *The New-York Packet*, July 18, 1789.

[70] *Kingsley [Sr.] v. William Bull Jr.*, Judgment Roll, 6 July 1791, L10018, Item 130A, SCDAH.

[71] From the surviving evidence it is not altogether clear when or where Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. died. New Brunswick records suggest he was alive perhaps as late as 1799. Surviving correspondence from Zephaniah Jr. makes no mention of him in 1801 when he references only his mother. By the writing of Isabella's will in 1805, she calls herself a widow. Kingsley mentioned his father in passing to Lydia Maria Child only to affirm that he was a Quaker in 1842. The elder Kingsley probably died about 1800, likely in Canada.

[72] There are numerous petitions and judgments from the courts at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina. See for example, Robert Pringle, Petition for Compensation, December 5, 1801, S165015, Item 40; John M. Verdier, et al., Petition for Compensation, November 28, 1806, S165005, Item 40, SCDAH; Committee Report on Petition of Isabella Kingsley, December 12, 1807, S165005, Item 46, SCDAH.

circumstances.[73] None of those lessons escaped Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. on his path to wealth in the Atlantic, where he regarded nothing as certain and the enslavement of debt as a constant possibility.

Immediately preceding Zephaniah Sr.'s claims in its July 15, 1789 issue, the *New-York Packet* printed the so-called Resolves, which called for the selection of electors to the French Assembly in Paris. Events in France would quick spiral out of control, invariably complicating the Atlantic economy and several international issues as well. As the rhetoric of the French Revolution made its way to the colony of Saint Domingue, the rapidity by which it spread highlights the complexity of a transatlantic community linked by system of trade and its highly mobile cast of ocean travelers. Many white elites in the Atlantic world faced such times with horror, others with glee, and most with telling silence. Cries of liberty in France were one thing to slaveholders; but the same cries from French Saint Domingue's slaves were something else.[74]

Americans doted on newspaper coverage of the events in France in the last decades of the eighteenth century. As Minister to France, Thomas Jefferson sent home tales of gluttony and the guillotine, the novelty of French attempts to replicate America's own "glorious revolution" quickly soured for many Americans. The French Revolution's excesses were wildly unpredictable as Americans were beginning to realize. Previously unthinkable, the specter of slaves vying for their own liberation in Saint Domingue and the French Atlantic embodied the nightmare of white slaveholders realized.[75]

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[73] David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 17.

[74] Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 44.

[75] Following the French Revolution, events in Martinique and Guadeloupe foreshadowed Haiti. David Patrick Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815," in Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 12-14; Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French*

The incessant talk of liberty influenced blacks and whites differently. In Virginia, for example, one of its most cherished slaveowning elites, Robert Carter III, signed his magnanimous "Deed of Gift" on September 5, 1791, freeing over 450 slaves of his own free will. "Citizen Robert Carter," as acquaintances were told to address him, was completing his historic act just as former slave Toussaint Louverture was commanding an army of freed blacks in Saint Domingue in order to overthrow the system of slavery. And as slaves torched the sugarcane fields of Saint Domingue near Cap Francais in what was later known as the Night of Fire, Louis XVI accepted a new constitution for the French state, albeit under duress. Slaveowners in North American braced for the full implications of Saint Domingue's abolition of slavery in 1794, anxiously seeing the glint of rebellion in the eyes of every slave. Their fear was not unfounded. Slaves throughout the Atlantic heard the name of Toussaint Louverture as a rallying cry. Only the most daring merchants like Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. flocked to Saint Domingue to capitalize on the spoils of war.[76]

The events spawned by the French and Haitian Revolutions reverberated in places like Spanish Florida as well. Few places tied to the transatlantic trade were immune. Spanish authorities in Florida wanted no part of the republican rhetoric and unpredictability emanating from across the Atlantic. Barring all things French matter-of-factly, they faced an impossible task to halt both goods and ideas at all of Florida's ports. Nevertheless, a complex set of circumstances brought a botched invasion of Georgia militiamen and French soldiers to Spanish

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Caribbean, 1787-1804 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 106-07; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 163, 171; Michael Walzer, ed., *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI*, New Edition (Columbia University Press, reprint 1992), 32-33, 35-46; Zephaniah Kingsley, *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society*, in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 64.

[76] Andrew Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed His Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), 140; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 171; C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Second Revised Edition (New York: Vintage, 1989), 86-87; Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*, 85-88. Kingsley's time in Saint Domingue is discussed below.

Florida from 1793 to 1795. Whether for profit or in sympathy with the French Revolution's ideals, the forceful Georgians hoped to plunder, punish, and extract the last bit of Spanish resistance from the region, with the French along for good measure.[77]

Many seized the opportunity to profit from the international disruption in trade. Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1793 to do just that. He swore an oath of allegiance to the United States on December 20 but continued to frequent ports across the Atlantic capitalizing on a new national identity. From the disruptions Kingsley found ample room to maneuver the economic and cultural spaces that promised enormous wealth, if at enormous risk. Had the younger Kingsley somehow failed to miss the enormity of revolution the first time around, 1793 would be a hard lesson in international ideologies and the complexities of transatlantic ties.[78]

These tensions are demonstrated in the *Georgia Gazette* of October 19, 1793, which announced the recent arrivals of ships to the port of Charleston, South Carolina. One in particular was not an infrequent visitor to the southern ports in general. The brigantine *Argo*, owned by his father but piloted by Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr., was captured in route from Kingston, Jamaica, to Wilmington, North Carolina, that month by the French privateer schooner *La Sans Pareille*.[79] The schooner was owned by one Jean Bouteille of Saint Domingue. Bouteille outfitted the ship, purchased at Le Cap (Saint Domingue), "with four swivels and shipped by a

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[77] Jane G. Landers, "Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida: The French Revolution on Spain's Colonial Northern Frontier," in Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 156-77; Richard K. Murdoch, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796: Spanish Reaction to French Intrigue and American Designs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 26.

[78] Brent H. Holcomb, *South Carolina Naturalizations, 1783-1850* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985), 93.

[79] Melvin H. Jackson, *Privateers in Charleston, 1793-1796* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969), 122, 128-29; *Georgia Gazette*, November 7, 1793; George S. Brown, *Yarmouth, Nova Scotia: A Sequel to Campbell's History* (Boston: Rand Avery Company, Printers, 1888), 203, the brigantine *Argo* was first listed in 1790 at a total weight of 64 tons and owned by Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. at the port of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

crew of 37 men" for the French cause. Capturing handsome purses along the way, Bouteille's ventures were bold, daring, and potentially upsetting internationally. He had a part in at least fifteen occasions of captures by 1795. Jean Francois Theric, then acting agent at Charleston for the French National Convention, commented that Bouteille "is as generous as he is just," and "[h]is patriotism is deep and sincere." "Whatever the pleasure of rehearsing virtuous deeds," said Theric, "those of Citizen Bouteille are so frequent that it can be said of him that no day passes without his having done some good." For his capture of the *Argo*, Bouteille netted some £280 as the ship was subsequently purchased by one Thomas Stewart "'for a Dane,' cleared for Barcelona."[80] It certainly seemed to be a disastrous financial beginning to a new career for Zephaniah Jr., representing a significant setback in a dangerous new world.

During the early years of the Haitian Revolution, the soaring international demand for coffee, sugar, and slaves enticed daring merchants to cultivate broader mercantile connections. Throwing himself into the transatlantic cataclysm spurred by the French Revolution and its Enlightenment rhetoric, Kingsley seemed to redouble his efforts and frequented Saint Domingue regularly soon after the British occupation there (1793-1798). Intermittent business on the island during the period was responsible for his residency primarily in the south and west provinces. Despite the hazards of war, Kingsley and others ("perhaps hundreds," he suggested) conducted a healthy amount of trade without encountering the ravages of war raging to the north. Taking up residence in Jeremie, the stronghold of the British army, for "nearly a year, at one period" he traversed ports and countryside "alone, and on horseback, from Leogane to the Cayes, and from Petit-Goave to Jacquemel, through woods and over mountains, with my saddle bags loaded with

[80] "Memorial of Jean-Francois Theric, 26 November 1795," in Jackson, *Privateers in Charleston*, 118, 128-29.

specie to buy coffee...."[81] The experience provided a watershed in Kingsley's life. There he discovered firsthand the complex reality of racial politics in the midst of a cataclysmic event in world history and made the transition to financial independence apart from his family's sordid past.

As David Geggus suggests, the period of Kingsley's arrival would have made good economic sense for the ambitious young man. No doubt owing to the prevalence of the contraband trade that flourished for those with hard currency, Kingsley would have found the island locale ideal to make a quick profit in coffee, sugar, and perhaps slaves. Such activities, both legal and illegal, formed the nucleus of a raging transatlantic economy that bound markets in America and Jamaica particularly into a closer relationship with the island.[82] In addition, the policies of Toussaint Louverture and the firm hand of the free-colored[83] plantation owners in the southern peninsula during Kingsley's residence maintained a crucial stability from the war that otherwise decimated the north. Kingsley's overwhelmingly positive portrayal of the complex sociopolitical situation perhaps underscores that last point in preference to the first. However, in a point referring to the general policy improvements made by the British for its Caribbean

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[81] Kingsley, *Treatise*, in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 64n8, 45-46; on the importance of Haiti in Kingsley's thought, see herein Chapters Four and Five.

[82] David Geggus, "The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue in the Later Eighteenth Century," in Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 87-116; John D. Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue," *The Americas*, 50.2 (October 1993), 233-63.

[83] The term "free colored" I have adopted throughout comes from current works on Haiti. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 5-6, states that "Understanding the Haitian Revolution also requires avoiding using racial designations—white, mulatto, black—as categories that can generate explanations rather than as social artifacts that demand them. Interpretations of individual and collection action during the revolution that are based primarily on racial or class categories often fail to provide a complete or coherent picture of how and why people acted as they did. The communities of African descent who were not enslaved, for instance, were enormously diverse, both socially and politically. While many within them were of mixed European and African ancestry, not all were, and the common use of the term 'mulatto' to describe them is misleading. (For this reason I have avoided using the term, which racializes and simplifies a complex reality, in favor of the term gens de couleur, which I translate as 'free people of color' or 'free-coloreds.') This term was favored by many politically active members of this group in the late eighteenth century."

colonies, Kingsley recognized the role of the free colored militia in maintaining order as well offering opportunities for social and at least some economic advancement for the otherwise limited class. Such groups, as Kingsley would have learned in his travels, filled like positions throughout the Atlantic world. For the sake of Kingsley's later arguments about racial slavery, free coloreds, more importantly, constituted the bulk of the new ruling elite in independent Haiti—a group with which he would later establish close ties. Collectively, the group provided a forceful testament to the fallacies of an increasing biological racism that found its way into proslavery arguments of the period.[84]

Revolution threatened to engulf the whole of the Caribbean in the 1790s. As revolutionary rhetoric and international power struggles clashed throughout the region, the time was ripe for further capitalizing on the uncertainty. In May 1795 Kingsley found himself in the thick of a rebellion in the Dutch colony of Essequibo. "[S]ome days before," according to a logbook of the Charleston sloop *Friendship*, "he sailed a British officer there from Demerara, to whom the colony was delivered up, and who administered to the Dutch troops the oath of allegiance and fidelity to his Britannic Majesty, and took them into his pay."[85] The effort of British Prime Minister William Pitt to crush the uprisings and reclaim the West Indies for the Crown was part of an initial deployment of some 32,000 soldiers sent to seize French holdings in

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[84] Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 64-65; John D. Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue*, 252, 261; George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46, 47; Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 22, 52, 73, 75; Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1775-1835* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 100-05; Laura Foner, "The Free People of Color in Louisiana and St. Domingue: A Comparative Portrait of Two Three-Caste Societies," *Journal of Social History*, 3.4 (Summer 1970), 406-30; Jeremy D. Popkin, ed., *Facing racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 172-73, despite the crucial role of free coloreds in keeping the revolutionary violence at bay, Antoine Dalmas notes in his account of the Haitian Revolution that "more than four hundred free men of color" were summarily tortured and executed in December 1791 in a charged atmosphere of fear and uncertainty of racial warfare; on the parallel between Kingsley's children and the free coloreds in Haiti, see herein Chapters Four and Five.

[85] Reported in the *Georgia Gazette*, June 30, 1796. The account came from the log-book of the sloop *Friendship* that entered Charleston on June 22 from the Island of Bourbon (Reunion).

the Caribbean. A bitterly contested terrain between both armies—complicated by shifting alliances of the native populations—the Caribbean islands formed a melancholy site where brutal slavery, cries of liberation, appalling violence, and vast fortunes all roiled the political landscape.[86]

The Dutch colonies of Demerara and Essequibo, later a part of Guiana, were not immune to English political and economic ambitions in the Atlantic.[87] The Dutch struggled to hold the colonies in face of international rivalries with the British, French, and Spanish for centuries.[88] A robust economy of cotton, coffee, sugar and indigo supported by slave labor, Demerara and its less significant neighbor Essequibo experienced significant economic growth in the last decades of the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries thanks to a vibrant plantation economy and a porous coastline for importation.[89] Wasting little time at Essequibo, Kingsley sailed three days later and promptly "fell in with a French privateer, who carried him into Guadeloupe, where he was detained two days...."[90]

The French colony at Guadeloupe was an important strategic position in the French Revolutionary wars. The island quickly overtook Martinique economically, in part due to an extensive system of contraband trade but primarily because of its sugar production.[91] Under the

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[86] Michael Duffy, "The French Revolution and British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies," in Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 83-85; Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 16-17; Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 550-51.

[87] da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood*, 20-21.

[88] Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, reprint 1992), 34.

[89] Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 219-20.

[90] *Georgia Gazette*, June 30, 1796.

steadfast rule of former Saint Domingue colonist Victor Hugues, Guadeloupe remained in French possession after reclaiming the island from the British in 1794. Its main civil and military port to the south, Basse-Terre, perhaps was the entry point for Kingsley and his privateer escort in mid-June 1795. The port, with its population of about 8 or 9,000 was a more convenient alternative to the counterpoint at Pointe-a-Pitre. A relatively stable population—of which roughly one half were slaves—the port at Basse-Terre flourished as the center of operations for the colony as well as the relative security of the topography.[92]

Immediately following the British blockade of the northern port at Pointe-a-Pitre, French privateering rose dramatically along Guadeloupe's southern coast. Surviving records indicate that approximately 1,800 ships were captured there in about four years. British by birth but no doubt claiming his American citizenship at the time, Kingsley possibly aroused suspicions once in custody. After all, "he there was informed that St. Lucia had been taken, some days before, after a gallant defence made by the inhabitants." The newly freed former slave population and republican forces there held out against the British for more than a year, diverting a substantial portion of the army and inflicting significant casualties. One Commissioner Goyrand, sent by Victor Hugues to reinforce French troops, claimed that a group of about 600, formed of equal parts volunteers and slaves, repelled a British force of 2,400 using only guns and pikes. It was a costly setback for the British and a crucial though temporary victory for the French.[93] Likely appealing to the friendly relations between France and the United States at the time, Kingsley probably persuaded local authorities that he posed no threat and was left to resume his travels.

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[91] Anne Perotin-Dumon, "Cabotage, Contraband, and Corsairs: The Port Cities of Guadeloupe and Their Inhabitants, 1650-1800," in Knight and Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities*, 60, 65-67.

[92] *Ibid*., 75-76.

[93] Duffy, "British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies," in Gaspar and Geggus, *A Turbulent Time*, 85-87; David Barry Gaspar, "Le Guerre des Bois: Revolution, War, and Slavery in Saint Lucia, 1793-1838," in Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 109-110; Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 233.

Exchanging identities was essential to economic success and survival in the brutal Atlantic system; fluidity and adaptation were paramount qualities.[94]

By all accounts, Zephaniah Jr.'s time in the French Atlantic was proving eventful. In addition to witnessing firsthand the epic events that transformed the institution of slavery and the international debate over the slave trade, Kingsley was in a prime position to experience the weight of imperial policies and the example of black resistance.[95] His extensive immersion in the revolutionary experience itself provided Kingsley with formative experiences that swiftly shocked and distorted the sensibilities. The protean character of life in the Revolutionary Atlantic was one lesson drawn from such experiences; a ruthless and calculating purpose to one's movement was yet another.[96]

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[94] Julius S. Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century," in Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 128-29; Ruben Gowricharn, "Introduction: Caribbean Transnationalism and Shifting Identities," in Gowricharn, ed., *Caribbean Transnationalism: Immigration, Pluralization, and Social Cohesion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 6-7; Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 167-68; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 16-17; Jackson, *Privateers in Charleston*, 1793-1796, vii, suggests that privateers and other vessels often carried multiple sets of papers in order to avoid capture; Vanessa Smith, "Costume Changes: Passing at Sea and on the Beach," in Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun, eds., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 37; Gesa Mackenthum, "Chartless Voyages and Protean Geographies," in *Ibid*., 146; Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 2004), 6.

[95] Kingsley discusses at length the example of the Haitian Revolution and the conduct and character of those that fought in his "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida (c. 1826)" and more fully in his pamphlet, *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society* (Four Editions: 1828-1834), both in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 26-35, 39-75.

[96] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 14, 36, 43, 52, 54; Wai Chee Dimock, "African, Caribbean, American: Black English as Creole Tongue," in Dimock and Lawrence Buell, eds., *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 276-78; Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 92-116. Giles' argument that "The conception of the author as a reflector or mediator rather than originator is characteristic of Enlightenment writing," in my view, goes a long way towards understanding Kingsley's thought process and worldview, particularly when considering how a host of characters that had similar travels held quite similar ideas. I explore this concept as it pertains to Kingsley's own evolving mentality throughout the remaining chapters.

In spite of the revolutionary struggles in the Caribbean, the demand for African slave labor increased dramatically in the 1790s. In response to rising British demand for cotton, the South's existing slave supply quickly fell far short of planters' growing needs.[97] For those bold enough, the African slave trade represented an enormous risk with handsome rewards.[98] Given the chronic instability of the Caribbean at the time, Kingsley perhaps opted to make an arduous journey to West Africa in hopes of procuring slaves, perhaps, to exchange for coffee and other goods to sell in Charleston. Arriving somewhere off the coast of West Africa in late April 1796, he met a Captain Johnston of the Charleston sloop *Friendship*, a vessel that was about three and a half weeks out returning from the remote East African island of Bourbon (renamed Reunion in 1793).[99] Controlled by the French, Reunion Island featured a prosperous trade in slaves primarily from East Africa and the highlands of Madagascar in approximately equal numbers, as well as significant volumes of coffee and other cash crops. The island was home to highly diverse native and transient populations that, according to Pier Larson, had a significant impact on the economic and sociopolitical landscape of the Indian Ocean.[100] In addition, political and environmental issues plagued the region and led to increased enslaving in Mozambique's interior, which contributed to an already rising international slave trade demand for labor vacuums like Brazil.[101] Attempting to tap into the new markets of the East Africa coast with an

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[97] Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Development* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2006), 55. As Wright reminds us, the determining factor in the rise of slave numbers in the American South was a result of British demand for cotton, "not by the invention of the cotton gin (as the old chestnut goes)…."

[98] Stephen D. Behrendt, "Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits: Merchant Decision Making in the British Slave Trade," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 58.1 (January 2001), 171-202.

[99] *Georgia Gazette*, June 30, 1796; Martha Eames, Administratrix of the Estate of John Foard v. Zephaniah Kingsley, Judgment Roll, 26 March 1798, L10018, Item 567A, SCDAH.

[100] Pier M. Larson, "Reconsidering Trauma, Identity, and the African Diaspora: Enslavement and Historical Memory in Nineteenth-Century Highland Madagascar," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 56.2 (April 1999), 338, 340-41; Gwyn Campbell, "Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810-1895," *Journal of African History* 22.2 (1981), 205-6.

eye to the future, Johnston's two week layover at Reunion "was the first sent from this city [Charleston] to open a trade with the islands eastward of the Cape of Good Hope...."[102]

Whitemarsh Seabrook, a slaveowner and author in antebellum Charleston, later attributed the importation of fine Bourbon cotton at this time to Kingsley acquaintance's James Hamilton. Hamilton and other cotton merchants praised it for its high quality as well as its exotic value, particularly before Sea Island cotton replaced the species a short time later.[103] Kingsley's encounter with Johnston off the African coast illustrates the remarkable extent that economic networks operated across vast stretches and integrated distant "peripheries" to a slew of overlapping and competing metropolitan "cores." In supplying for consumer demand, merchants like Kingsley and Hamilton placated an international market by organizing and maneuvering through a complex network of trade in a host of goods that cultivated a civilized, thoroughly modern identity.[104] However, the venture was not without risk. Ironically, a deeper submersion in the Atlantic markets likewise increased the risk to both person and property. As Joyce Chaplin and others argue, such qualities were indicative of an increasingly "anxious" portion of the "enlightened" white population highly vulnerable to an almost limitless series of real and imagined "crises."[105]

Port cities linked transatlantic travelers like Kingsley to an infinite array of cultures and markets. Originally envisioned "as places for facilitating the movement of capital", historian

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[101] Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 70-71.

[102] *Georgia Gazette*, June 30, 1796.

[103] Richard Dwight Porcher and Sarah Fick, *The Story of Sea Island Cotton* (Charleston, SC: Wyrick & Company, 2005), 353-354n4.

[104] Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 30; Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 166-99; Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 8, 155.

[105] Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, see particularly Chapters 2, 6, and 7; Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 100.

Julius S. Scott convincingly argues that such ports gradually "became destinations where seafaring folk from across the region could put their heads together free of mercantilist restriction to make deals, swap stories, plant and harvest rumors, and gather news about happenings—of a business nature or other—throughout the greater Caribbean."[106] It was here that new and old social and business networks could dissolve and reform in a remarkably flexible manner. For example, merchants like Kingsley might cultivate business and friendship networks that linked him at once to Canada, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and North and South America. Within such broad overlapping channels of communication and goods, such immersion promised both social and economic prestige if successful; yet the frailty of those extended connections rendered prospects of relentless acquisition decidedly small. Anywhere along the maze of credit necessary for buying and selling goods, a slight rupture carried with it the prospect of ruin.[107]

Emblematic of the cultural mixture in ports at the time were the Danish islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix. Nestled amongst a chain of islands owned by the French, British, and Spanish, the Danish colonies likewise benefitted economically from the presence of large numbers of transatlantic characters. Having returned from West Africa and a possible stopover in the Caribbean, (where St. Thomas and a host of other ports served as a transshipment point for slaves and other goods bound for elsewhere) Kingsley returned to Charleston piloting the schooner *Apollo* in February 1797. Offering the cargo of the ship for sale in "approved Specie Notes at 90 and 120 days" at William's Coffee House on March 2, he likely hoped to acquire enough to clear a profit as well as take the opportunity to purchase high-demand goods (such as flour and foodstuffs), perhaps to sell in Saint Domingue or Havana, or other manufactured goods

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[106] Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires,"in Paquette and Engerman, eds., *The Lesser Antilles*, 129.

[107] Hancock, *Citizens of the New World*, 25, 37-38; Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 437; Holton, *Forced Founders*, 77-105; Behrendt, "Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits," 171-202.

bound for Jamaica and the like.[108] Such destinations are indeed possible given the extent of Kingsley's surviving communications and would have appealed to him, given the ripe opportunities for potentially quick and lucrative profits. Owing at least in part to the instability of wartime Saint Domingue's exports, some locales previously at the margins of the Atlantic gained economic importance for the first time as others underwent a much needed revitalization, demanding more slaves and creating more market possibilities.[109]

Anticipating larger profits to be had in the Caribbean, Kingsley and a host of other likeminded Atlantic travelers settled there by the close of the eighteenth century. A brief but annoying legal dispute first trailed him from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Charleston. Although sued for an outstanding debt, he failed to appear before the court as he had promptly departed for Petit-Goave (Saint Domingue). Kingsley could not have known that he was then entering into a damaging financial predicament that would subsequently haunt him for years.[110] Nevertheless, he ultimately took up a lengthy residence in St. Thomas in 1798, serving as a paid ship captain. From there, where he assumed another national identity by swearing allegiance to

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[108] *City Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Charleston), February 27, 1787; Geggus, "The Major Port Towns if Saint Domingue in the Later Eighteenth Century," in Knight and Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities*, 99; James Gregory Cusick, "Spanish East Florida in the Atlantic Economy of the Late Eighteenth Century," in Jane G. Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 172-73, 179-80, 183; Louis A. Perez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55; Linda K. Salvucci, "Supply, Demand, and the Making of a Market: Philadelphia and Havana at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," in Knight and Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities*, 15, 41.

[109] David Geggus, "The Sounds and Echoes of Freedom: The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on Latin America," in Darien J. Davis, ed., *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 20, 29-30; B.W. Higman, "Jamaican Port Towns in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Knight and Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities*, 119-20, 122.

[110] *Eames v. Kingsley*, L10018, Item 567A, SCDAH. Kingsley refused to repay a debt taken from John Foard at Wilmington in 1796. Foard subsequently died and the administrator, Kingsley claimed, brought no proof sufficient forth to legally compel him to repay the note. He failed to appear for a hearing and a jury decided against him in the full amount plus interest. Charleston merchant-planter, close friend, and business associate James Hamilton posted bail. Kingsley was at Petit-Goave (Saint Domingue) at the time on business for Hamilton and himself, where he unknowingly completed a disastrous financial matter that dragged on for years and caused him considerable anxiety. Samuel Campbell to James Hamilton, Baltimore, August 15, 1805, James Hamilton Papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens (UGA). Kingsley's relationship with Hamilton is discussed herein Chapter Two.

the nation of Denmark, the younger Kingsley seemed poised and determined to acquire enough wealth to enable the nearly thirty-three-year-old to achieve the kind of security that had dogged his father since leaving Charlestown decades before.[111] Immersed within the intense ebb and flow of transatlantic cultures and travel, Zephaniah Kingsley seemed poised to navigate the hazardous waters by surrounding himself with its "motley crew" of cultural hybrids, shape-shifters, and "the peculiar confusions and perplexities" of the protean Atlantic world.[112] It was to be the most formative experience of his life, giving rise to the apparent inconsistencies and complexities of his later worldview in both thought and deed.

[111] For Kingsley's "Burger Brief" (Oath of Loyalty) in the Danish West Indies, see Daniel L. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove Plantation, 1803-1813," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 102, 116n15; Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 21; Daniel L. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Danish Connection," *Jacksonville Historical Report & St. Andrew's Bulletin*, (n.d., n.p.), copy at Kingsley Plantation Field Office, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Jacksonville, Florida.

[112] Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 212-14; Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 7, 9.

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGING GROUND: LADY FORTUNE, SLAVE TRADING, AND AN ELUSIVE INDEPENDENCE

In the realms of the so-called Atlantic world "peripheries," the islands of the Caribbean proved to be the hub of commerce and cultural interaction. Far from the hubs (or, "cores") of London, Charleston, Paris, and New York, international merchants kept meticulous notes on the ever shifting market prices and the prospects of maximum profit. With a decidedly limited window to profit from both real and imagined instability, particularly keen opportunists like Zephaniah Kingsley appeared to take stock of "the common wind" that carried a plethora of information throughout the Caribbean. Effectively plugged into the heart of the commercial hustle and bustle in the Danish West Indies, the frenzy of Kingsley's crisscrossing activities seemed more pronounced as the century came to a close. Establishing a host of powerful connections across the Atlantic landscape, he was in prime position literally and figuratively to potentially prosper.[1]

The Danish island of St. Thomas had been a draw for Atlantic business for decades. As one of perhaps the earliest free ports it featured an extremely diverse collection of inhabitants at any given time. From its "overwhelmingly Danish" makeup of government officials to its vast array of linguistic combinations, St. Thomas's culture synthesized and displayed tenets both subtle and sublime. African slaves and Europeans, locked into the complexities of chattel slavery and sugar production, each struggled to preserve airs of the familiar within a strange

[1] Julius S. Scott III, "'The Common Wind': Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1986; Stephen D. Behrendt, "Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits: Merchant Decision Making in the British Slave Trade," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 58.1 (January 2001), 173, 174.

landscape that juggled complex theories of enlightened domination with the stern realities of bondage.[2] Its merchant and business classes were intimately connected across the chain of Caribbean islands as well as the distant mainland of all sides of the Atlantic. Such contacts facilitated at once the basic necessities of socialization, business acumen, and cultural obligations. By the web of communication that accompanied the day to day business transactions, the elite and aspiring elite stayed largely in step with the current fashions, overriding intellectual theories, and general news. In short, their positions necessitated a peculiar reliance on any number of communication channels that invariably fostered a truly global perspective of the world.[3]

By all remaining accounts Zephaniah Kingsley quickly fell in with at least a few merchants at St. Thomas where he stood to make a handsome sum. Perhaps compelled to leave the financial struggles of his youth behind him, he faced either potential ruin or fortune in the international merchant trade. Obtaining employment as a ship captain, he appears to have made a rather daunting series of business trips to Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe, Havana, Jamaica, the United States, and no doubt elsewhere—all while residing in no particular location for any length of time. In late October 1799, for example, Kingsley is listed as captain of one Peter Vedders' ship based out of St. Thomas, while the next year finds him likewise piloting on at least two occasions, different vessels owned by a John P. Jennings of the same place. In addition, he

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[2] Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1999), 6-11; Julius S. Scott III, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century," in Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 132-33; Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 9-10, 21-22, 34-35; Robert Forster, "Three Slaveholders in the Antilles," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 36.1 (2002), 3, 5, 15, 17; Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), 263-99.

[3] Waldemar Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule, 1671-1754* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 250-51, 253-54.

appears to have wisely combined his advantage of sheer mobility with other merchant ventures that unfortunately bound him to the pitfalls of the revolutionary Atlantic. It was there that the complicated networks of the transnational market were more pronounced. The risks and rewards caused many to contemplate their own financial fates and undoubtedly caused many more to doubt the ever-present prospect of ruin.[4]

From Port-au-Prince (Saint Domingue) in May 1801, Kingsley wrote to friend and sometimes business partner, merchant-planter James Hamilton of Charleston, about his recent misfortunes. The theme was to be a constant one in his future correspondence. Arriving a few days since, for example, he quickly discovered that "St. Thomas was taken two weeks before I left it." He could not attest to his losses there. A more pressing concern continued to haunt him: an elusive Frenchman named Augua defaulted on credit given three years prior by Kingsley himself at Petit-Goave. However, Kingsley was only recently made aware that the bill, accumulating eight percent interest per year, remained unpaid. It threatened to sink him financially. "I begin to think worse of mankind the longer I live," he despaired. To make matters worse, another matter seemed unlikely to remedy itself fully. "A part of my business here was the pursuit of a runaway Captain," he explained. "I have caught him and shopped him and perhaps may never get any other satisfaction." But the prospects to that point were not entirely discouraging. Coffee and flour still remained highly lucrative crops and potential bright spots for further gain. And before closing, Kingsley remarked at the spirit of tranquility that prevailed at Port-au-Prince. Despite the prevalence of rumors that flooded the Atlantic about the

[4] Daniel L. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Danish Connection," *Jacksonville Historical Society & St. Andrews Bulletin*, (no year), n.p, copy at Kingsley Plantation Field Office, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Jacksonville, Florida (KPO); Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 80-112.

slave revolution on the island, he asserted that, "This country seems perfectly quiet & peacable [sic]."[5]

Between stops at Kingston (Jamaica), Havana (Cuba), and St. Thomas, Kingsley arrived in New York for business by about early July. For the time being, he remained overtly concerned with settling nagging business debts but characteristically open to the prospect of gain elsewhere. Venting to Hamilton again, he admitted that "Trying to recover five thousand Dollars due from an unfortunate Ship & in which I have only partially succeeded brought me off from St. Thomas without settling my affairs."[6] Determined to let the matter rest, Kingsley opted to focus his energies on making good on the merchant house that he was contracted to, and somewhat prematurely predicted that business there would close quickly. "...[T]here is no danger of my being ever again drawn in to any further speculations from that quarter." Confident in his abilities to weather the ebb and flow of Atlantic business, Kingsley proclaimed: "I hope very soon to be free and call myself my own Master again, for I have been led away terribly against my will."[7]

In order to make considerable headway towards his outstanding debts, Kingsley solicited his friend James Hamilton for advice, which he acknowledged had "great influence upon my

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[5] Zephaniah Kingsley to James Hamilton, Port-au-Prince, May 1, 1801, James Hamilton Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (DU). Remarkably few personal letters from Kingsley remain and, as evinced by the Bibliography herein, scattered. What does exist varies considerably in tone and content. Personal reflections, too, in his letters are often limited to brief snippets rather than prolonged statements of his own failings (although I have found a few instances where he uncharacteristically goes on at.considerable length). His writing style, while evidently learned in substance, oftentimes is terse with erratic punctuation; as such,it is very often difficult to distinguish where his statements end. Thoughout, I have inserted punctuation as necessary but have done so in brackets. Above all, it is quite apparent that the frequency of his travels and mentality required to survive in the Atlantic markets manifests itself particularly in his correspondence to James Hamilton, often at ports abroad; for comparative purposes, see Kingsley's later letters to Joseph Hernandez, written from home, for significant stylistic and tonality differences. The quality of his writing notwithstanding, all contemporary observers noted his impressive eloquence and intelligence without fail.

[6] Kingsley to Hamilton, New York, July 20, 1801, DU.

[7] *Ibid.*

future actions."[8] The shadowy Hamilton, apparently a Scottish-born immigrant, set himself up as a merchant in the 1780s and later joined commercial forces with friend and fellow Scotsman, John Couper. Together the house of Hamilton & Couper acquired a series of tracts on St. Simons Island off the Georgia coast, along with hundreds of slaves and a reputation for prime cash crops (long-staple cotton, sugar, and rice), fine goods, and importing exotic flora. In addition, he eventually acted as a powerful factor in Charleston and London, commanding economic and personal ties on a global level. Hamilton therefore provided Kingsley with friendship, assurances of credit, and invaluable social connections.[9]

The collapse of business in St. Thomas earlier in the year occupied Kingsley far longer than he initially predicted. Eager to remedy the situation there, from New York he remained still anxious about money owed to him. That October he stated that, "In short as past experience has taught me to consider every thing as uncertain, I shall not feel easy until I have my Mon[e]y within my own grasp...."[10] Prospects appeared much grimmer than theretofore. Presumably having recently returned from Petit-Goave, Saint Domingue, in regards to outstanding bills of credit, the situation looked there bleaker than it did a few months prior. "I did all I could do," he explained. "[W]as that Government in a state of solidity I should look upon the payment as certain." However, he somewhat coyly added, "not on Account of the honesty of [the] Drawer & Indorser [sic], as they are only Frenchmen and hardly deserve even that name...."[11]

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[8] *Ibid.*

[9] T. Reed Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994), 1, 47, 52, 66-67, 159-61; James E. Bagwell, *Rice Gold: James Hamilton Couper and Plantation Life on the Georgia Coast* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 11-13. Given the overwhelmingly Scottish networks that Kingsley circulated in, the possibility of his identification with his mother's lineage appears more pronounced with his full immersion in the transatlantic market culture. It certainly would account for his constant self-identification as a Scot until his death that is substantiated particularly after the Patriot War.

[10] Kingsley to Hamilton, October 4, 1801, New York, DU.

Leaving New York bound for St. Thomas he intended to visit James Hamilton first in Charleston.[12] No record survives of such a meeting. Overextended with the additional burden of supporting his brother-in-law's new merchant business in New York,[13] Kingsley appeared disheartened and ready to settle again elsewhere. "I mean to try hard for 3 or 4 months yet to make a little money if possible before I change the ground," he mused to Hamilton in January 1802. "Insurance & other debts here have become like wild geese[:] the more you run after them the farther they are off." Increasingly vexed about his financial ventures, Kingsley subsequently wrote Hamilton on no less than two occasions by the early New Year regarding the prospects of slave trading. "I desired you to give me what information you could on the subject of New Negros," Kingsley wrote from St. Thomas, "as probably a better Market than Havana might be found if one knew exactly how and where, what quantity could be sold at once and the terms of payment and risks one would have to run."[14] Financially liable for a series of outstanding accounts spanning a handful of continents—which he had little prospect of making good on—the merchant effectively turned to slave trading full-time in hopes of an economic turnaround.[15]

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] George Gibbs III (1766-1848) of Wilmington, North Carolina, married Kingsley's sister, Isabella, in 1798. The couple bordered on economic collapse after the fall of Gibbs' merchant business there, apparently as a result of negligent bookkeeping by his partner, and eventually came to New York. There he managed Kingsley's affairs as well as fell into his brother-in-law's good graces by doting on Zephaniah's elderly mother. Gibbs later prospered after a particularly rocky start at New York and later settled in St. Augustine, Florida, where he held official capacities for the Territorial Government and acted as Kingsley's attorney. The Gibbs family was later linked to the St. Simons planters' kinship network by marriage and gave both Kingsley and Gibbs powerful connections in personal and business matters. See Margaret Gibbs Watt, *The Gibbs Family of Long Ago and Near at Hand, 1337-1967* (Privately Published, 1968), 17-20, 29, 100.

[14] Kingsley to Hamilton, St. Thomas, January 10, 1802, DU.

[15] Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2006), 9, 45. The author states that according to best estimates "at least 300,000 slaves entered Cuba, if not more," in the between 1790 and 1820. The corresponding "expansion of slavery during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century caused radical social,

The Atlantic slave trade was a risky venture. Financially speaking, the risks to both the slave ship and the cargo were great. Many slavers cleared very little profit if any, and even more lost considerably. Yet for those that had added up the costs to their own persons and property, the enticement of substantial wealth was worth the danger. They did not—could not—survive such a life without a remarkably thick inner core. "Captains of slavers were tough," Marcus Rediker reminds us, "hard-driving men, known for their concentrated power, ready resort to the lash, and ability to control large numbers of people."[16] Such a venture no doubt would have appealed to Kingsley's increasingly shape shifting character—guided by an ever dangerous capability of both kindness and cruelty, and a mounting desperation to acquire wealth.

In about a month's time Kingsley purchased a slave ship, the fregata *Superior*, in St. Thomas for "seis mil pesos." On February 27, Juan Lawson, acting agent for the ship's owner Don Francisco Delsar of Buenos Aires, delivered the 156-ton vessel into Kingsley's hands—perhaps high priced, as Daniel L. Schafer suggests, on account of the cargo of African slaves already on board. Wasting little time at St. Thomas, Kingsley subsequently left there after procuring a sea pass from Danish authorities on March 2, bound for the lucrative sugar and slave markets at Havana with 250 "new negroes" below deck.[17]

Early nineteenth century Cuba continued to experience a rapid economic increase thanks to the Haitian Revolution. Capitalizing on the significant drop in the French dominated markets, the island first reaped large profits from coffee and rapidly switched to cultivating massive amounts of sugar. Thousands of refugee planters from Saint Domingue arrived throughout the

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political, economic, and cultural transformations of Cuban society". Child likewise attributes such shifts as contributing to the continent wide Aponte Rebellion of 1812 that took as its inspiration the Haitian Revolution.

[16] Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 6.

[17] Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Danish Connection," n.p., KPO; Allan J. Kuethe, "Havana in the Eighteenth Century," in Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 30.

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well (part of the so-called "planned migration" or "planned exile"), accompanied by their large population of slaves and a desire to rebuild their forfeited estates.[18] Markets like Havana therefore had a high demand for slaves to fuel the incessant development of sugar mills that littered the western island regions. Expanding slavery in Cuba in tandem with the Saint Domingue revolt created something of a moral quandary for many officials—though one that was eventually trumped by profit for an increasingly standoffish planter contingent.[19]

Trading frequently with the North American mainland, Havana found itself effectively plugged into a lively commercial exchange with the United States, coupled with a growing integration of its own colony at Spanish Florida.[20] Eager to profit from the boom cycle, Louis A. Perez, Jr. demonstrates that Americans "provid[ed] slaves and manufactured goods at reasonable prices, often extend[ed] generous credit arrangements, and accept[ed] sugar and molasses as payment."[21] The situation on both sides revealed the evolving path of the Atlantic economy, its broad outlines, and the increasingly malleable quality of the regional commodity flow.[22] The promise of profit lured businessmen like Kingsley to Cuba en masse.

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[18] Louis M. Perez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 54-76; R. Darrell Meadows, "The Planters of Saint Domingue, 1750-1804: Migration and Exile in the French Revolutionary Atlantic," Ph.D. Dissertation, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004, 105.

[19] Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba*, 35-6; Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in Its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 2004), 108.

[20] Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 176.

[21] Perez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 60.

[22] James Gregory Cusick, "Spanish East Florida in the Atlantic Economy of the Late Eighteenth Century," in Jane G. Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 169, 172-73, 178-79, 183.

At once problems surfaced for the new slave ship captain. Despite his initial hopes for a handsome turnaround on the overwhelmingly-male slave cargo (168 men, 27 women, 7 boys, 23 girls),[23] Kingsley found the situation "[fell] far short of my expectations at this market." True to form, he initially panicked at the prospect of failing on his first venture. To James Hamilton, then at St. Simons Island, Georgia, he dispatched a hasty and cryptic note on March 14 suggesting that he might risk illegally selling the slaves in Georgia. "Did I know exactly where you was [sic] and the state of things, I would be tempted to risk a part of them on the borders of ----------," Kingsley promised in a veiled reference, "for it grieves me to be changing one dollar for another without profit."[24] Uncertain as to what the cargo might bring him financially, he promised that "if the sale does not turn out as well as I expect, necessity will oblige me to try a part of them at some other market. If I was sure you was on your plantation it would not be long before you would see me. I will perhaps see you as it is, for I wish to see whether we cannot do some good business again together."[25] If Kingsley's fate appeared hopeless, his own fortunes appeared to be turning soon enough. By the month's end, he had reportedly since "disposed of the cargo" and was soon to leave Havana for Hamilton's plantation "to have some conversation with [him] upon business."[26]

By the end of 1802, Zephaniah Kingsley had spent a fair amount of time immersed in the Caribbean in hopes that he might "change the ground." To that end he had broadened his economic horizons by settling some of his outstanding accounts with merchants in St. Thomas

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[23] David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, Herbert S. Klein, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Number 13933, features the cargo breakdown though unfortunately little else.

[24] Kingsley to Hamilton, March 14, 1802, DU.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Kingsley to Hamilton, March 27, 1802, DU.

and St. Croix, particularly, and suffered none too silently on the Saint Domingue debts that threatened to ruin him in the long run. His time in St. Thomas, for one thing, immersed him within perhaps the Atlantic's most intense cultural and economic experience. In addition to rubbing shoulders with the best and worst that that maritime world had to offer, Kingsley no doubt learned the highs and lows of big business in what was generally deemed a fruitful economic period for Atlantic merchants. The experience led him to cultivate longstanding relationships with the powerful and well connected that he subsequently maintained long after he left the West Indies for the North American mainland. Although he would take up residences elsewhere, Kingsley would return to St. Thomas on business frequently in the coming years. And not least of all, he presumably was able to accumulate a small sum to seek a life and his fortune elsewhere.[27]

Within the first years of the nineteenth century the specter of the slave revolution in Saint Domingue continued to haunt the Atlantic world and influence the domestic policies of empire. Fearful of the example of black rebelliousness and the cries of liberty, officials in an overwhelming numbers of locales throughout the hemisphere were attuned to the immediate and protracted influence that pervaded slave populations. Colonial governors throughout the Caribbean in particular found it almost impossible to effectively police the porous coastlines in search of incendiary European Enlightenment materials and the inevitable revolutionary rhetoric from sailors and the like. Due to mounting efforts by the British abolitionist movement and the increasingly burdensome costs of keeping the slave trade open, Denmark wisely outlawed future

[27] For example, later Florida resident and fellow world traveler Moses E. Levy knew Kingsley in St. Thomas and later maintained a friendship until Kingsley's death. Levy was powerfully connected a prominent merchant family through his brief marriage as well as high ranking government officials from Cuba to Puerto Rico. See the exchange printed by Levy in *Florida Herald & Southern Democrat*, January 23, 1843; and C. S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 26-27, 32-33, 36, 146-46, 160.

slave imports in 1803. As Kingsley pondered leaving the Danish West Indies for the mainland, the heyday of the transshipment market at St. Thomas had passed its peak. Until 1807, however, an extralegal trade did continue to funnel smaller numbers of slaves to Spanish markets at Cuba and nearby Puerto Rico.[28]

British pressure to end the slave trade left the United States in something of a conundrum. Its own looming statute on slave importations was due to expire on January 1, 1808. What the Americans would decide was anyone's guess some four years out. Then, as Don E. Fehrenbacher has shown, Congress passed an act in early 1803 that effectively "forbade the importing of 'any negro, mulatto, or other person of colour' into any state that had prohibited such entry." For South Carolina, the proverbial writing on the wall foretold an uncertain future for slavery under the recent flexing of federal muscle. Itself in need of both cheaper and plentiful slaves—particularly in the backcountry—the state defiantly opted to reopen the slave trade. Between its late-1803 opening and its demise on December 31, 1807, "more than forty thousand Africans" arrived in Charleston, where "many of whom were then sent on to other markets as far away as New Orleans."[29] From New Orleans, as was the case throughout time and space, it became "a story of back and forth glances and estimations, of hushed conspiracies and loud boasts, of power, fear, and desire, of mistrust and dissimulation, of human beings broken down into parts and recomposed as commodities, of futures promised, purchased, and resisted."[30] Such rapid expansion along the southwestern frontier created a dire need for slave

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[28] Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 526-27.

[29] Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 141-42.

[30] Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 3.

labor, the likes of which slave traders like Zephaniah Kingsley were all too happy to oblige in delivering.

Appearing before Spanish authorities at St. Augustine (Spanish Florida), on September 24, 1803, for the third time in a decade Kingsley swore an oath of allegiance pledging to defend the province in times of rebellion and to bind himself to His Catholic Majesty's laws. Not yet in his fourth decade, the slave trader and merchant told authorities that "he has sixty-seven thousand one-hundred sixty pesos in houses, money and slaves." From his theretofore time spent navigating the often treacherous waters of the Atlantic world, Kingsley survived and thrived by inventing and reinventing himself at will. The very real presence of privateers, pirates, and parasites were a constant presence in many parts of Kingsley's adventures. Crisscrossing empires called for an easily flexible identity that skillfully integrated any number of the most useful and appealing traits. "Character," historian S. Max Edelson argues, "was a fundamental property that anchored the self in this changing world where appearances could be deceiving. Describing character pinned down the true value of the socially ambiguous person and the fluctuating commodity alike and fixed the essence of both so that they might be inserted into a stable matrix of understanding."[31] In altering his identity Kingsley altered the power dynamics. When asked of his background, Kingsley characteristically claimed to be a "native of Misisipy [sic], unmarried, farmer by trade, of the Catholic faith...."[32]

Kingsley's peculiar answer was most likely if not a complete fabrication, at least mostly so. He was unmarried; that much was true. Perhaps hoping to capitalize on the booming southwestern slave trade for a time he went to Natchez or to New Orleans a bit further on at the

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[31] S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 168.

[32] Zephaniah Kingsley, "Oath of Allegiance, September 24, 1803 (translation)," typescript, Zephaniah Kingsley File, St. Augustine Historical Society, St. Augustine, Florida (SAHS).

insistence of his friend James Hamilton or John Couper. The two men, after all, had significant ties to the area (which therefore extended to Kingsley as well) and later jointly owned significant properties there as well.[33] Nevertheless, Kingsley was not a "native" of the area. He was in fact a slave trader by profession. And while he attended church (in some cases, regularly) and later claimed that he sometimes still attended Quaker meetings, Kingsley otherwise appeared generally opposed to organized religion, let alone Catholicism.

Spanish Florida offered settlers with means to cultivate plentiful land, have abundant room for expansion, and an increasingly integrated transatlantic economy.[34] Always the opportunist, Kingsley later explained that "he came to settle in this province in order to enjoy the privileges and rights granted to the new settlers" under "several Royal Orders" passed by the Spanish Crown since the late eighteenth century. As one of the "true settlers who are wanted in this Province," he immediately set about procuring property tracts as stipulated in the Royal Order of November 1790, which promised a fixed grant of land based upon dependents within a household introduced to the province. Allotments could and did vary according to the ages of family members; and slaves constituted part of the equation for dispensing lands. Based upon amended laws passed by Governor Enrique White a matters of weeks after Kingsley's oath,

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[33] Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation & Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 151, 155; Thomas Spalding, "On the Cultivation of the Sugar Cane, Erecting of proper Buildings, and Manufacturing of Sugar," *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs*, February 1829; Walter Charlton Hartridge, ed., *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen to His Family: Written from Spanish East Florida, 1791-1807* (Columbia, S.C.: Bostick & Thornley, 1943), xxx-xxxi; William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola: University of West Florida Press, 1986), 209, 274-75; Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point*, 47, 48, 52, 60-61, 63-67; Bagwell, *Rice Gold*, 64; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation, 1838-1839* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1984), is the most popular account of the St. Simons families.

[34] William S. Coker and Susan R. Parker, "The Second Spanish Period in the Two Floridas," in Michael V. Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 157-60.

children under eight years of age were not factored for the total allotment, while those eight to sixteen added fifteen acres per person to the grant.[35]

Appealing to Spanish authorities at St. Augustine for land based on the headright system in place, Kingsley was firmly rebuffed by Governor White. In Kingsley's telling the governor explained that "these [lands] were destined for poor settlers as well as similar other types"—not for wealthy men like the applicant. As he "became tired and not having anywhere to employ his slaves," Kingsley instead "resolved to acquire land with his money." On November 26, 1803 he purchased from a widow, Rebecca Pengree, "four contiguous plantations" totaling some 2,600 acres for $5,300.00. Pengree's financial hardships were clearly Kingsley's good fortune. "I am driven to a fatal extreme…to indigence or sell," she abashedly reported to the governor on October 10. In his first two months as a Spanish citizen, Kingsley was off to a promising start in what would be a rather remarkable series of opportunistic land dealings in the creation of his own small empire.[36]

The crux of Kingsley's landholdings in northern Florida located along the beautiful, winding St. Johns River that opened along Doctor's Lake in today's Orange Park was called "Laurel Grove." Situated on some 1,753 acres it served as the core of Kingsley's plantation enterprises for nearly a decade. With ten slaves brought from South Carolina, he began work there at once. Clearing lands and repairing significant portions of the neglected tract no doubt

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[35] Zephaniah Kingsley to Governor Henry White, St. Augustine, January 25, 1814, and Governor Henry White, Modification of Royal Order, St. Augustine, October 12, 1803, in Malcolm Gray, translator, "Spanish Documents Pertaining to Zephaniah Kingsley and His Claim to lands Based on the Number of Slaves He Introduced in Florida," unpublished manuscript, P. K. Yonge Library, University of Florida, Gainesville (PKY).

[36] Claims of Zephaniah Kingsley, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Collection, PKY, typescript copy based on Confirmed Spanish Land Grants of Zephaniah Kingsley, K-10, Box 20, Folder 17, pp. 39-41, Spanish Land Grants, State Library of Florida, Tallahassee; Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 2-3; Daniel L. Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove Plantation, 1803-1813," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 102, 117n17; Pengree knew John McQueen, who possibly notified Kingsley of the opportunity.

occupied the slave crew for a considerable time. To facilitate the process Kingsley brought Abraham Hannahan from Charleston in early 1804 to oversee the plantation's management. Hannahan, an enslaved mulatto overseer apparently raised under the Kingsleys earlier in Charleston, probably provided a much needed sense of both familiarity and stability during a crucial time of transition. Once at Laurel Grove the overseer, operating under Kingsley's precise orders, aided his master in organizing a massive operation that eventually encompassed three settlements, "but which were adjoining and substantially one."[37]

On 760 acres outlaid with orange and citrus groves, sugar, some 200 acres of Sea Island cotton, and several large fields of potatoes, corn, beans and other foodstuffs, Kingsley resided in "a good, frame building" dwelling house "with double piazzas & brick chimneys, incl[u]d[in]g kitchen" that measured some thirty feet by thirty-five feet in all that was eventually flanked by twelve slave quarters, a host of other buildings, and several "Ornamental live oak trees." Combined with his nearby Springfield Plantation ("one mile distant") and at the Ship Yard settlement, Kingsley's agricultural pursuits at Laurel Grove would make him a very wealthy planter and businessman by any calculations.[38]

In the meantime, Kingsley required a significant labor force to expand his Florida holdings. Opting to return to his former residence at St. Thomas, the slave trader evidently still found connections substantial enough to conduct several significant transactions there. Purchasing a schooner named *Little Jim* on April 2, followed by a cargo of twenty-five slaves during his short time there, he arrived at the port of St. Augustine having rechristened the ship

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[37] Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 29; East Florida Claims, "Case of Zephaniah Kingsley," n.p., n.d., PKY, 2.

[38] Zephaniah Kingsley, "Petition of Zephaniah Kingsley to Honorable Raymond Reid, Judge of the Superior Court (July 25, 1812)," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 198-202 *passim*.

"*Laurel*" (the new name perhaps reflected, as Daniel L. Schafer has speculated, Kingsley's own Laurel Grove plantation) on May 5. Apparently wasting little time delivering the slave property to Laurel Grove, Kingsley promptly departed for the slave markets at Havana where, after an absence of a few weeks, he again returned to St. Augustine aboard the *Laurel* with ten purchased slaves at the end of June.[39]

With the close of 1804 it was apparent that Kingsley had begun a substantial enterprise in East Florida. Laurel Grove had upwards of about fifty slaves clearing and prepping the vast fields for cotton and provisions since its inception, and, given enough hands, had a reasonable chance to succeed as any. Yet, debt (real or imagined) continued to plague the plantation owner. He sold, for instance, his slave ship *Gustavia* ("as she [then] [lay] in Savannah in the State of Georgia") at Charleston to merchant Spencer John Man for the sum of $10,500.00 on August 14, while claiming this time to be "of the City and State of New York...."[40] Like many slaveowners of the period that were plugged into the transatlantic print culture market, Kingsley too appeared to measure his own self-worth and identity through evolving standards of civility, progress, and ideas about enlightened mastery.[41] Financially dependent upon plantation crops at his fledgling Florida estate to recoup his mounting expenses, Kingsley again opted to try his hand at the African slave trade, though in a slightly different role.

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[39] Gray, trans., "Spanish Documents Pertaining to Zephaniah Kingsley," PKY, 9; Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Danish Connection," n.p., n.d., KPO; Zephaniah Kingsley, "Requests inspection and Admission of 10 Slaves from Havana, June 25, 1804," Records of East Florida, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Microfilm Reel 133 (EFP).

[40] Zephaniah Kingsley to Spencer John Man, Bill of Sale, August 14, 1804, S213003, 3T:446, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia (SCDAH).

[41] Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 35-37, 93, 110, 130, 132; Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 104-07.

Departing in the waning days of 1804, Kingsley journeyed to Liverpool, England, aboard the *Gustavia* commanded by a Captain Theophilus Hill, but in the capacity as the voyage's agent. His principal purpose there, he wrote to James Hamilton, "was to obtain leave to fit out a Ship for [A]ngola"—an endeavor that he was forced to cancel "on account of the impossibility of obtaining leave to take on board the necessary provisions...."[42] As Stephen Behrendt suggests, due to the "seasonal patterns" of transatlantic shipping Kingsley's January arrival was in fact a poor time and Liverpool a poor locale to launch a lengthy voyage. Arriving well past the peak season, it is likely that he experienced severe shortages of everything from timber and textiles to abundant provisions for both crew and cargo, as well as possible goods to trade. For such reasons, Behrendt says, "transaction cycles favored fitting out a slavery vessel during the summer."[43]

Kingsley appeared almost inconsolable as nearly a month elapsed with little progress. On account of "hav[ing] been so thronged with troubles since [his] arrival," he "obliged reluctantly to set off for Mosambique" under less than ideal circumstances and scratched Angola altogether. He confessed that his future prospects were all but uncertain, consistently blaming external forces for sabotaging his efforts, but never himself. His expectations, Kingsley admitted, frankly "[were] not sanguine." In the same lengthy letter to Hamilton, Kingsley somewhat uncharacteristically launched into his most revealing and heartfelt admission of the past year's turmoil:

> This last year has been a period of Misfortunes[—]so much so, that I allmost [sic] despair of ever accomplishing the wished for object of indipendance [sic] which seemed to be sometimes within my reach & then again totally to disappear: By experience I have learnt that fortune is neither to be won by prudence nor industry &

[42] Kingsley to Hamilton, Liverpool, February 28, 1805, DU; Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 23.

[43] Behrendt, "Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits," 179-80.

> have only to thank God that Ambition[,] the attendant of health[,] has not yet deserted me & keeps hurrying me on like a Soldier in hopes of victory; yet well aware that if not soon obtained that period must come when nature will relax the Springs and leave me distanced in the course….nature is obliged to be silent & give way to ambition, which perverts the sweetest and most natural enjoyments of life.[44]

Alienated and increasingly morose, Kingsley quickly changed the subject to business and news of local events. After a period of such despair, he did not repeat such a protracted admission in his surviving correspondence.[45] After remaining in Liverpool for another month, Kingsley and crew finally embarked for Mozambique probably in the first days of April.[46]

From Liverpool the ship sailed along the coast of West Africa, where it ultimately arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in a journey of about four months. Kingsley was generally impressed with the aesthetics of his surroundings. "This town is the neatest & most beautiful I ever saw," he wrote again to Hamilton. "The people are generally handsome & very hospitable and the climate is temperate & the healthiest I believe in the known world." However, despite the prevailing European opinion at the time, Kingsley did find the immediate area somewhat "barren" in some spots and in need of European cultivation. Had he ventured out further, the

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[44] Kingsley to Hamilton, Liverpool, February 28, 1805, DU.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Kingsley to Hamilton, Liverpool, March 30, 1805, DU; in a letter to Spanish Florida Governor Enrique White, fellow Floridian John McQueen relayed a letter from Kingsley dated at Liverpool intended for the Spanish administrator. Although familiar with McQueen from the Hamilton and Couper network, McQueen referred to him as "Kinsley" and incorrectly asserted that Kingsley was in fact still at Liverpool in late May. McQueen had previously owned Fort George Island, Kingsley's later residence, and subsequently sold it to John Houstoun McIntosh, who later resold it to Kingsley. The men were all part of a well connected circle of business and/ or family relations (largely comprised of Scotsmen) that stretched across the western hemisphere and beyond. John McQueen to Governor Enrique White, St. Johns [Florida], May 22, 1805, EFP, R58; see also Hartridge, ed., *Letters of Don Juan McQueen*, 23, 47, 52, 62-63, 81; Charles Spalding Wylly, *The Seed that Was Sown in the Colony of Georgia: The Harvest and the Aftermath, 1740-1870* (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1910), 133; on the network of Scots, see Roger G. Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 214-27; Stefanie L. Joyner, "Slave Housing Patterns within the Plantation Landscape of Georgia," M.S. Thesis, University of Florida, 2003; McIntosh was one of the prominent McIntoshes of Georgia (and nephew of Lachlan McIntosh of Revolutionary War fame). I have retained the spelling of his full name ("Houstoun" instead of "Houston") as it appears on his tombstone in St. Mary's, Georgia.

traveler might have encountered a growing community of botanical collectors exchanging scientific information in what Londa Schiebinger termed a quintessential "biocontact zone." Part and parcel to the often complex web of transatlantic exchanges generally, such cultural collusions were responsible for relaying and trading information rapidly across spatial and linguistic barriers. Nevertheless, Kingsley did admit that mutual friend John Couper's planting troubles might be "indemnified by some eastern curiosity."[47]

The layover at the Cape of Good Hope was all too brief. As he estimated that Mozambique lay nearly weeks ahead, Kingsley and the *Gustavia* initially hoped to be back in West Indies and then Charleston with their slave cargo by November or December at the latest. Given the precarious situation of his new plantation, absenting himself from the settlement at that critical juncture appeared to cause him much anxiety. In his stead, Kingsley's brother-in-law and agent, George Gibbs, promised to attend to it.[48] Such hopes were undoubtedly dashed by the tumultuous journey up the East African coastline.

Home to a substantial international trade, Mozambique supplied a host of goods imported and exported from as far away as South America and China. Trade largely depended on the cyclical weather patterns. During Kingsley's stay the typically calm ocean currents of the season were a brief reprieve; however, the constant threat of hurricanes, heavy rains, and fierce winds remained. Slave markets in Mozambique—like at Zanzibar and Madagascar—frequently

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[47] Leigh Davin Bregman, " 'For Sale': Botanists and the Commercial Trade in Botanical Specimens at the Cape of Good Hope, 1750-1850," *Archives Internationales d' Histoire des Sciences*, 56.156-57 (June-December 2006), 249-50; Londa Schiebinger, *Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 57-58, 83-84, 87, 89.

[48] Kingsley to Hamilton, Liverpool, March 30, 1805, DU; George Gibbs to James Hamilton, New York, October 16, 1805, James Hamilton Papers, DU; Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, November 4, 1805, DU; Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, November 15, 1805, DU; Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, December 27, 1805, DU. Given the unforeseen length of Kingsley's absence, Gibbs relayed various accounts of his brother-in-law's supposed return based on earlier estimates. Gibbs' marriage to Kingsley's sister Isabella likewise placed him in close proximity to Kingsley's mother, also named Isabella. All family members there were understandably concerned when he did not arrive on schedule.

displayed a steady supply of captured chattel for sale. Natural disasters coupled with warfare and European demand ensured more slaves for market. The Portuguese dominated the Mozambique trade supplying its Brazilian colony; the French also sought numbers for its sugar plantation colonies; and an increasing trans-Mozambique Channel slave trade brought larger numbers to sell year round. Before 1811, Herbert Klein estimates the area sold 90,000 slaves and later accounted for some fourteen percent of all slaves shipped from Africa in the nineteenth century.[49]

Purchasing slaves from East Africa was generally thought to entail significantly more risk to both crew and cargo. The longer voyage time entailed much more resources needed for the crew and slave cargo. Sometimes lengthy negotiations for purchasing slaves invariably used up critical resources as the ship anchored. Expenses would mount and forestall the return journey to unload the cargo for market. Sickness and death threatened both the crew and the expensive slave population aboard. The threat of slave revolt (always a real possibility) would have only been compounded by the sheer factors of time and miserable conditions below deck. Any of the factors at any time might spell disaster for Kingsley's substantial venture.[50]

During his run to the coast of East Africa, Kingsley evidently decided to continue farther north to Zanzibar before the return voyage. Purchased during that stretch from Zanzibar on the eastern coast of Africa was Jack Pritchard, also known as Gullah Jack in late 1805. The slave, one of countless numbers that Kingsley bought and sold over his many years of trading, was memorable for a special reason. "[T]he little man who can't be killed, shot, or taken," as he was

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[49] Gwyn Campbell, "Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean, 1800-1861," *Slavery & Abolition*, 9 (1988), 174-75, 179-81; Klein, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 70-1.

[50] Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 197-98, 244-46, 291-301.

referred to, Gullah Jack died on the gallows less than two decades later for his role in Denmark Vesey's conspiracy of 1822. Zephaniah Kingsley later wrote:

> Gullah Jack or Jack the Conjurer was a priest in his own country, M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles: I purchased him a prisoner of war at Zinguebar. He had his conjuring implements with him in a bag which he brought onboard the ship and always retained them.[51]

A partial slave inventory from Laurel Grove later suggests that Kingsley himself acquired others from the same region, perhaps during this specific voyage. Of several slaves later seized by Native Americans in Florida, Kingsley claimed two "very prime" male carpenters and one "prime" female hand.[52]

As the new year of 1806 dawned, family and friends had not yet heard from Kingsley since August 1 when at the Cape of Good Hope. His brother-in-law was still "very anxious" by late February as still no news arrived. Even worse, Gibbs reported that Laurel Grove's temporary manager had written him the month before of the crop misfortunes. The winter frost "has injured his [Kingsley's] crop very much, but making a great proportion of his cotton yellow, and it appears they have made very little, but he will not do much until he can be more there himself or until he can get a good manager to attend to it." Relieved to finally hear word from

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[51] Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2; Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free*, 118; Kingsley, *Treatise*, in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 68; See also Philip D. Morgan, "Conspiracy Scares," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 59.1 (January 2002), 162; Robert Tinkler, *James Hamilton of South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 44-48; Vesey was a free black that orchestrated a rebellion that aimed at escaping bondage in Charleston, South Carolina, but was betrayed both by both weather and a slave informant. Scholars appear quite divided over the existence of the plot's existence. I do not take a particular stand on the plot's existence or nonexistence, as Kingsley certainly believed it to be real nonetheless. See herein Chapter Four for more about the Vesey conspiracy in the making of racial laws that affected Kingsley's domestic situation directly.

[52] Schafer, "Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove Plantation," 110, and Kingsley, "Petition of Zephaniah Kingsley to Honorable Raymond Reid, Judge of the Superior Court (July 25, 1812)," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 199.

Kingsley in mid-April, Gibbs and family "all rejoiced to hear he is so far on his way back, and that he was safe at that time."[53]

By early February Kingsley and crew had rounded the Cape of Good Hope once again and headed northwest on the West African coast. Stopping at the tiny island of St. Helena (later famous for the exiled Napoleon, 1815-21), the slave ship perhaps docked at the port of Jamestown in order to resupply after the arduous voyage, and for Kingsley to dispatch letters. He intended to stay at the island for about two weeks before continuing his journey. Gibbs correctly surmised that Kingsley might opt to head straight for Georgia, where friends James Hamilton and John Couper had significant plantations. Ignoring the illegality of such a move, Kingsley instead "anchored" the slave ship of "240 Negroes" at Tybee Island on April 21 near Savannah (and outside of the law's sights).[54] Perhaps retrieving outstanding communications and tending to business there, Kingsley stayed briefly and arrived in Charleston a week later.[55]

In all likelihood, compelled to bolster the sagging revenue at Laurel Grove, Kingsley intended to make some immediate key changes. First, he sent sixteen Mozambique slaves from the *Gustavia* at Charleston to Florida in July by Captain Joel Dunn aboard the *Balandra el*

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[53] Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, January 18, 1806, DU; Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, February 26, 1806, DU; and Gibbs to Hamilton, New York, April 15, 1806, DU.

[54] Zephaniah Kingsley to William Allen, Tybee [Island, Georgia], April 21, 1806, James Hamilton Papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens (UGA).

[55] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 23; James A. McMillan, *The Final Victims: Foreign Slave Trade to North America, 1783-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 1314; *The New-York Weekly Museum* of May 17, 1806 reprinted the *Gustavia's* arrival in Charleston along with that of three other slaving vessels in an unflattering editorial: "Four cargoes of HUMAN FLESH, imported in the ships Robert, Gustavia, George, and brig Neptune, are (to the disgrace of our country), advertised for sale in the Charleston Courier of the 1st instant. They consist of 835 African Negroes who are said to be PRIME." South Carolina newspapers listed 250 slaves having arrived about the *Gustavia*, though Kingsley's figure was less in his note to William Allen written from Tybee Island; James Hamilton bought at least eight "prime negroes" from Spencer John Man in Charleston (six male and two female) on May 2, paying $280 for the former and $275 for the latter. Spencer John Man to James Hamilton, May 2, 1806, James Hamilton Papers, UGA.

Pepe.[56] The East Africans would effectively increase the labor to something like seventy laborers spread between the three settlements at Laurel Grove. Next, finally leaving Charleston sometime in early September, presumably with forty-three unsold East Africans on board, Kingsley arrived at Havana on fellow Floridian Captain Henry Wright's ship *Esther*. Between September 18 and his October 10 departure, he purchased "four hogshead of molasses, twenty-eight half pipes, and twelve whole pipes of rum...." But more significantly, he had also purchased, presumably "from a [slave] fleet," "Tres Negros bozales" that Wright subsequently introduced at St. Augustine on October 21 for Kingsley.[57]

Of the three *bozales*, evidence seems to suggest that one, Ana, was likely purchased at that time. Ana, or Anna Madgigine as Kingsley haphazardly wrote her name in later years, initially served as one of Zephaniah's slave concubines and eventually bore him four children. Their relationship no doubt reflects the complicated relations of power and racial hierarchy of the time. As such, it is indeed difficult to unravel the paradoxical relations between a slave master and slave trader with a black mistress.[58] Once more, Kingsley's own deceptive answers on the

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[56] Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 334n68; Captain Joel Dunn to Governor, Requests Inspection and Admission of 16 Slaves Belonging to Zephaniah Kingsley, July 15, 1806, EFP, R114.

[57] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 23-24; "Manumission of Anna (1811)," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 23; Captain Henry Wright to Governor, Requests Admission and Inspection of 3 Slaves Belonging to Zephaniah Kingsley, October 21, 1806, EFP, R133.

[58] Mary Frances Berry, "Judging Morality: Sexual Consequences and Legal Behavior in the Late Nineteenth-Century South," *Journal of American History*, 78.3 (December 1991), 842-43. Throughout my account I refer to Anna as Zephaniah's, first, concubine, and later common-law wife, which stands in stark contrast with the position taken by Anna's biographer, Daniel L. Schafer. One of many problems with adopting Schafer's view of the union as a marriage is the culturally loaded aspect of the term. In a similar case in South Carolina, Scotsman Adam Tunno

subject coupled with local myth and efforts of later historians have helped craft a love story between the two that aimed to remove any potential pitfalls of Anna's enslavement and otherwise portray a view of domestic bliss across racial and culture lines. Yet the full magnitude of their relationship was not immediate and likely altered little of the daily mechanics at Laurel Grove for quite some time.[59]

Like other slaves captured and sold to slavers for supercargoes, Anna and a significant body of slaves at Laurel Grove had endured a horrific transition to chattel slavery. Kingsley, like

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and his free black mistress, Margaret Bettingall, lived together and had one surviving child. After Tunno's 1832 death, the provisions of his will provided for the mother and child. It was a half century later that a lawsuit regarding French payments for American ship losses before 1800 called into question the issue of Tunno's relationship to Margaret. Tunno, a merchant at the time of the French attacks, lost a vessel. White descendents of Tunno's challenged Margaret's heirs for the losses amounting to some $14,000. While the court ultimately ruled against Margaret's heirs, an important issue of "what constituted marriage" was raised and is relevant here.

For example, Anna's status as a de facto "wife" versus a de jure wife is a significant difference. Apart from Kingsley's rather informal, perhaps affectionate use of the term, it is noteworthy that he left the issue of the union's legitimacy to chance in his will. In adopting Schafer's position, the premise that the marriage was legitimized ennobles Zephaniah's intentions, which misrepresent the dynamics at work and presumes a rather strained scenario. Kingsley had children by at least three other women as well. One in particular, Flora, appears to have been a slave of Kingsley's mother, Isabella, manumitted on October 9, 1817, perhaps by Kingsley himself as co-executor of her estate. Local Florida legend actually confused Anna with Flora in this regard. Further evidence of Kingsley's informal use of the term "wife" and confirmation of Zephaniah's status as a single white male throughout his life is in a strikingly similar parallel to the Tunno case.

On Tunno, see Cynthia Kennedy-Haflett, "'Moral Marriage': A Mixed-Race Relationship in Nineteenth Century Charleston, South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 97.3 (July 1996), 206-26; manumission of Flora in Harry B. Yoshpe, "Records of Slave Manumissions in New York During the Colonial and Early National Periods," *Journal of Negro History*, 26.1 (January 1941), 98; on the legitimacy issue of Kingsley's relationship with Flora, see the case of Kingsley v. Broward, 19 Fla. 722 (1883), in George P. Raney, ed., *Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Florida During the Years 1882-3* (Tallahassee: Florida Book and Job Office, 1883), 722-47; Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 4n5, succinctly discusses the problems of terminology for historians in the past.

[59] Antoinette T. Jackson with Allan Burns, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve: Ethnohistorical Study of the Kingsley Plantation Community* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2006), 9.

his friend and fellow slaver John Fraser situated at Rio Pongo (West Africa), considered himself a legitimate entrepreneur engaged in a "very respectable business." Though the slave trade's more dubious aspects as he said "were invariably attendant" on its basic tenets, Kingsley often looked no further than sheer economics. "It was very profitable," he later asserted.[60] Yet the sheer economics of the slave trade did nothing to alter the fact that human beings were violently removed from their own families and kinship networks to endure a life (however brief that might be) half a world away. For Anna, as it was for Kingsley's other slaves, the experience could only have been earth shattering.[61]

Many recent historians have recognized that the internal dynamics of the African political structure often fueled the slave trade. While the degree of increased participation of Africans in facilitating the slave trade is debatable, ultimately, as Gwendolyn Midlo Hall argues, the mechanism that sustained it was primarily European: "Although it was often propelled by internal considerations, it became increasingly provoked, inspired, greased, and supported by the European demand for slaves in the Americas as the frontiers for the capture, kidnapping, and sale of Africans supplying the Atlantic slave trade expanded and moved inland."[62] Slaves like Anna no doubt had similar stories of their capture and of the lives that they left behind.

For example, Sitiki, later a slave in St. Augustine (there called "Jacque" or "Uncle Jack"), remembered quite clearly as a youth being taken "captive to a neighboring people." "The town we lived in was Igboe," he later explained. His father, Deva, "was a weaver; and I remember standing by him while he wove the cotton that raised in the fields about there." Jene, Sitiki's

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[60] Kingsley quoted in Lydia Maria Child, "Letter from New York," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, 109, 111.

[61] Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 106.

[62] Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 15; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 112.

mother, like other women of the town, wore gold "employed in ornament," typically "in bands about the wrists, arms & ankles." He had a brother, ("the name of the little fellow I cannot recollect") he said, "a year younger than myself whom I used to lead about holding him by the hand." Decades later Jack recalled the moment of his capture in precise detail:

> It happened on a time that our little family, accompanied by a woman, went on foot from home, about a day's journey, to a village where we stopped. While there we heard cries of war with the report of muskets at a distance. The inhabitants ran into the swamp near by. Directly a man entered our house and took the gold rings from my mother's fingers and the beads from her neck. Then another man came & took her away with the [other] woman. My father arriving and seeing us boys hidden in the corner, took his sword and stood by the door. Two men came who told him to give up; he refused: they afterward brought two others who talked to him. He then surrendered. One man took my brother, the other took me. After going a little way I looked back and saw a multitude of people around my father making a great commotion. I have ever [had] the opinion that he was killed there.

After a fortnight with his captors, Sitiki saw his mother and brother for the final time the following day. "She gave me a handful of pica (ground nuts)," he remembered. "I was mounted behind the man who took me. After she was gone, my brother was brought along on horse back following her, & I gave him a part of my nuts, the man I was with riding up that I might do so." With a characteristic gentleness Jack added, "I never saw of either of them again."[63]

Captives such as Jack and Anna were often transformed by the sheer trauma of their enslavement through a series of "phases" that began on African soil. Each process from capture, transport, confinement, shipment, and sale all reinforced the ideas of separation and commenced an unknown new reality for the captive. Such phases served to facilitate the process of transforming an individual into a slave.[64] The paths to bondage varied considerably, and as

[63] Buckingham Smith, ed., "The Story of Uncle Jack," unpublished manuscript, Buckingham Smith Papers, New York Historical Society, New York (NYHS).

Gavin Wright reminds us, there were also as many different types of slavery. While Satiki became "Jack" and worked under the rule of his master, Anna (if she had a previous name, it is now lost to history) assumed a remarkably different identity; was granted her freedom while still in her teenage years; bore Kingsley several children; and became a slave and property owner in her own right. The diverging fates of Jack and Anna serve to illustrate but two distinct paths in the Atlantic world from the Middle Passage.[65]

The plantation at Laurel Grove proved to be an altogether different experience for Anna than she was used to in her native Senegal. One of the first plantation realities that served to separate her from Senegal was her exploitation. Herself barely a teenager, Anna gave birth to Zephaniah's son George within months of her arrival.[66] After all, as Jennifer L. Morgan recently demonstrated, reproduction was the benchmark of a slave woman's worth.[67] Zephaniah, as her owner, would have commanded authority over the young girl. Master of a surrounding slave force of dozens, Anna stood little chance of thwarting Kingsley's advances, particularly in her early days at Laurel Grove.[68] Probably given light duties to keep Zephaniah's residence in

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[64] Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 158-59; Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 107, 111.

[65] The distinction and the diverging paths are eloquently illustrated in Ira Berlin's portrait of the "Revolutionary" and "Migration Generations". See *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 99-244; Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), xi-xvi; on the ambiguity of Anna's name, see herein Chapter Three.

[66] "Manumission of Anna (1811)," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 23. Based upon the imprecise age of "about 18 years old" that Kingsley listed in Anna's manumission in 1811, scholars have therefore based her birth year at about 1793. While no clear evidence is forthcoming, she later gave her age as sixty in 1856, or a c.1796 birth. See Arrival of Schooner *Marietta Smith* from Port au Platt, August 15, 1856, Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897, Records of the U. S. Custom Service, RG36, M237, R165, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

[67] Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 25, 36, 80-83.

[68] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 419.

order,[69] the young slave quickly recognized that she would be left alone during his lengthy business absences and that close contact with the master gave her increased opportunities to gain advantage from her position. Under the pervasive theory of slaveholding paternalism, Kingsley naturally would have gravitated between kindness and cruelty as required to keep a large slave force.[70] Maintaining good relations simply helped to ensure one's survival. In time the relationship would evolve as Zephaniah immersed himself further into the broad structures of his international business and as he interacted with Anna and their son. She likewise would gradually learn English, learn to anticipate some of her master's behaviors, observe his cunning ways, and later become, in Kingsley's words, a "very capable" figure on his plantation while he was away on business.[71] She would remain, as Kingsley's statement reveals, under him in the paternal hierarchy and underneath his domineering, watchful eye.

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[69] Mark N. Taylor, ed., "'The African Daughter: A True Tale': A New Edition," *Slavery & Abolition*, 23.3 (December 2002), 134. An anonymous antislavery writer commented on practices by Kingsley friend John McIntosh's plantation at this period that, "The work of the *new* negro, the usual designation of the plantation recruit, is always light: palpable interest of the owner has uniformly suggested the necessity of securing the complete possession of his slave by very gradual approaches." The same undoubtedly held true for the dynamics between Zephaniah as slaveowner and Anna as his slave property as well. The story is one possible source for the confusion over Anna being a princess; another more likely source is the fact that Kingsley "had long been acquainted" with Christiana Gibbons of Philadelphia, "granddaughter of a prince of the Ebo tribe," an idea widely circulated in E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, From April 1833 to October 1834* (London: John Murray, 1835) 2: 146.

[70] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 276, 279, 294, 316.

[71] Child, "Letter from New York," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, 109; John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South, Revised & Enlarged Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 24-25; Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, & Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 231-32, 235-37, 240; here I also respectfully depart from Daniel L. Schafer's portrayal of Anna and Zephaniah's union. His rendering serves to give the sexual union something approaching a pre-determined arrangement on Zephaniah's part to take her for a wife and demonstrates little in the way of explaining her evolution from chattel purchased at a slave market.

In addition, the idea that Anna served as a manager for the plantation deserves caution for two reasons. First, Kingsley's surviving correspondence indicates that white male managers actually managed the plantations in his stead. His assertion that Anna "was very capable, and could carry on all the affairs of the plantation in my absence, as well as I could myself," was stated to abolitionist Lydia Maria Child in response to one of the reasons he "[became] attached to her". He does not blatantly indicate that she exercised full power. Kingsley had already

Particularly in the years following the British and American bans on the African slave trade the marked increase in illegal importation was attributable to slave traders like Kingsley and his friend John Fraser. Fraser, a native of Scotland like many of Kingsley's closest influential associates, headed a daunting international slave trading operation based on the West African coast. It was there that the young Sitiki in fact had first "heard of Kingsley & Fraser" and would later "become more familiar afterwards in Florida".[72] A short time later Fraser also settled in Spanish Florida, arriving "with one hundred thousand dollars in hand, in negroes and other effects—principally negroes." He settled no less than two plantations—Greenfield (Pablo), for Sea-Island cotton and provisions (corn, peas, sweet potatoes), and the rice complex Roundabout—in both cases near Kingsley, where he had amassed a slave force of approximately three hundred and sixty-seven.[73] In 1813 during a particularly turbulent era in Florida history, after Fraser's sudden death left Kingsley co-executor of his estate, he profited handsomely by dipping into his late friend's holdings.[74] Such actions, clouded under the aims of benevolence, are hardly surprising.

Slave traders like Kingsley and Fraser served at once to replenish their own vast plantation complexes with Africans and solidify strong ties to the West African regions that supplied their slave cargoes. Fraser, for example, married a powerful African woman named Phenda (or Fenda) in 1799. Astute and diligent in business matters Phenda it is thought perhaps

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given Child a fictitious account of their relationship's origins and gave self-serving and evasive answers to her poignant questions. Although he certainly was "not on trial" during their meeting, Kingsley may have felt that he was, particularly given her occupation and the chance that their dialogue would appear in print. His answers seem to be quite in line with his protean nature. Kingsley himself stated in the *Treatise*, 62, that "white people are only wanted in act as overseers, or to fill vacancies in conformity to law...." At bottom is the difference between Anna's capabilities (which seem to have been great) versus what Kingsley's rule would effectively allow. The distinction is significant.

[72] Smith, ed., "The Story of Uncle Jack," NYHS.

[73] East Florida Claims, "Case of John Fraser," PKY, 2, 12-15.

[74] Daniel L. Schafer, "Family Ties that Bind: Anglo-African Slave Traders in Africa and Florida, John Fraser and his Descendants," *Slavery & Abolition*, 20.3 (December 1999), 3, 11-12.

had significant kinship ties to local Rio Pongo leaders. Between tributes and keeping good relations with such leaders, Fraser, Phenda, and the biracial children solidified bonds across racial, political, and cultural lines.[75] Firm business and kinship ties of course helped in a region that disposed of captives captured in battle. Military enslavement, one of the few options available to African rulers, had deep roots in West Africa for centuries. Victors in battle with neighboring tribal enclaves commonly enslaved the vanquished, their families, and sometimes their entire villages.[76] In fact, according to one scholar, "In no known instance did warfare not lead to the sale of slaves."[77]

Globally speaking Africa is commonly regarded by scholars as having unprecedented "human diversity."[78] Neighboring peoples often shared common cultural and linguistic ties. Politically speaking, the groups could and did diverge. In battle the victorious side increasingly perceived their neighbors fit for slavery. As historian John K. Thornton notes, battle triumphant regional chiefs enslaved "people whom they, at least, regarded as aliens."[79] Eventually brought to holding pens near the coast called barracoons, "new" African slaves were shackled and shipped to plantations like Laurel Grove and Roundabout to labor permanently, where they likewise "Africanized" Spanish Florida. Bringing customs, languages, and expectations from remarkably diverse regions of the African continent, slaves in many instances necessarily adapted to the realities of the plantation and formed a vibrant, hybridized culture all their own.[80]

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[75] Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 171.

[76] John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 98-100.

[77] Klein, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 116.

[78] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 164.

[79] Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 99.

Cultures and traditions, however, did not remain intact as they were transmitted across oceans and continents.[81] Despite some similarities in languages and practices there were several problems for slaves in replicating the familiar. "They were, after all, in a new political and economic system," says one historian:

> They had communication with people who did not share their heritage or that of their near African neighbors, including Europeans and Euro-Americans. Even if they were able to transmit their culture to a new generation, the culture passed on was not the original African culture. Afro-Atlantic culture became more homogenous than the diverse African cultures that composed it, merging these cultures together and including European culture as well. The evidence suggests that the slaves were not militant cultural nationalists who sought to preserve everything African but rather showed great flexibility in adapting and changing their culture.[82]

Like their overwhelmingly European slaveholding counterparts, Africans of all regions borrowed, discarded, adapted, and altered their cultural ways in new locales. Never fixed, always evolving, identities of master and slave operated both within and without constantly moving spheres of influence marked by fluctuation of competing dynamics.[83] Slaves at Laurel Grove occupied themselves while not working as "they vied with each in dress and dancing" in a "weekly festivity, for which they always provided an ample entertainment themselves, as they had an abundance of hogs, fowls, corn, and all kinds of vegetables and fruit."[84] There they interacted in a limitless ways away from the fields and tasks, no doubt furthering the cultural exchanges between African and African-American alike, reinforcing ties to the African

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[80] Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 176; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 148.

[81] Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 107-08.

[82] Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 206.

[83] Paul E. Lovejoy, "Ethnic Designations of the Slave trade and the Reconstruction of the History of Trans-Atlantic Slavery," in Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 10, 19, 32-33, 37.

[84] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 69-70.

continent, and providing much needed solace and reassurance in collectively forming and reforming kinship ties.[85]

Kingsley's expansion efforts were gaining momentum as he added to his slave force (now at about 100) and purchased other plantations in Florida. Now technically a free woman under law, another move indicated another break with her African past. Zephaniah placed Anna across the St. Johns River and built a dwelling house/ merchant store for her and three living quarters for her six slaves. From there she had over "10 Doz[en] Ducks," "4 Doz[en] fouls [sic]," and "10 stock hogs." Measuring twenty-five by thirty-five feet, the "new house…with a store house under it" held an assortment of goods. In 1813, for example, it held no less than "600 bush[el]s [of] corn," "500 lb. nails and spikes," "Cart chains, axes and tools," "spinning wheels, cards and furniture." A major step came in operating Kingsley's store and handling the day-to-day operations. Most importantly, each exchange was also a market transaction—one that demonstrated the power, the great "leveling effect," that sometimes accompanied commodity relations. The power and possibility of the marketplace was likely a significant experience in the life of the former slave. Her mere presence among a sea of free white faces attested to that. Perhaps it was a short step given Anna's cultural origins and new economic experiences to see commodities in people as well; in fact, her very own freedom depended on it.[86]

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[85] Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 6, 37, 39, 41-43, 52, 146.

[86] Lawrence T. McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community," in Winifred B. Moore Jr., Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr., eds., *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), 31-44; Douglas R. Egerton, "Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26 (Winter 2006), 623-25, 629, 636, 638-9; Walter Johnson, "Clerks All! Or, Slaves with Cash," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26 (Winter 2006), 642-3, 645, 648-50; Stephanie Smallwood, "Commodified Freedom: Interrogating the Limits of Anti-Slavery Ideology in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24 (Summer 2004), 289-98.

Freedom in East Florida was as precious as it was frail. The ebb and flow of market cycles and the sheer unpredictability caused no uncertain anxiety. As Zephaniah Kingsley began his plantation enterprises reeling in self doubt and on the edge of financial destitution, the fruits of his ruthless and persistent travels had finally bore him fruit. Wealthy at last, the patriarch of Laurel Grove had perhaps few moments to rest. Fields required tending and the unending crops to plant; business in New York or Charleston no doubt could use his attention as well. But in the early months of 1812 those efforts were violently interrupted and marked the ending of one chapter of Kingsley's life and worldview. Before it was over a very different era had come to East Florida, leaving in the wake of war a landscape ravaged by coming of a ferocious new era. It proved to be nothing short of a nightmare for Zephaniah Kingsley, from the likes of which he would never fully wake.

CHAPTER THREE

A PERFECT DESERT: SPANISH EAST FLORIDA AT WAR, 1812-1819

The so-called Patriot War of 1812-1813 was a watershed in Florida history.[1] Up to that point East Florida proved to be profitable for those with means to cultivate on a large scale. "The condition of the country was most prosperous," George J. F. Clarke later attested. "Every man was making money, hand over hand, as fast as he could...." Zephaniah Kingsley echoed this claim: "The country was in a very flourishing state when the revolution commenced." "It never was so prosperous before or since. It was left by the Patriots," he lamented, "a perfect desert." Kingsley had amassed a small fortune, but reinvested the earnings into perpetuating his plantation and merchant businesses. His friends and acquaintances like John Houstoun McIntosh, John Fraser, and Francis Fatio Jr. grew large amounts of cotton and foodstuffs, as did Kingsley, and reaped huge profits from lumber contracts to Liverpool, probably for the ship building industry there.[2] In addition to the new twenty-five by forty foot "barn," fifteen "new Negro houses," and a "two-stories high" thirty-five by forty foot "new frame building," Kingsley invested heavily in goods for his merchant store that held a "large supply of every article for plantation & family use & was kept for the supply of the surrounding country...."[3] Within

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[1] James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 10.

[2] Clarke and Kingsley quoted in East Florida Claims, "Case of John H. McIntosh," 13-14 and East Florida Claims, "Case of John Fraser," n.p., n.d., P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville (PKY), 6-9; John L. Engle and David R. Durham, Administrators of the Estate of Francis P. Fatio Junior, deceased, vs. The United States: Claims for losses in 1812 & 1813, Records of the Patriot War, RG217 Entry 347 (Microfilm), PKY; East Florida Claims, "Case of Zephaniah Kingsley," n.p., n.d., PKY, 3; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 53-54; Stephen D. Behrendt, "Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits: Merchant Decision Making in the British Slave Trade," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 58.1 (January 2001), 179-80.

[3] Zephaniah Kingsley, "Petition to Honorable Raymond Reid, Judge of the Superior Court," in Jane G. Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 199, 201.

eighteen months most of his holdings were destroyed. His faith was arguably broken, his identity in crisis, and his financial prospects more uncertain than ever. From the period Kingsley never fully recovered and it clouded his vision of the future.[4]

Kingsley's immersion within the Atlantic market as both merchant and slave trader in the years leading up to 1812 brought some handsome profits if at considerable risk. He had scoured nearly the entire western hemisphere and appeared to rest but little. Despite meeting with a few initials snags upon arriving in Florida, his time there had more or less coincided with many opportunities to acquire a substantial purse.[5] At places like Fernandina on nearby Amelia Island the staggering amount of trade (legal and illegal) enticed many more settlers to come and try their hands at making some quick money. Slaves, timber, and transshipped goods came in and out of the port with rapidity, particularly during the Jefferson Embargos. Not unlike the transshipping islands of the Caribbean, places like Amelia served as but one of a host of locales that bordered the United States from Canada to Key West to the Gulf of Mexico trafficking in illicit cargo.[6] Such profits Kingsley reinvested into his plantations at Laurel Grove, Drayton Island on Lake George, and White Oak along the St. Marys River bordering Georgia.

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[4] Kingsley never seemed to have stopped talking about the devastation of the period that he experienced. In addition to a slew of testimony found in various claims of East Florida residents, Kingsley's anxiety and persistence on the matter is evident in a letter written only weeks before his death. Zephaniah Kingsley to Joseph M. Hernandez, San Jose [East Florida], August 12, 1843, Probate File 1203 (Zephaniah Kingsley), Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, Florida (DCC); in the later period of his life, lengthy court battles over the legitimacy of some of his landholdings caused him no small amount of concern either. In a letter to Surveyor General Colonel Robert Butler, he claimed to have "the most deddly [sic] aversion to all law suits and contraversies [sic] which seldom pay for the time & troubles...." Zephaniah Kingsley to Colonel Robert Butler, Fort George Island, May 21, 1834, copy in Dena Snodgrass Collection, Box 3, PKY; see also the lengthy deliberations involving a substantial amount of Florida lands granted, on condition, under the Spanish some twenty years before its hearing in *United States v. Zephaniah Kingsley*, 37 U.S. 476 (January 1838).

[5] Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 174-82.

[6] Donald R. Hickey, *The Other War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 168-69; William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands* (Pensacola: University of West Florida Press, 1986), 273-74; James Gregory Cusick, "Spanish East

In late August Laurel Grove was surrounded by a host of Florida Seminole Indians unleashed during a complicated, international affair that coincided with the War of 1812.[7] Spanish Florida, long linked to the empires of the Atlantic, suffered politically from an unstable governing body and blatant overshadowing by Cuba.[8] A much weakened Spanish Florida suddenly found itself diplomatically aligned with the English in common cause against the French. Uncertain of its own position posited between the Spanish and English alliance, the United States under President James Madison eventually allowed a rather bizarre covert invasion to unfold in early 1812. Proceeding from Georgia the self proclaimed "Patriots" all but overran the undermanned station at Fernandina on Amelia Island under, among others, Kingsley's acquaintance, fellow planter John Houstoun McIntosh.[9] McIntosh later explained the island's significance largely in monetary terms, highlighting the vast wealth to be had by the most astute of the population: "We took possession of the Spanish command at Fernandina, under a capitulation. The merchandise then in this little place, was computed to be worth upwards of a million dollars. The inhabitants and garrison, who had surrendered their arms to us, were, with their property, perfectly secure, and neither the one nor the other suffered in the smallest

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Florida in the Atlantic Economy of the Late Eighteenth Century," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantation and Economy in Florida*, 178.

[7] Rufus Kay Wyllys, "The East Florida Revolution of 1812-1814," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 9.4 (November 1929), 416; Malcolm Bell, Jr., *Major Butler's Legacy: Five Generations of a Slaveholding Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 170.

[8] Allan J. Kuethe, "Havana in the Eighteenth Century," in Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 29, 20, 33-34. Havana's dominance politically and geographically benefitted especially from its booming sugar producing economy. East Florida, however, offered significant economic rewards for many, yet appears to have received little credit when contrasted with the colonial metropole. Whereas Havana's integration in the Atlantic economy benefitted from the combination of trade with the United States and the disruption of sugar from Saint Domingue, Spanish Florida likewise traded frequently with the United States as well, though the period of prosperity was ultimately disrupted by the Patriot War; Cusick, "Spanish East Florida in the Atlantic Economy" in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 183-84.

[9] D.C. Corbitt, "The Return of Spanish Rule to the St. Marys and the St. Johns, 1813-1821," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 20.1 (July 1941), 47-48.

instance."[10] Taking Amelia Island, the Patriots quickly moved south to the capital of St. Augustine in hopes of replicating their first victory. As the Georgians failed to penetrate the Spanish entrenched there and a prolonged siege at the garrison town effectively wore down the invaders, the addition of a large group of Seminole warriors marked a decisive turning point in the stalemate.[11]

Surprisingly, the Patriots were approached by Seminole leaders to support an armed takeover of the Spanish. Patriot Generals McIntosh and former Georgia Governor George Mathews flatly refused any assistance in the conflict concerning "a quarrel among white people." McIntosh, in his usual hot-headed form, promised Seminole Chief Bowlegs that "he intended to make him…a waiting man." Insulted by the rebuke, Bowlegs and the Seminoles were instead welcomed by the newly arrived Spanish Governor in late July. Using Laurel Grove as a base of operations, Kingsley meanwhile alleged that the Patriots had taken him prisoner and extracted an oath of loyalty to the American cause or else forfeit his Florida properties. Brutal fighting between the Patriots and the Seminoles at this time was responsible for countless stories of atrocity. Spanish reinforcements from Cuba were slow to arrive. Overwhelmed with the recent chaos of a seemingly disjoined series of plantation revolts inspired by the Haitian Revolution headed by free black Jose Antonio Aponte, Spanish officials at Havana were understandably concerned about their own borders at the time.[12]

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[10] John Houstoun McIntosh, "Communication," *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), July 2, 1823.

[11] Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 4, 7-9.

[12] Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 155, 161-62, 195, 214-15; Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 4; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 221-22, 224-25; Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle for Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 133-54; *City Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Charleston) on May 29, 1812 already reported that Kingsley was among the leaders chosen earlier that month to raise troops for securing independence from the Spanish.

As the unchecked violence spread from plantation to plantation in Spanish Florida, the core of Kingsley's plantation complex came under attack on July 25. Himself "busy about scaling ladders & pikes" at the siege of St. Augustine, "an unexpected eruption of Indians from the west" began the first of many attacks at Laurel Grove. "My Indian interpreter, a white man, my Old driver, & one Negro were killed & scalped," he lamented. Abraham Hannahan "had a shot through the body" though was expected to "recover in short." The initial attack Kingsley summed thus: "They killed & drove off 36 of my most valuable negroes & all of my horses besides burning & destroying every thing but a new unfinished house to which three white men & some Negroes relived & saved them selves by defending it." His cotton fields, uncollected by his field hands, a month later were "now beginning to scatter with the wind." "My crop was the best I ever made in Florida," he said. Of some relief, however, was a story of a faithful slave that later "refused" to flee from Kingsley's benevolent care. In Kingsley's telling, the slave would not join the Seminoles, for "his master should never say that he was a runaway negro; upon which the Indian shot him, and he died next day."[13] Such stories only reinforced the ideas of loyalty to fending off challenges to mastery—a theme of constant preoccupation with Kingsley throughout his life.

Weeks later the threat had not yet abated. Scores of Georgia Volunteers went to and fro collecting provisions and planning counteroffensives against the Seminole bands.[14] To James

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[13] Zephaniah Kingsley to James Hamilton, Laurel Grove, August 20, 1812, James Hamilton Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (DU); Kingsley later placed the figure higher. See his "Petition to Honorable Raymond Reid, Judge of the Superior Court," in Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, 198-202; Zephaniah Kingsley, *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society*, in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 70. All subsequent references to the *Treatise* are from Stowell's volume.

[14] Lt. Colonel Smith to Captain Tomlinson Fort, August 11, 1812; and Smith to Governor David B. Mitchell, August 21, 1812, both reprinted in T. Frederick Davis, ed., "United States Troops in Spanish East Florida, 1812-13, Part II," *FHQ*, 9.2 (October 1930), 109-110.

Hamilton he wrote nervously, "Habit modifies every thing while the savages surrounded the house & watched opportunities of shooting us on every side at the same time trying to involve us in the general conflagration of the surrounding buildings." As yet he refused to leave the dwelling house for fear of attack. Clearly the experience had left its early mark. From his isolation Kingsley rationed that "as this danger is past & I have allready [sic] habituated myself to look as a good many bare skulls I begin to hold scalping in less dread & think I may escape myself by very good luck…." In the days that followed Kingsley spent significant amounts of time fortifying Laurel Grove to withstand future attacks. Not only had it sustained a severe assault and ruined his crops, but his plantation at Drayton Island apparently suffered as well. Unwilling to risk taking flight, he had little choice but to remain: "[I]f I evacuate I have no means of living & I have no vessel to carry of a sufficiency of provision or my remaining movables so that I have concluded to hold out & go the whole."[15] A month later newspapers reported that Kingsley alone remained in the "waste and desolation" to "repel the Savages from his stronghold...."[16]

Spanish Governor Kindelan, now settled in his duties at St. Augustine, was reported to have offered a bounty for the scalps of each Patriot brought to authorities.[17] Not to be outdone, several Patriots responded in kind after killing several Seminoles in an engagement in the fall near the tide turning engagements fought at the Twelve Mile Swamp. The soldiers reportedly took them to Laurel Grove where newspapers later claimed the residence was "*handsomely*

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[15] Kingsley to Hamilton, Laurel Grove, August 20, 1812, DU; syndicated newspapers carried the attack on Laurel Grove as well. For example, see *The Times* (South Carolina), August 11, 1812; another variation with different figures appears in *Raleigh Register and North-Carolina Gazette* on Friday, September 18, 1812.

[16] *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), September 29, 1812.

[17] J. H. Alexander, "The Ambush of Captain John Williams, U.S.M.C.: Failure of the East Florida Invasion, 1812-1813," *FHQ*, 56.3 (January 1978), 280, 289.

decorated with Indian scalps...."[18] When Laurel Grove was again attacked, Seminole retaliation was attributed to such reports.[19]

In the meantime, Zephaniah continued to aid the combined forces of the American militia and federal soldiers from his Laurel Grove plantation for the remaining year of 1812 and nearly all of 1813.[20] In that time he supplied the Patriots with everything from packhorses, cattle, provisions, money on a few occasions, and, as he later recalled, "the use of my boats, flats & slaves...."[21] The chronic instability of the region and the loss of a sizeable portion of his slave labor force left Kingsley and countless other plantation owners unable to plant in 1813. Many were unable to collect what remained in their fields the previous year; the added failure of 1813 left many severely destitute. On August 18, Commander Buckner Harris reported to Georgia Governor David Mitchell that the Seminoles "have attacked Mr[.] Kingsley again & taken his Black wife & Two [sic] children...."[22] Given the climate it is therefore unsurprising that Zephaniah permitted Anna, the mother of now three of his children, to take up residence across the St. Johns River on the east bank on five acres granted by the Spanish government for the dual

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[18] *City Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, October 28, 1812 (emphasis in original); infamously reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, November 7, 1812.

[19] Colonel Newnan to Governor David B. Mitchell, October 19, 1812, reprinted in T. Frederick Davis, ed., "United States Troops in Spanish East Florida, 1812-13, Part III," *FHQ*, 9.3 (January 1931), 148-50; *Raleigh Register* (North Carolina), September 12, 1812, likewise reported that Kindelan "promised six dollars and a bottle of rum for each scalp they produce."

[20] Questioned in regards to his whereabouts at the time, Kingsley later gave testimony to authorities that said: "He was at Laurel Grove on the St. Johns River in 1812 & 1813. He was sometimes away for a short time, but that was his residence. His occupation was nothing but that of a soldier defending his house and place of residence." Estate of F. P. Fatio, Jr. vs. U. S., RG217 Entry 347, PKY, 56-57.

[21] East Florida Claims, "Case of Zephaniah Kingsley," PKY, 8-9; Colonel Daniel Newnan to Lieutenant Colonel Smith, August 31, 1812, in Davis, ed., "United States Troops in East Spanish Florida, 1812-13, II," 115; Colonel Smith to Zephaniah Kingsley, February 2, 1813, in Davis, ed., "United States Troops in East Spanish Florida, 1812-13, IV," *FHQ*, 9.4 (April 1931), 270; Kingsley to Hernandez, August 12, 1843, Probate File 1203, DCC.

[22] Buckner Harris to Governor David B. Mitchell, East Florida, August 18, 1813, Buckner Harris Papers, Folder 2, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Georgia Division of Archives and History, Morrow (GDAH).

purpose of maintaining one of his merchant stores as well as rendering them "safe from the insults and annoyances of the insurgents...."[23]

Under the Spanish government and Kingsley's patronage, Anna had done remarkably well for herself. Along with her six slaves, Anna was also perhaps eager to achieve a degree of freedom from the confines of Laurel Grove under Zephaniah's heavy hand. Although a freewoman, prospects for financial prosperity were effectively limited. Her "new house…with a store house under it" and the accompanying "3 Negro houses" formed the core of Anna's burgeoning independent spirit. Capitalizing on the Patriot War insurgency, she might have hoped likewise to distance herself from her benefactor's duplicity to the Spanish Crown and conduct her own affairs. Her loyalty to His Catholic Majesty was of paramount concern. One particularly remarkable incident that attested to Anna's zeal from Military and Civil Commandant of the St. Johns River, Thomas Llorente in November 1813, stated that

> ...since I myself mentioned to her, that her house situated as it was, full of provisions and other grains, the insurgents might get possession of it, and have abundance of food, thereby causing much injury to us and the rights of His Majesty, she instantly answered that as it was so, she would rather loose [sic] all than give aid to the Kings enemies, and that after taking out a little corn and some clothing she would herself set fire to it that the flames might destroy all rather than that the robbers should have any advantage from it, and then the large and small houses were burned, leaving herself and family without a home, coming to our Camp until a place was found for her to go to. When she arrived she brought with her, three children and four grown up Slaves, having afterwards known that she had two slaves more… This is all I have to inform your Excellency in virtue of your superior decree which has so ordered.[24]

[23] Anna [Madgigine] Kingsley, Confirmed Spanish Land Grants, Box 20, Folder 16, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee.

[24] *Ibid*.

Braving life and limb, Anna showed a remarkable aptitude for duty and fortitude—qualities that later enabled her to, with Zephaniah's continued sponsorship, remain an astute if not tenacious slaveowner in her own right. Collecting the last of her slaves and the remnants of her property holdings, Anna and the children remained in the company of Llorente's soldiers at nearby San Nicholas before reuniting with Zephaniah that December at Amelia Island.[25]

The destruction of Kingsley's plantations at Laurel Grove and Drayton Island were catastrophic psychologically as well as financially. From his temporary residence at Fernandina, Kingsley no doubt muddled over the profound losses of that which he so recently acquired as he wrestled with the thought of his own "independence" once again lost. With Laurel Grove's losses nearly total, Kingsley gathered his remaining slaves and goods rescued from the St. Johns River area and sent a stretch of rafts bound for Fort George Island, north of modern day Jacksonville.[26] The move, designed to effectively replace Laurel Grove as the epicenter of his former empire, was in some ways a mixed blessing. First, located on a coastal island close to the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean, the plantation at Fort George was geographically situated for outstanding transportation of goods and vessels. However, its remoteness and ease of access marked it as a veritable target should the chronic instability continue. Such were the complaints of many other observers to East Florida for decades.[27]

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[25] Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 44.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] For example, Henry Laurens informed Richard Oswald that, "If you have no Neighbours or no good ones your Negroes will be exposed to the arbitrary power of an Overseer & perhaps sometime tempted to knock him in the head & file off in a Body." Laurens to Oswald, 12 August 1766, in George C. Rogers, Jr. and David R. Chesnutt, eds., *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Five: Sept. 1, 1765-July 31, 1768* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1976), 156; and Zephaniah's nephew, Kingsley Beatty Gibbs, confided to his journal that "I do not think any of us are yet weaned from the town life, to which we have all been accustomed for many years." The area, as attested to by his journal, was and still is quite remote. Jacqueline K. Fretwell, ed., *Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and His Journal of 1840-1843* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1984), 20. An interesting and highly characteristic exchange, as an aside, took place between Zephaniah and Gibbs later regarding the sale of Fort

Fort George Island had suffered during the Patriot War. John Houstoun McIntosh, the very same leader of the Patriots, was an acquaintance and neighbor of Kingsley and part of the same kinship networks that connected both men and extended throughout the Lowcountry. Until the hostilities disrupted regional business, McIntosh had two separate plantations that occupied well over 200 slaves. Like most within Kingsley's intimate circle, McIntosh was a Scotsman and every bit the dubious businessman as well. Connected to the vast personal and business networks through the Atlantic, McIntosh commanded an awesome empire that produced everything from cotton to foodstuffs and timber. "When the revolt broke out, I had the most valuable plantations," he later explained, "and, with the exception of the African factor [fellow Scotsman and Kingsley's friend, John Fraser], more negroes than any other three individuals together in the province."[28] Kingsley himself substantiated the claim, referring to his Patriot comrade as "the greatest planter in East Florida." After the hostilities, McIntosh's estate eventually received the second largest claim from the United States government for losses from 1812 and 1813.[29]

After the Patriots ultimately collapsed and began the slow retreat out of Spanish Florida, McIntosh wisely fled the province for Georgia. With his slave force more or less secure in St. Mary's (Georgia), hope of a return to the status antebellum was finished. As McIntosh later acknowledged, he discovered a grim reality awaited him if he fell into Spanish hands:

George Island. Gibbs stated in his journal of April 30, 1841: "Mr. Kingsley often visits us, as I have a great deal to do for him as his attorney in fact, particularly in the claim for Losses in 1812 – He now fears that he will have to assign my Mortgage and Bond, which will be ruinous – but I believe he has too much regard for me to do it – It is for the purchase of this Island and 40 negroes, on which I paid $7000 in cash (p. 21)." A year later Gibbs reported on May 27, 1842 that "Mr. K[ingsley] and self visit the [St. Johns] Bluff again; and on this day he releases my Bond and Mortgage, & takes back 28 negroes... (p. 28)."

[28] McIntosh, "Communication," *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1823.

[29] East Florida Claims, "Case of John H. McIntosh," PKY, 1-3, 8-9.

> I well knew the character of the Spanish government, and I had been just taught a lesson which satisfied me, that, had I trusted myself, under the faith of this treaty, to its authorities, that a dungeon or the inquisition might have been my lot, uninquired for and unpitied but by my private friends. It is now ascertained that I was *excepted* in that pardon which was granted by the Captain General of Cuba, to whom the Governor was subordinate.[30]

Under the circumstances McIntosh had little choice but to liquidate his holdings and remain well out of the Spaniards' radar. Few plantations remained in northern Florida as they were before the war. Witnesses testified that "both his plantations were devastated in respect to the buildings and every article of personal property upon them." He "never recovered from this shock his estate sustained down to the time of his death."[31]

When Zephaniah Kingsley arrived at Fort George, having rented the property from the departed McIntosh, accounts suggest only the dwelling house stood. Not long before it was the scene of a highly lucrative timber business "under contract to furnish 300,000 feet, board measure, of pine ranging timber at ten dollars per thousand feet, monthly" for merchant Daniel Stewart of Liverpool, England. Approximately sixty to seventy "prime negro fellows and 8 or 10 white men" along with a varied group of another eight hands or so rounded out the workforce. Another hundred slaves were also at the plantation, being "female workers and also some weak negroes," McIntosh claimed. Kingsley's first concern for stability would of course be housing for both himself and for his slaves. As it was, "the invaders burnt every building except the dwelling house, and they stripped the dwelling house to the extent of taking all the locks from

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[30] McIntosh, "Communication," *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1823.

[31] East Florida Claims, "Case of John H. McIntosh," PKY, 2, 8; in 1823, McIntosh openly admitted the central role that he played in fostering the Patriots' cause in East Florida. From wealth to dependence, he explained, was his plight: "[M]y losses were at least, in proportion to my property, as large as that of any other planter, except a few very unfortunate individuals who had their negroes carried off by the Indians." The last clause, of course, was an obvious reference to (among others) Kingsley. McIntosh, "Communication," *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1823.

the doors."[32] The inference taken from McIntosh's submitted claim logically suggests that no slave cabins remained. Beginning with initial studies in the 1960s pioneered by famed archaeologist Charles Fairbanks, a host of scholars have speculated as to their precise date of construction. No clear consensus exists.[33]

The symmetry of the semicircular arc of thirty-two cabins constructed of tabby indicate a clear building plan combining aesthetics with functionality. First, the precise numerical division indicates a fairly stable slave population on the plantation (hence, it accounts for no real appreciable growth in laborers). Secondly, their construction gives a sense of stability and permanence while increasing the value of the plantation.[34] Stability at Fort George Island in the days so soon after the fall of Laurel Grove was sorely lacking. Neatly bisected by a dirt road leading to the main dwelling house, sixteen cabins spaced approximately twelve-feet apart form crescents that curve out and upwards to the master's lodgings 1000 feet in the distance. On both ends of either side of the road, noticeably larger cabins likely housed the plantations drivers and their extended families. The shape, though rare, was replicated on at least two other plantations.[35] At Fort George, however, the aesthetic appeal of the crescent arrangement added a

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[32] East Florida Claims, "Case of John H. McIntosh," PKY, 2-5, 7.

[33] James M. Davidson, Erika Roberts, and Clete Rooney, "Preliminary Results of the 2006 University of Florida Archaeological Field School Excavations at Kingsley Plantation, Fort George Island, Florida," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter* (September 2006), n.p.; Elsbeth K. Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 229-30; Karen Jo Walker, *Kingsley and His Slaves: Anthropological Interpretation and Evaluation* (Columbia: The Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, 1988), 81, 107, 110.

[34] Thomas Spalding, "On the mode of Constructing Tabby Buildings, and the propriety of improving our plantations in a permanent manner," *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs* (December 1830); Lauren B. Sickels-Taves and Michael S. Sheehan, *The Lost Art of Tabby: Preserving Oglethorpe's Architectural Legacy* (Southfield, MI: Architectural Conservation Press, 1999), 6-7, 33.

[35] Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 211-13. The Florida plantation of Colonel Charles Wilhelm Bulow and son had forty-six slave quarters similarly arranged, built sometime after 1820. The plantation itself fell to the Seminoles but the slave cabins survived. Bulow and his plantation were familiar to Kingsley and his brother-in-law George Gibbs. See letter of George Gibbs to Joseph Delespine, Esq., reprinted in *East Florida Herald*, March 23, 1823; another known instance was at the Georgia plantation of a Colonel Davis located near

defensive function as well. Ample room from windows facing the rear (and more vulnerable side) of the plantation grounds, provided secure points to easily discharge weapons at would be attackers.[36] Given the sacking of Laurel Grove, Kingsley was unlikely to keep his slave force clustered for the threat of similar Seminole advances. Similar practices of arming slaves are hardly surprising and occurred more frequently in the Lowcountry beyond lawmakers' efforts to curb the practice.[37]

In Kingsley's own telling Laurel Grove was a near utopia that contained "mostly fine young men and women, and nearly equal in numbers." "I never interfered with their connubial concerns, nor domestic affairs, but let them regulate these after their own manner," said the patriarch. His heavily romanticized portrait of domestic bliss featured a lively and contented lot that had little if any reason to protest. Despite evidence of a jail cell within the dwelling house's attic, existence of a prison-house on the property, and stocks for rebellious slaves at Fort George (unlikely the first existence on Kingsley's properties)[38] Kingsley's contrasting of that property with Laurel Grove suggests that the new arrangement—at least in its infancy—was distinctly inferior to its predecessor.

> They were perfectly honest, and obedient, and appeared quite happy, having no fear but that of offending me; and I hardly ever had occasion to apply other correction than shaming them. If I exceeded this, the punishment was quiet light, for they hardly ever failed in doing their work well. My object was to excite their

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Macon. "Interview with Mose Davis, January 20, 1937," in George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, First Series, Georgia Narratives* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), 12A: 268.

[36] Davidson, et al., "Preliminary Results," n.p.

[37] Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-Americans Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, reprint 1992), 16.

[38] Samuel G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 57.342 (November 1878), 844; R. King, Jr., manager of Pierce Butler's estate near Kingsley's acquaintances Hamilton, Couper, Spalding, and Wylly, outlined a very similar arrangement for his plantation affairs that likely prevailed more or less on his main plantation residence. R. Butler King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate, and the Cultivation of the Sugar Cane," *Southern Agriculturalist and register of Rural Affairs*, December 1828.

> ambition and attachment by kindness; not to depress their spirits by fear and punishment.[39]

Implementing the task system popular among Lowcountry rice planters, Kingsley probably had his earliest familiarity with the arrangement from his father's vast Black Swamp plantation years before.[40] A predetermined amount of work per slave was fixed by master and overseer to be completed before the workday's end. Once the work was completed, slaves typically were thereby relieved of their labor obligations to the master for the remaining day and free to use that time as they saw fit.[41] Readily adapted to other agricultural pursuits, tasking was a highly individualized arrangement that might often be manipulated more easily by planters than slaves themselves. "Even as the system continued to reserve a place at the metaphorical negotiating table, it role as a bulwark against the appropriation of labor time eroded," notes S. Max Edelson. In theory, that allotted time away from the daily slave duties exempted Saturday afternoon and Sunday for the slaves to cultivate what Kingsley referred to as "their physical and moral happiness." But a rather broadly defined "urgent necessity" might alter the practice and increase labor demands at any point in the growing and cultivate seasons.[42] Newer studies, in other

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[39] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 69; here and throughout my account, I approach Kingsley's *Treatise* with caution. Nearly all that is known of his supposed treatment of his own slaves comes from this very public document. One of Kingsley's purposes in writing it was to persuade his audience that slavery was kinder and gentler than northern free labor. In line with evolving conceptions of organic relations between master and slave, Kingsley's portrait emphasized the nonviolent aspects of benevolent mastery while almost sidestepping its brutality. Based on surviving evidence that I have included throughout my account, it appears that he was neither better nor worse as a slave master than his contemporaries. One may justly view the psychological aspects of his slave system as particularly cruel, as some public critics did. See Chapter Four herein on this point.

[40] Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr., Loyalist Examination Transcriptions, South Carolina Volumes from New York Public Library Transcripts of American Loyalist Examinations and Decisions, RW 3169, V52:476-77, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia (SCDAH).

[41] Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 43; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 179-87, 180-81, 185-86.

words, indicate that the presence of the task system did *not* necessarily indicate a kinder, more benevolent arrangement.[43]

As a slaveowner Kingsley claimed that he initially maintained an active interest in the affairs of his chattel. He was on the whole satisfied that "they hardly ever failed in doing their work well." Arrangements at Laurel Grove tended to promote a stable and productive labor force, in his telling. "Perfect confidence, friendship, and good understanding reigned between us," the patriarch stated adding that "they increased rapidly."[44] His statement demonstrates an obvious concerned with maintaining a viable slave community, which he took precautions to ensure as much that conditions would encourage. The period of tranquility was all too brief. "After a few years, this pleasant and profitable state of harmony was interrupted by the revolution of 1812." The bulk of the slaves at Laurel Grove Kingsley claimed were African-born. Brought to the plantation probably by their master himself from African or the Caribbean, such slaves lived at Laurel Grove upwards of five to ten years before the Patriot War ensued. In that time many of course formed crucial kinship networks and presumably neighborhoods consisting of households organized in various arrangements.[45] At Laurel Grove attachments to land and in all probability a burial ground bound at least some to the area. To be forced from

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[42] S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 157-59; Christopher Morris, "The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered," *Journal of American History*, 85.3 (December 1998), 985-86; Kingsley, *Treatise*, 69.

[43] Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 126-58; Walter Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic History," in Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 153.

[44] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 69-70; Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, Revised Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 142, notes that maintaining an interest without disrupting the slave families was common, as partnering relationships "were varied and unpredictable, much as one would expect male-female interaction to be." More to the point, as it pertains to Kingsley, she adds that "Slaves helped to mold plantation realities but the right to make unsettling and life-threatening decisions remained with slave owners."

[45] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 70; Kaye, *Joining Places*, 21-50.

there to reconstitute such communities was difficult and all but impossible given the human losses. Given the rupture it is not altogether surprising that Kingsley claimed relations between master and slaves degenerated after he "purchased more new negroes." Aided, he suspected, by the meddling of a Christian minister, Kingsley's slaves eventually resorted to thwarting him at every turn. Before long, "myself and the overseer became completely divested of all authority over the negroes," he confessed.[46]

Of particular concern seemed to be an indication that infanticide became increasingly more common among the slave population at Fort George. Remarking that the growing insubordination of the laborers left the power relations at a crucial impasse, Kingsley noted in frustration that, "Severity had no effect; it only made it worse; and I really believe that, in several instances, sick children were allowed to die, because the parents thought conscientiously that it was meritorious to transfer their offspring from a miserable and wicked world to a happy country, where they were in hopes of soon joining them!"[47] Recent studies demonstrate that slave women's knowledge of abortifacients and acts of blatant infanticide were simply two of "a number of means within their power to control their own fertility, confounding their masters' efforts to have them reduced to breedable beasts of burden."[48] It becomes understandable that the construction of a very different spatial arrangement was necessary at Fort George Island to remedy the degeneration of Kingsley's authority.[49]

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[46] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 70-71; Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 248-49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 42-43.

[47] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 71.

[48] Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 145-46, 149; Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 205-06.

[49] John Michael Vlach, "Snug Li'l House with Flue and Oven: Nineteenth-Century Reforms in Plantation Slave Housing," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 5 (1995), 118-19.

Effectively separated from the plantation's nucleus, comprised of the main barn and the dwelling and kitchen houses, the semicircular cabins featured porches on some of the structures, several wells, and provision plots nearby.[50] Agreeing with the assessment that "exciting ambition by cultivating utility, local attachment, and moral improvement, among slaves" was a superior method to stimulating plantation production while minimizing the potential for domestic interruptions from within and without, Kingsley perhaps maintained an earlier arrangement in keeping with the original owner's architectural influences regarding aesthetics, flexibility, and functionality.[51] Building the sweeping arc of the permanent tabby cabins over preexisting (and burned out) wooden sites would have minimized the need for a dramatic restructuring of everything from the buildings themselves to the nearby provision gardens. The addition of a slave burial ground reportedly fixed between the cabins and the main barn likewise permitted the labor force, as historian Vincent Brown suggests, "to feel an ancestral connection to the land."[52]

The existing damage at Fort George invariably entailed considerable labor to commence planting and adequate habitation. McIntosh's fields had grown over in the nearly two-plus years away from regular crop cycles and subsequent raiding by several parties, whether friend or foe. The dwelling house, once described by John McQueen, then owner of Fort George, as "a very

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[50] See above footnote 33.

[51] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 72; Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 229; Jerome S. Handler, "Plantation Slave Settlements in Barbados, 1650s to 1834," in Alvin O. Thompson, ed., *In the Shadow of the Plantation: Caribbean History and Its Legacy* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002), 130-32.

[52] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," 844; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 274-78. Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 246-49; Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 55-56, suggests that Anna perhaps influenced the arrangement based on what the author suggests are "Wolof arrangements". The monolithic portrait of that culture portrayed by Schafer at once distorts the cultural reality in that portion of West Africa as well as tellingly neglects Kingsley's own very real material interest in the plantation. Other Sea Island planters built the structures to aesthetic specifications in order to bolster the estate's value and, in Zephaniah's case, required a defensive spatial arrangement with windows facing out and away from the plantation to defend the interior of the complex. In avoiding clustering the cabins, slaves were better positioned to defend or avoid capture, as at Laurel Grove. Also, the arrangement that the author suggests was likely influenced by Anna again neglects Kingsley's often overwhelming character both as a slaveowner and patriarch.

comfortable habitation, & in any other country a handsome situation," was a testament to sheer simplicity.[53] Its symmetrical layout of "four identical square pavilions" connected by "a rectangular great room," art historian Elsbeth Gordon notes "was current with the geometric classicism and Palladian symmetry that was the fashion in England, the American colonies, and English West Indies." McQueen, a frequent correspondent of Thomas Jefferson, Gordon suggests might have encountered the style from the Monticello architect himself. In any event, the Italian-inspired style was well-suited to the Spanish Florida climate. Similar to the St. Augustine style with the emphasis on air circulation, the "Homestead" as the house was eventually called, is every bit a distinct, civilized social space carved out of what white planters at the time considered an otherwise "unruly, Africanized wilderness."[54]

In the early months of 1814 when Zephaniah and family arrived at Fort George planting no doubt took precedence above all. While he continued to divide his time between the plantation and business further north at his White Oak plantation and at Fernandina, Kingsley's main house gradually took shape over the coming years. A visitor later described Fort George as "a perfect garden, laid out in parks, arbors, and flower beds," which also prevailed at the St. Simons plantation of Zephaniah's friend John Couper.[55] A boat landing was set just off the

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[53] John McQueen, Jr. to Eliza Anne McQueen, Fort George, March 11, 1798, in Hartridge, ed., *The Letters of Don Juan McQueen to His Family*, 45.

[54] Gordon, *Florida's Colonial Architectural Heritage*, 222-23; Albert Manucy, *The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, reprint 1992), 7, 9, 11, 27; Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 143.

[55] Anonymous, "Notes of an Invalid. –No. 9," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 30, 1837. The account was subsequently reprinted in the Liberator as well under the title "Slaveholding Amalgamation", and later referred to more or less accurately by Lydia Maria Child in her "Letter from New York, Letter XXIII, July 7, 1842." Child asked Kingsley during their 1842 interview if he had in fact read the account. "I never saw the letter...but from what you say, I have no doubt that I am the man," Kingsley replied. Child, "Letter from New York," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 109; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 167. Couper and his son James Hamilton Couper were favorably portrayed and thoroughly enlightened, benevolent slaveowning agriculturalists.

beach line that lay not far from the main house: "Just yonder where you see a ship on the stocks is the place," the smitten observer noted. Kingsley's Homestead later proved something of a showpiece inside as well. After dining with the group Kingsley "showed his guests about the house" which then "displayed the many curiosities he had brought from Africa...." Of the vast collection of Kingsley's souvenirs the anonymous guest said that "most of all he seems to prize the pictures of African beauties which were painted from originals by a French artist, and then adorned his parlor." One of the originals he had himself seen," Kingsley noted to the visitors, "and before her he pointed out his rhapsodies to his guests of her personal charms."

> 'Ah!' said he 'the elegance, the embonpoint [sic], the elasticity of the figure was unequalled. I know, prejudiced white people do not like the African style of beauty; but to see the original of this picture would I am sure disarm all prejudice. Then there is no complexion like the African for setting off with jewelry with effect'.[56]

But in the earlier days of 1814 there was not time yet to entertain the curiosity seekers. Slave laborers and carpenters brought the plantation back to life largely in Kingsley's absence.[57] Worse still, multi-veiled threats continued to menace planters' enterprises.

From the Florida-Georgia border at St. Mary's in June, the *Savannah Republican* reported that "a few days ago, a party of whites disguised as Indians, together with blacks and mulattoes, sailed from St. Augustine, under the command of a savage called Philip Salano, and put to death a white man (by name Warlow) and a negro belonging to Zephaniah Kingsley, on St. John's." As evidenced by the constant swirl of rumors and speculation, informants suggested that, "Mr. Kingsley is missing. It is said, that if the party had met him, he is no more."[58] No

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[56] Anonymous, "Notes of an Invalid. –No. 9," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 30, 1837.

[57] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 52.

evidence suggests that Kingsley himself ever met such a party; however, the widespread belief that a scenario existed demonstrates the overwhelming presence of looming disaster at work that threatened to subvert planters' ambitions at every turn. Nonslaveholding whites and escaped slaves represented, in slaveowners' eyes, mounting threats to the institution of slavery. Reports of slave conspiracies increased at this time and simply added to the anxiety clear across the Atlantic world.[59]

For now, business called at Fernandina which proved to be yet another disastrous turn of events for the struggling entrepreneur. Kingsley had several contacts at Amelia Island at that time. The powerful firm of Hibberson and Yonge and the trading post of John Forbes were all stationed there and were significant suppliers for Zephaniah's immediate plantation needs. The Yonges in particular, Philip and Henry, were closely linked to Kingsley through various business and personal ventures and continued so for a number of years. Jane Landers, for example, convincingly argues that through the considerable importation of Africans after 1810, opportunistic businessmen like Philip and Henry Yonge and Zephaniah Kingsley all contributed to the "Africanization of Florida."[60] George J. F. Clarke, an understudied but important figure in East Florida history, also based himself there. Captain of the militia, he did a considerable business in local lands, timbering, and a tan yard.[61] The fate of the men before long was invariably intertwined.

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[58] Reprinted in *New York Commercial Daily Advertiser* (New York, New York), July 9, 1814.

[59] Scott, "The Common Wind'; Jane Landers, "Black Community and Culture in the Southeastern Borderlands," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18.1 (Spring 1998), 129; Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, 24; Shane Alan Runyon, "Borders and Rumors: The Georgia Frontier in the Atlantic World," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Florida, 2005.

[60] Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 274-75; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 176-77.

[61] Louise Biles Hill, "George J. F. Clarke, 1774-1836," *FHQ*, 21.3 (January 1943), 225-26, 231, 234.

The *Providencia* lay in Fernandina harbor on the evening of November 25, 1814. On board the small sailing vessel was its owner, Zephaniah Kingsley, St. Augustine carpenter Juan Houston, and a handful of slaves as the ship's crew. They were at Fernandina "for the purpose of building him [Kingsley] a house." That evening the *Providencia* drifted into the lines of a nearby slaving vessel, the schooner *Dolores* of Havana, when "both vessels got tied by accident...." The *Dolores*' captain hollered for Kingsley "to untie the ships, warning him that if he failed to do so he would cut the cable." Apart from "several offenses" exchanged between the two men, "each captain limited himself to untying his own vessel."[62]

The following night at 9 pm, Kingsley claimed that as he was "taking off his clothes to go to bed, he heard some screaming on the deck, when he went up, he found it was due to his ship" again entangled "with a slaving schooner that was right next to it." Though both ships were unscathed, he was met with a parade of insults from the crew of the *Dolores*. In a later sanitized telling of the incident, Kingsley claimed to have replied to the captain that "the accident happened because of bad weather, and the insufficiency of his anchor" and "he would move his base to another place." Houston for his part admitted that "both captains started insulting each other with the most improper expressions." Soon it was apparent that the crew of the neighboring Cuban vessel was drunk and unruly. Kingsley refused to answer and opted to conclude the matter when all had sobered up sufficiently.[63]

Juan Houston meanwhile lay motionless in his bed, exhausted and very sick. From the deck above Kingsley came to the cabin and explained to Houston that "it seems that the people

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[62] Declaration of Juan Houston, November 30, 1814, Records of East Florida, Roll 126, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., (EFP). I have used translations of the original Spanish materials available at the Kingsley Plantation Field Office, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Jacksonville, Florida (KPO). Very special thanks to Park Rangers Carol S. Clark and Roger Clark for their assistance with the materials.

[63] *Ibid*.; Testimony of Zephaniah Kingsley, January 14, 1815, KPO.

from the schooner are coming aboard armed...." Removing "a pistol out of a box which he put on the table," he asked the carpenter for help. But Houston refused on grounds that "it wasn't possible because of my illness," he said. Having gone to discover the situation for himself, he discovered "8 or 10" men from the *Dolores* coming aboard. Kingsley met the group armed with no less than a rifle of "regular size and caliber," a pistol with a nine-inch barrel, and a dagger with a four-inch wooden handle and five inch blade.[64]

Taunting the group, "he tried to intimidate them by threatening to kill the first person to try doing down to the chamber (cabin) with his rifle." Heavily outnumbered he managed to stand his ground nonetheless. It was his intention, he later said, "as long as possible, to avoid being the first to attack...." "But," Kingsley continued, "while some of them tried to cut his hands with sabers, one grabbed the rifle to take it away from him...." A shot rang out, and, "as a natural impulse," he returned fire. The crew of the *Dolores* then fired (or counter fired, perhaps?)

> again, to which he answered with a gun [pistol] he had; and not having more firearms, they then came into the chamber, and after mistreating him hitting him and cutting him, they tied his arms and like that—naked and full of blood they threw him into the boat and took him aboard the schooner [*Dolores*], where they put him in the storage room, and in this sad situation they held him close to an hour until by order of the commander he was taken to land and taken, or better yet dragged to the body of Guard.[65]

Houston witnessed the encounter, which was a particularly gruesome affair. The group wrestled the dagger away from Kingsley "with which they stabbed him many times and mistreated him by hitting him infinitely...." After bounding the prisoner, the crew of the *Dolores* took Kingsley out

[64] Testimony of Kingsley, KPO.

[65] *Ibid*.

of Houston's sight when, "a short time that he heard new screams and presumes that he [Kingsley] was again mistreated."[66]

On the morning of November 27 confined by local authorities, Dr. Joseph F. Gault arrived at Fernandina to examine Kingsley following the incident. The wounds, as he discovered, were quite extensive. "I found on him a very big wound on the left side of the head, through the bone could be seen, and appears to have been done with a saber or knife," Gault reported on November 30.

> His forehead was terribly crushed; a blow right next to the left eye, that has left this organ and its muscles very swollen and black; a wound in the nose, and another in the lower lip; many small wounds in other parts of the face and neck; the right wrist terribly cut due to a saber; a blow on the lower part of the abdomen, that passed through two pairs of pants that he had above and the shirt; Some light cuts on knee, and one very serious wound on the right heel, with other small dagger cuts in various parts of the body; His shoulders, back, buttocks and thighs very beaten and of all colors, due to all the beating that he recieved [sic], and very warm.[67]

Authorities, meanwhile, were gathering evidence for criminal proceedings. Kingsley had wounded *Dolores*' pilot, Genaro Garay, with a rifle shot to the right arm—a violation of Spanish law. Always evasive—and probably in keeping with his initial admittance into the Spanish province—Kingsley stated that he was a native of "Luisiana [sic]," and adamantly denied any wrongdoing on his part. He suggested that "he knows according to both civil and natural law no man shall offend another" and that he was merely defending himself. As such, it was Kingsley himself who was in fact the victim. Nonetheless, officials appeared somewhat perplexed how to proceed. Witnesses had suddenly departed; only Kingsley and his black crew were confined

[66] Declaration of Juan Houston, KPO.

[67] Joseph F. Gault, Fernandina, November 30, 1814, KPO.

(Kingsley actually had "double shackles," being tightly bound on his arms and ankles); and an increasingly suspicious crew of the *Dolores* seemed entirely too eager to flee from Florida.[68]

Philip Yonge, pressing local officials to act with greater impunity, was determined to resolve the matter quickly. Kingsley was fairly certain that Captain Zorrilla of the *Dolores* had masterminded the assault and was in "conspiracy" with Military Commandant Francisco Rivera. The wounded pilot, Garay, pelted with lead shot from Kingsley's gun, seemed to recover from his wounds soon after and appeared to be a flight risk. A doctor's examination a few weeks after the incident revealed limited use of the injured arm but promised a full recovery. All the wounds had begun to scar and presented no danger of infection. Similar reports stated that Kingsley's numerous wounds had passed the point of concern and had already started to heal. Yonge quickly ascertained that the full weight of the blame was unduly resting only on Kingsley's shoulders. Successful in finally bringing Garay into custody, officials at last determined that *Dolores* Captain Zorrilla had ordered the assault on the captain of the *Providencia*. The Tribunal ultimately decided that the incident was caused by his "imprudent" actions and as they moved towards prosecution of the captain instead, opting to settle the matter concerning Kingsley and Garay. Following costs paid by both parties, the incident was finally resolved nearly two months after the fact.[69]

Zephaniah Kingsley had narrowly escaped death in the Patriot War only to find that he was in fact lucky a second time. Not even the dangerous waters of the Atlantic or countryside during a racial war in Haiti caused Kingsley as many problems to life and limb as East Florida. Yet despite the destruction of his estate, compared to many he was very fortunate. The end to the so called Patriot War, after all, did not mean the conclusion of looming threats by way of

[68] EFP, R126, KPO.

[69] *Ibid.*

civil war either in northern Florida (or along the North American coast generally), lingering bands of Seminole warriors and escaped slaves, and the British presence emanating from West Florida at the time. Threats from above simply became multiple threats from all sides.[70]

Friends and business allies particularly in the Sea Islands on either side of the Florida-Georgia border suffered tremendous losses throughout the period. The great "Negro Factor" John Fraser—whom John Houstoun McIntosh alluded to in his sentimental recap of the Patriot War—was one of the major casualties of the incessant infighting in East Florida. As McIntosh noted, Fraser refused to join the Patriots' cause. As the Patriots controlled nearby Amelia Island and several key passes near Fraser's vast plantations at Pablo Creek (called Greenfield) and the St. Marys River (called Roundabout, on the Florida side), Fraser knew they "would have made him prisoner had he attempted that passage, and probably would have made him pay dearly for his ransom." En route from Fernandina to Pablo Creek, Fraser drowned in December 1813 and left a massive estate in the hands of Kingsley and Philip Yonge as executors. Due to the staggering wealth and the complex, international aspects of the proceedings, Fraser's untimely death proved something of a blessing for both executors, though at the expense of the deceased's African widow and children left at Rio Pongo, West Africa.[71]

Further north the British raided plantations in the Chesapeake area and South Carolina in early 1814, offering slaves protection and transport to Canada or the British West Indies. By June of that year newspapers reported that about 700 fugitive slaves had been taken to Bermuda, while another 2000-3000 had gone to Halifax. Apart from the sporadic British presence

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[70] Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 99-101; Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 292.

[71] East Florida Claims, "Case of John Fraser," PKY, 2; Daniel L. Schafer, "Family Ties that Bind: Anglo-African Slave Traders in Africa and Florida, John Fraser and his Descendants," *Slavery & Abolition*, 20.3 (December 1999), 3.

concentrated in the two regions, Georgia slaveowners remained relatively immune to the effects of war on their peculiar institution. Given the remoteness of their island locales, Malcolm Bell, Jr. rightly suggests that it gave slaveowners a "false sense of security" to the times.[72]

While Kingsley remained near Fernandina for the close of his criminal proceedings from the incident with the Havana slave ship, British Royal Colonial Marines arrived at Cumberland Island on January 10, 1815 under Sir George Cockburn. Before the month was out, they had captured St. Simons Island. The majority of the island's planter elite were former Loyalists (or descendants) with strong ties to the Caribbean, nearly all Scotsmen, and close friends of Kingsley's: James Hamilton, John Couper, George Baillie, Alexander Wylly, and William Page among others. Through their elaborate estates and host of complex kinship networks, Kingsley's associates commanded a considerable fortune and influence.[73] Facing their own series of trouble beginning with a disastrous embargos of Jefferson, areas like St. Simons, St. Mary's, and Amelia Island all suffered tremendous damage from a gale in September 1813. Couper, for example, lost his cotton crop and several structures. Absentee planter Pierce Butler's losses approached something like 1400 barrels of rice "having all been swept into the river." In general, houses, stores, and ships faired poorly against the "great Rains and excessive high tides." "Some dead bodies are exhibited in the streets, and many missing," a St. Mary's account stated.[74]

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[72] Bell, *Major Butler's Legacy*, 170-71.

[73] *Ibid*., 100-02, 115-16, 171-72, 173, 176-77; Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point*, 85-7, 107-08, 122; Ray Crook, "Bilali—The Old Man of Sapelo Island: Between Africa and Georgia," *Wadabagei*, 10.2 (2007), 50-2; several letters written by Mary Williams Houstoun to her mother are remarkably revealing in the lively kinship networks as well as landscape on St. Simons Island. Houstoun was at J. H. Couper and James Hamilton's Hopeton Plantation there to attend the Christmas 1827 wedding of Couper and Caroline Wylly. The typescript letters were transcribed by Charles Wylly, later found by his descendents, and now are microfilmed in the John Couper Collection, 1775-1913, R159-51, GDAH; Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, is littered with the kinship networks and colorful descriptions on the island; Burnette Vanstory, *Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles*, New Edition (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1981), 129-201, gives a fairly good overview of the plantations and families that mixes historical and oral histories.

Kingsley's misfortunes at Laurel Grove the previous year were in some cases smaller than that of his Georgia friends in 1815. Promising aid and freedom from their American owners, British troops enticed slaves to abscond in large numbers to their outposts. The British presence, believed to be at 2,500, was reported to have some 1,600 black troops among them. The example of armed blacks so close to recent events in Haiti and the Atlantic perhaps more than ever brought owners to the brink of maddening sense of Armageddon, aided (in Butler manager Roswell King's words) by "as great rascals as on Earth."[75] In a short time the invading troops had managed to wreak nothing short of havoc on the region. As was the case with the Seminoles raiding plantations in Spanish Florida, British soldiers were largely successful in destroying planting efforts, along with outbuildings and workforces. British policy was somewhat mixed regarding slaves as property, however, and caused no small rupture in relations with slaveowners and the occupying army.[76]

At least some British officers maintained that no slaves unwilling to leave their plantations would be forced to do so. In other instances it was often less than clear what policy was in effect and to what degree it would be carried out to the letter of the law. A group of planters appointed by the Madison Administration in March 1815 to address the restoration of property seized by the British at Cumberland discovered this all too well. Thomas Newell and Thomas Spalding ("the Lower South's most energetic sugar planter"), representing both local

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[74] *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 7, 1813; another hurricane in the fall of 1824 did a terrific amount of damage as well to the same plantations and cut large swaths through the region. The repetitive destruction led some planters like John Couper at Cannon's Point to See *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 8, 1824. Frequent reports of "unprecedented" weather are in a host of papers in the early 19th century, a phenomenon noted by Mart A. Stewart, '*What Nature Suffers to Groe': Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 93.

[75] King quoted in Bell, *Major Butler's Legacy*, 181.

[76] Frank A. Cassell, "Slaves of the Chesapeake Bay Area and the War of 1812," *Journal of Negro History*, 57.2 (April 1972), 145-47; Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 154, 204, 213; Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 41-2.

and national interests, met with British Admiral Cockburn in a particularly frustrating match of diplomatic wrangling. At bottom the issue hinged upon the recovery of slave property taken, particularly as it pertained to the details of the recently signed Treaty of Ghent (December 1814) that formally ended the War of 1812.[77]

The agents were of course incensed that Cockburn's forces both occupied and plundered *after* the peace had been concluded. To Cockburn they "demanded all the slaves and private property of every description taken or received at Cumberland Island, or laying in the waters contiguous to the same, on board his ships, or which had been there at the ratification of the treaty of peace by the President of the United States...." Unfazed by the demands, the British admiral reportedly responded that only what was taken from the island was to be returned, "but what were taken or received from other places, although on Cumberland, or in the ships in the river or sound, would not." Negotiations clearly reached an impasse when the two sides split hairs regarding the actual wording of the treaty. Cockburn opted for a literal reading; the agents, "in the spirit of amity in which that article was concluded should have been restored," approached matters in the opposite.[78]

The British adamantly refused to return an slaves unwilling to go back to their masters. Finally receiving permission "to go on board his [Cockburn's] ships in the offing to obtain the voluntary return of their slaves," Spalding met with the escapees and tried to persuade them to accompany him. In all only thirteen chose to go; of that number "six of captain Wylly's, five of Mr. Couper's, one of major Butler's" were among the contraband that relented. Newell and Spalding, in keeping with the prevailing paternalism of the time, objected to subsequent British

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[77] Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 155; Bell, *Major Butler's Legacy*, 178, notes that Roswell King, manager of absentee owner Pierce Butler's St. Simons plantation, wrote his employer stating that he accompanied Spalding to Cumberland for the meeting "to see after the property the British have robed [sic] you of."

[78] *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 5, 1815.

interference that otherwise "would have produced a return of hundreds...."[79] For the likes of John Couper, who lost "60 prime, and effective negroes—carried off by the enemy," the loss aggrieved an already worsening situation and "lessened [his] income full $15,000."[80] James Hamilton and Pierce Butler faired much worse. Hamilton lost upwards of a staggering 238 and Butler 138 slaves, respectively. The time, it appears, effectively proved a watershed for Kingsley's friends as much as for himself. Later he reflected on the time and paused to suggest that crisis was narrowly averted:

> Whoever was so unlucky as to see, on Cumberland Island, last war, the magical transformation of his own negroes, whom he left in the field but a few hours before, into regular soldiers, of good discipline and appearance, and with what despatch [sic] and celerity the recruiting service went on under the protection of a few hundred marines, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance that was used to prevent desertion, could not help figuring to himself the consequences had there been a larger force, able to maintain a position on the main, with any ulterior object of conquest in view, and possessing the means of equipment. Where would they have stopped, or what could have stopped them?[81]

The experience was one of many that prompted the devout proslaveryite to craft at once a defense of the institution and offer remedies to ensure its flexibility to withstand future attacks internally and externally.[82]

Given Kingsley's significant losses during the Patriot War, he seemed duly impressed by similar events that occurred on the plantations of Thomas Spalding and John Couper of the period. Fervently opposed to exposing slaves to "the danger and hurtful tendency of superstition (by some called religion)," Kingsley found "two instances, to the southward, where gangs of

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[79] *Ibid.*

[80] John Couper to James Couper, St. Simons Island, May 24, 1828, John Couper Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (microfilm).

[81] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 63.

[82] See herein Chapter Four.

negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers, or influential negroes, whose integrity to their masters, and influence over the slaves prevented it; and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Africans, and professors of the Mahomedan religion."[83] The references no doubt pertain, as Michael Gomez has shown, to Spalding's Bilali and Couper's Salih Bulali (aka "Tom").[84]

In the case of the former, Bilali was Spalding's driver on Sapelo Island for 500 slaves that vowed, "I will answer for every Negro of the true faith, but not for the *Christian dogs* that you own." He led some eighty slaves in the anticipated attack of Sapelo by the British. Born in Timbu in West Africa, the Fula speaking Bilali was "intimate friends" with Salih Bulali on St. Simons Island. There at Cannon's Point Salih Bulali was described by John Couper's son and agricultural pioneer, James Hamilton Couper, as "a remarkable man". Bulali told Couper that he was from "Kianah" and "considers himself, as his language proves, a Foulah, and converses freely with the Foulahs, from Timboo and Foulah."[85] Both Bilali and Salih Bulali were purchased in the Bahamas for plantation work in Georgia within a few years of each other. It was during the British occupation of St. Simons that Salih Bulali succeeded in keeping roughly half of the 120 slaves on Couper's plantation. The biographer of Cannon Point neighbor Pierce Butler argues that the Muslim driver was "held in awe by his fellow slaves" and warned against

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[83] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 70, 68-9. It is tempting to speculate exactly what Kingsley means as it pertains to Anna Madgigine as well. That the slaves were faithful to their master somehow seems incredible to him given the slaves' Islamic following. Kingsley claimed Anna was always faithful as well; and while he made no mention of her religious affiliation, one might rationally ask if Anna was in fact Muslim in her native Senegal, as Schafer has suggested, and what implications is has for his conclusions or that of other scholars.

[84] Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 83.

[85] James Hamilton Couper, Esq. to William B. Hodgson, reprinted in William B. Hodgson, *Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 68, 70; J. H. Couper's contributions to agricultural advancement were renowned. On James Hamilton Couper see Bagwell, *Rice Gold*; Jeffrey Doyle Richardson, "'Nothing More Fruitful:' Debt and Cash Flow on the Antebellum Rice Plantation," M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1996; James M. Clifton, "Hopeton, Model Plantation of the Antebellum South," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 66.4 (Winter 1982), 429-49; Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point*.

British promises of benevolence. "He had been their slave in the West Indies and warned that life on St. Simons was preferable to anything the British might promise."[86]

Unwilling to let the matter of their absconded slaves rest, the St. Simons faction along with Spalding entered into a collective legal challenge to Britain's seizure of their lawful property. Stubbornly, the group consisting of Spalding (in an official capacity duly appointed by President Madison), Couper, and Roswell King thought it best to pursue Admiral Cockburn and the British fleet to Bermuda. Once there they anticipated reasoning with the commander before the transshipment of their fugitive property occurred. Writing to Pierce Butler in Philadelphia, Roswell King at the time naively boasted that, "Mr. Couper and myself have concluded for to go immediately to Bermuda before the Negroes git [sic] scattered. We are both sanguine that if we can find the Negroes most of them will be willing to return. It is said they are badly treated at Bermuda and dying very fast." Cockburn was not amused at their persistence and refused the American entourage any audience with the slaves there. More to the point, the bulk had already gone on to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and joined the remnants of a few thousand Black Loyalists there as a consequence of the American Revolution. Some, in fact, had made the journey at early as February and within the first few weeks of the British landing at Cumberland, where some assumed new identities and broke with their plantation past. Spalding pursued matters at Halifax under President James Monroe but was in the end unsuccessful. Later claims by the Georgia

[86] Bilali quoted in Keith Cartwright, *Reading Africa into American Literature: Ethics, Fables, and Gothic Tales* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 170-71. Cartwright suggests that, "Zephaniah Kingsley appears to have been the first writer to take note of Bilali"; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 82-3; Crook, "Bilali—The Old Man of Sapelo Island," 41, 47-8; William S. McFeely, *Sapelo's People: A Long Walk into Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 36, 38-9; E. Merton Coulter, *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1940), 83; Bell, *Major Butler's Legacy*, 172; Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 270.

group paid measly sums—all of which were tiny fractions of the outstanding amounts lost. Others suffered similar fates.[87]

Floridians meanwhile had their own share of problems with the combined British, Seminole, and black populations. Admiral Cockburn's stay at Cumberland Island coincided with a growing concern to slaveholders building in West Florida in the form of the so called Negro Fort. Located along the Apalachicola River at Prospect Bluff, the outpost was established in summer 1814 by British officers Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicolls and Captain George Woodbine. As they would throughout the eastern seaboard—much to the chagrin of slaveholders there—the British enticed slaves from areas such as East Florida, Georgia, and Mobile to take refuge from their owners. Offering freedom and land to any would be fugitives, the British allied also with local Seminoles and acted as agents on their behalf. Their numbers swelling daily, the masses at Prospect Bluff had everything from uniforms, arms, and drill-training supplied by the British. Self-fashioned benevolent masters like Zephaniah Kingsley were clearly losing precious investments to the refuge; it quickly became the paramount threat to mastery and a source for Kingsley's growing anxiety over the chaos reigning in his plantation affairs.[88]

Similar to the Georgia faction in its dogged determination to recapture slave property, Kingsley too was particularly outraged that his patriarchy had been thwarted. In a hastily written dispatch to planter and business associate Joseph M. Hernandez (then at St. Augustine), Kingsley

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[87] Bell, *Major Butler's Slaves*, 180, 182-86; Mary R. Bullard, *Robert Stafford of Cumberland Island: Growth of a Planter* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 45-7; Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeast Spanish Borderlands*, 274-76.; [John MacPherson Berrien?,] *An Argument In support of the Claims of James Hamilton, Pierce Butler, James Villier, Dennis Laronde, Jumonville de Villier, and others, and in reply to an Argument, in support of the Claims of Joseph C. Cabell, and others* (n.p., 1828).

[88] Larry Eugene Rivers, *Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 190-91; Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 304; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 230-31.

appealed to his correspondent for help in catching a fugitive slave. Buck, he believed, was (evidently) for a second time attempting to reach the Seminole Nation. "Offer Eighty dollars with all expences," he told Hernandez, "—& spare no pains sending him on secure in irons to Fernand[in]a as before."[89] Other Kingsley slaves, Bob & Tim, were "safe in the Guardhouse" after being captured and sent to Amelia Island where their master met them mid-June 1815. They too were probably drawn to the Negro Fort and risked flight over the drudgery of slavery. Notwithstanding the return of two of his bondmen, all was not well at Fernandina. [90]

Sent to reinforce Admiral Cockburn at Cumberland Island to the north, Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls and the Royal Marines were at Amelia Island in June 1815. Once there Kingsley obtained firsthand information from the recently arrived Nicolls regarding the Negro Fort's situation in West Florida. Nicolls told Kingsley that "he left the Fort well furnished with Stores, amunition [sic], Ordenance [sic] & provisions...." Worse yet, the numbers seemed larger than imagined. The officer stated "two hundred blacks & all the Creek nation" were there, "whom he has declared free and independent & made a treaty Offensive & defensive with them in favour of G. Britain with whom alone they are allowed to trade." The situation clearly did not bode well for abating threats to person and property. Despite Nicolls' assertion that the Seminoles were not allowed to receive "any runaway negroes," Kingsley seemed to know better. "I have been sick," he confessed to Hernandez, "every thing looks discouraging & no prospect of security on any side."[91]

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[89] Zephaniah Kingsley to Joseph M. Hernandez, Diego Plains, no date (c. 1815?), Buckingham Smith Papers, New York Historical Society, New York (NYHS).

[90] Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 304.

[91] Kingsley to Hernandez, Amelia Island, June 16, 1815, NYHS.

While Royal Marines carried away southern slaveowners' property in materials and persons, forces under General Andrew Jackson seemed to gain valuable momentum after their victory at New Orleans. Locals there had a particular disdain for the American occupation and interruption of commerce. Jackson had after all already attacked Pensacola (West Florida), gone on to Mobile, and effectively "neutralized" strongholds in the immediate areas. The American forces were varied. For example, still reeling from the effects of the not too distant Haitian Revolution, some free black refugees at New Orleans formed a militia company that fought against the British. Tennessee Volunteers, militiamen, and an assortment of others contributed as well. Through a combination of nature and strategy, Jackson's army inflicted appalling losses on the enemy and eventually seized New Orleans by mid-January 1815 as Cockburn landed at Cumberland.[92]

Months later Nicolls' arrival at Amelia where he met Kingsley followed a particularly brutal period in Spanish Florida. American forces maintained a strong presence in the western region near New Orleans and another along the Florida-Georgia border just before the Apalachicola River. The Negro Fort became the focal point for which a slew of political agendas battled for months. Facing increasing pressure from slaveholders, Jackson and Spanish authorities in West Florida failed to come to a mutual understanding on the fort's future. By July next the impasse reached a crucial mark. An increasingly weakened Spanish government could do little to halt uprisings throughout the Atlantic at the time—Florida included. Jackson authorized troops to end the threat. Surrounding the fort, by which time was proudly taunting the Americans with a Union Jack, U.S. forces sent a volley of cannon fire at the stronghold in late July. A heated cannonball exploded on a vulnerable powder magazine and virtually incinerated the fort from within. The majority of those inside died instantly, though a few did survive and

[92] Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 204-14.

some tortured and executed. Without a secure position, the masses that formerly resided there fled southward to a handful of locations. These clustered settlements similarly offered at least some protection due to their sheer remoteness.[93]

Shortly after the destruction of the Negro Fort at Prospect Bluff slaveowners greeted that news and the subsequent success American forces had in capturing a number of fugitive slaves. On September 13 at Fort George Island Kingsley penned an appeal to Georgia Governor David B. Mitchell regarding "the securing of a good many Negros" from the area. Coupled with the losses during the Patriot War, Kingsley was still clearly frustrated by the lingering threat that the Seminoles played in the region. In regards to the captured slaves he told Mitchell that, "I have no doubt but some of mine were amongst them as I have a great many with the Indians, who refuse delivering them up or allowing any one to take them...." His impatience with the faltering Spanish authorities was clear: "[A]s there is no efficient Government in this country to oblige them [the Indians] or protect the inhabitants We are thus iniquitously deprived of our property by those Villans [sic] who laugh at us."[94]

Instead of bartering with the Tribes, Kingsley instead proposed the governor a lucrative offer. He was concerned that United States authorities might not hold Spanish property in high regard. Trusting Mitchell to see that he was "fairly dealt with," Kingsley was coy, adding that he in fact was "a Citizen of the U. States...." Of his escaped slaves he believed that "upwards of

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[93] Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic*, 99-101; Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 17; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 234-35.

[94] Zephaniah Kingsley to David B. Mitchel[l] Esq., Fort George Island, September 13, 1816, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens (UGA). The document has been incorrectly indexed in both authorship and location. Mitchell, incidentally, was born in Scotland and obtained the governorship in 1815—the last to hold the position born outside of the United States. Mitchell, interestingly enough, sold Kingsley's friends Hamilton and Couper a tract of land on St. Simons Island in December 1793 that housed the latter's Cannon Point plantation. It is unclear whether the link was known to Kingsley when he wrote his appeal. See Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point*, 52.

Forty Negroes" might be found at settlements littered between the Suwannee River and Tampa, a considerable stretch of land to be sure. "I am willing to give one half to those who will go and seize them & bring them out by force and all the Florida people have agreed to do the same & authorise the captors to take them wherever they are to be found." He estimated "there must be two hundred Negros or upwards owned about this Neighbourhood" to be recovered. Kingsley reminded Mitchell, the former American agent in Florida during the Patriot War, that he "was well aquainted [sic] with the circumstances attending the loss of my Negros allready [sic] and that it took place while the country looked up to the U. States for protection...."[95] Governor Mitchell's letter books do not contain a reply to the vexed patriarch.[96] Some of Kingsley's slaves continued to flee their master, only adding to his growing frustration. At least one group arrived at Prospect Bluff near the old Negro Fort and into the protection of the Tribes by January 1817.[97]

Amelia Island remained a more pressing matter at this time. The island and its "motley crew" had taken on an even larger significance for both the American and Spanish governments. Smuggling in slaves there proved particularly embarrassing for Washington. After all, while Congress had passed a series of laws aimed to eliminate the illegal importation of slaves into the United States, historians such as the late Don E. Fehrenbacher have convincingly argued that theory and practice varied widely. "Enforcement tended to be episodic, rather than systematic," he argues in *The Slaveholding Republic*, "and the engagement of federal officials in the battle against the slave trade ranged all the way from diligence to nonfeasance, with some instances of

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[95] Kingsley to Mitchell, Fort George Island, September 13, 1816, TCC, UGA.

[96] David B. Mitchell, Governors' Letterbooks, RG1-1-1 (Microfilm), GDAH.

[97] Edmund Doyle to John Innerarity [Jr.], Prospect Bluff, January 28, 1817, in "The Panton, Leslie Papers: Two letters of Edmund Doyle, Trader, 1817," *FHQ*, 17.4 (April 1939), 313. The group had at least four of Kingsley's slaves in it when it sought and received protection from the trading post of John Forbes & Company.

corrupt involvement in the traffic." In fact, the same Governor Mitchell of Georgia was, shortly after Kingsley's letter, replaced in that capacity and made an Indian Agent for the United States government. At the high point of smuggling activities at Amelia, Mitchell himself was accused of bringing "about a hundred Africans" into Georgia sometime in 1817. An unidentified witness later observed a considerable portion of the slaves on Mitchell's own plantation and seemed thwarted in his efforts to obtain their return. Lest they be discovered, he noted that a portion of the group "were removed and secreted in the woods." Other instances also proved to be his undoing. A publicly embarrassed Mitchell was eventually removed by President James Monroe in 1821 and wrote a lengthy rejoinder, publishing it in 1822.[98]

"My individual progress has for some days past been impeded by our fear of Invasion, otherways [sic] I should have been allready [sic] on the road to St. Augustine," Zephaniah wrote to Hernandez in late June 1817. Contrary to the swirl of rumors plaguing northern Florida at the time, he believed none of the idle talk. Landed property holders did not concern him. They could hardly be swayed, he told his loyal Spanish recipient, by "Land bounties & promises" offered in hopes of fomenting rebellion. However, in a theme that litters in particular his later published work on slavery, Kingsley was especially repulsed by the lower classes. It was those "great many residents [that] have no property nor any interest to defend" that were a liability: "of these we have most to fear." Also a devoted advocate of paternalism, Kingsley similarly believed that slaves could be governed as any public might on that same principle. He believed that "the great secret of governing a people lays in making it their interest to defend It's [sic] Government."[99] That theory was again put to the test.

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[98] Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic*, 152; Katherine E. Rohrer, "David B. Mitchell," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, retrieved February 2, 2008: http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org .

[99] Kingsley to Hernandez, Fort George Island, June 21, 1817, NYHS.

In a week's time yet another bizarre occurrence befell Florida planters. Again the threat came from Amelia. Anticipating an as yet shapeless threat, Kingsley voiced the broad concerns of a skittish class. "We are now like a Turtle without a shell," he said frankly, "vulnerable on all sides & endeavouring to hide from the vilest animals until we gather strength which time alone can bestow." Planters and common folk alike had suffered a great deal. Food for many was scarce and grossly inflated when available. Worse yet, "few have houses to shelter them from the Rain," he said. Kingsley, of course, in the meantime had made Fort George Island his principle residence—which a traveler at the time noted was "fortified" at "a very eligible position at the entrance of the Nassau River."—though maintained places at a host of locales for business. He relayed to Hernandez "a circumstance which gives pause to every holder of Negro property within the province...." "Another Brig has arrived at Amelia from Kingston with Convict slaves abo[u]t. fourteen in No." A slave trader himself, Kingsley could not help but reflect on the implications of provoking international criticism: "We cannot blame our Neighbours for their ill will & opposition while we under a plea of Right & Independent Govermt. are introducing such deadly poison amongst them." Willing to risk profits to build his empire, Kingsley now could only recoil in horror at the thought of losing it all to an unstable labor force brought in simply to line the pockets of a few. "I am sorry in this case," he lamented with more than a hint of irony, "that individual interest is so much at variance with Public good but I cannot help mentioning it as I am so deeply concerned."[100]

Swept up in the broad movement for independence throughout the Afro-Latin Atlantic, Floridians felt the effects at home. At Fernandina in the last days of June 1817, Scotsman Gregor MacGregor quickly overran the few Spanish authorities there and proclaimed the

[100] *Ibid.*; Anonymous, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Spanish Main in the Ship "Two Friends;"*… (London: John Miller, 1819), 152.

"Republic of the Floridas." Fighting with Simon Bolivar throughout the Caribbean, MacGregor seemed caught up in the Great Liberator's ambitions as well as revolutionary rhetoric. He professed his desire to overthrown the Spanish Monarchy and free the subjects there both from religious oppression and chattel slavery. A few dozen soldiers grew in number slightly but ultimately collapsed from a lack of support. The local population either left at once or remained, only to protest MacGregor's disruptive presence. Leaving Amelia on September 9, MacGregor's rebellion quickly faded and was replaced by a similar scenario under Luis Aury, also a soldier of the Independence Movement in the Afro-Atlantic. Aury claimed the island in the name of Mexico. According to Jane Landers, Aury amassed about $500,000.00 in illegal slave and contraband sales during his brief tenure. It is little wonder that Americans were suspicious.

"Dangers from abroad," to use President Monroe's words, threatened what he called the fragile pursuit of America's "high destiny." "National honor is national property of the highest value. The sentiment in the mind of every citizen is national strength. It ought therefore to be cherished."[101] With the early articulation of the Monroe Doctrine in mind, Monroe sent U.S. troops to occupy Amelia Island in the waning days of 1817. The troops remained until Spain's cession of the territory to the United States, but not before ushering in a blatant disregard for racial and property laws of citizens black and white in exchange for so-called "stability."[102]

Emerging from the tumultuous decade from the disruptions of war, planters like Zephaniah Kingsley arrived at a crossroads. A post-war financial crisis sunk markets for cash crops like cotton. Combined with the net losses from the war period, many planters were even

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[101] Reprinted in *The Supporter*, March 18, 1817 (Chillicothe, OH).

[102] L. David Norris, "The Squeeze: Spain Cedes Florida to the United States," in Jacqueline K. Fretwell and Susan R. Parker, eds., *Clash Between Cultures: Spanish East Florida, 1784-1821* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1988), 107-09; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 245-46; Hill, "George J. F. Clarke," 227, 230; Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 304; Coker and Parker, "The Second Spanish Period in the Two Floridas," 164.

more hard pressed to repay outstanding debts as the international banking system collapse from panic. Many owners felt sufficiently extended to push west in hopes of new lands and fortunes to be made. And so it was that the migration was also responsible for what Ira Berlin has suggested was the most formative period of American slavery, eventually "displac[ing] more than a million men and women, dwarfing the transatlantic slave trade that had carried Africans to the mainland." In turn, it set off a debate on the nature of slavery so poignantly felt in the Missouri controversy from 1819 on. Tested by their opponents, slaveowners increasingly defended both the right to hold property where they saw fit and the benevolent (and increasingly Christian) aspect of the institution of slavery. That very need—to defend the system of slavery—quickly helped encourage a certain elegance in its articulation and a fair amount of delusion as well. The shift from a preoccupation with slavery's vices gave way to articulating and romanticizing its merits, giving Kingsley a powerful, evolving ideological weapon to add to his arsenal to rebuild, re-imagine, and reconfigure the possibilities of his own empire.[103]

In sum, with their mastery overwhelmingly challenged and property threatened at nearly every turn, the need for a stabilizing force was paramount.[104] Neither guns nor blatant force could hope to prevail in face of overwhelming numbers of enemies from within and without.

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[103] James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, New Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998), 72-3; Jeffrey Robert Young, ed., *Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740-1829* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006, 51-2; *Domesticating Slavery*, 161-92 *passim*; Lacy K. Ford, "Reconfiguring the Old South: 'Solving the Problem of Slavery', 1787-1838," *Journal of American History*, 95.1 (June 2008), 11-12; Eugene D. Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 3; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 162; it should be noted that Kingsley did not adhere personally to the theory of Christian stewardship. Yet, the very pervasiveness of the doctrine ensured that although he consciously disagreed with indoctrinating his own slaves in Christian teachings, he was influenced by it through his transatlantic market participation nonetheless. Kingsley's attitude to religion as a whole was overwhelmingly negative. He did believe that Christian teachings, as was shown earlier, tended to subvert his own authority. In contrast to many later Christian stewards, he believed that slaves did have a great capacity for understanding and using the concept of salvation as a weapon against earthly temporality. He attributed such ideas taken up by slaves as reasons why his own bondmen at one point simply stopped obeying him.

[104] Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Economic Development* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 8.

Part and parcel of the evolving standing of an enlightened mastery, Zephaniah Kingsley muddled over the remnants of his plantation empire and concluded that the lessons of the Revolutionary Atlantic afforded "abundant examples of situation, occurrences, and facts" from which to promote a system "better adapted for strength, durability and independence" against. In his quest to articulate "the grand chain of security by which the slaves are held in subordination," Kingsley needed to look no further than his own domestic sphere.[105]

[105] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 40, 44, 47.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DOOR OF LIBERTY: A FALLACIOUS AND DECEPTIVE HOPE

"The plantation," argues Ira Berlin, "did not just happen; it had to be made to happen."[1] From the drudgery of fieldwork to the constant upkeep of its buildings and equipment, the plantation complex required round the clock attention. Eager to recover from the losses sustained in the recent war period, Zephaniah Kingsley commenced a series of initiatives to reclaim the earth from the forces of marauders and neglect. Two properties were of particularly great importance: his main residence at Fort George Island and a cash crop venture located north along the St. Marys River, called White Oak. Situated between the economic misery of a recent past and the uncertainty of impending cession of Spanish Florida to the United States, Kingsley's business and personal affairs evolved in tandem with a modern, equally evolving strand of proslavery thought.

Fort George Island appears to have quickly taken on the semblance of an estuary for its owner.[2] Primarily a Sea Island cotton and provisions plantation, the residence housed a complicated domestic sphere and a tense working and living arrangement with the slave labor force in its infancy, amid its spaces and structures of power and privilege with a lush, flourishing landscape.[3] It formed a part of Zephaniah's efforts to constitute an ordered world of civility and

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[1] Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 175.

[2] James Grant Forbes, on appointment as marshal of East and West Florida by President James Monroe, wrote favorably on Fort George in his topographical history of the territory published in 1821: "This fine island was once in the possession of John McQueen, Esq. of George, and afterwards much improved by John Houston McIntosh, Esq; and is now in the possession of [Mr.] Kingsley, Esq, whose property is much increased in value." James Grant Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas; More Particularly of East Florida,* edited by James W. Covington (Originally Published 1821; Gainesville: University of Florida Press, reprint 1964), 75.

[3] Samuel G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 57.342 (November 1878), 840-46, features a romanticized but quite detailed description of the plantation grounds; John Michael Vlach, *The*

mastery.[4] An unnamed visitor to the plantation during Kingsley's residency described it as "a perfect garden, laid out in parks, arbors, and flower beds, for his own residence."[5] Many planters of the Enlightenment era were deeply interested in agricultural experimentation.[6] Like his friends John Couper and James Hamilton at St. Simons Island, Kingsley was also an avid horticulturalist.[7] At Fort George he probably imported a variety of flora found on his travels or from acquaintances. For his Drayton Island plantation, for example, he acquired "a collection of tropical trees, plants and seeds" from Brazil, including "several" Bahian orange trees that their importer, D. J. Browne, described as "one of the greatest prodigies of the vegetable kingdom."[8] Uncle Jack (the St. Augustine slave known as Sitiki in his native West Africa) remembered that Kingsley had brought "from Haiti" a "Large white variety" of yam.[9] Sarah Pamela Williams, daughter of author John Lee Williams, likewise recalled that Kingsley, "a sick old man," while

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Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 1, 2, 4; Sarah Fick, "Sea Island Cotton Plantation Architecture," in Richard Dwight Porcher and Sarah Fick, *The Story of Sea Island Cotton* (Wyrick & Company, 2005), 359-80 *passim*.

[4] Mart A. Stewart, *'What Nature Suffers to Groe': Life, Labor and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 147-48; S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 141-65 *passim*; Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 187, 193, 211-12.

[5] Anonymous, "Notes of an Invalid. –No. 9," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 20, 1837.

[6] Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 102-36; James E. McClellan III, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 293.

[7] Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 151, 155; T. Reed Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon's Point* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994), 141-58 *passim*.

[8] *New York Observer and Chronicle*, June 24, 1858; D. J. Browne, *The Trees of America; Native and Foreign, Pictorially and Botanically Delineated, and Scientifically and Popularly Described* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846), 58.

[9] Buckingham Smith, ed., "The Story of Uncle Jack," Buckingham Smith Papers, New York Historical Society, New York (NYHS).

"visiting Haiti and Jamaica had brought back casava [sic] and arrowroot and met with great success in raising crops of both." "He gave Father some of each," she said, "and we used to raise cassava very successfully."[10] In the 1870s, long after Zephaniah's residence there, journalist Samuel Benjamin theorized that the agricultural experiments had given Fort George Island its decidedly "peculiar" quality.[11]

Prematurely ending the portrait of the grounds, the unnamed observer at Fort George seemed particularly incensed over what he considered a pressing concern. In reference to the idyllic setting he begged his audience: "to crown it all, what do you think he chose for a wife?—Why, one of the blackest wenches that you ever saw." The visitor, known only as "The Invalid," had heard tales of Kingsley's alleged interracial practice but suspended belief until meeting Anna Madgigine that day. "The sooty spouse," he called her, "was indeed as black as jet—as strongly scented as a musk-rat—and, to prejudiced eyes, as ugly as pictures of the king of sinners." Despite the overwhelming measure of a not too subtle racism, the bewildered reporter seemed enthralled at the arrangement: "But perhaps you will think stranger, that he has been faithful to her for more than twenty years. He has a grown mulatto son by her, and two mulatto daughters, and they all live together in concord as blissful as the best."[12] Indeed, the testament to

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[10] James M. Denham and Canter J. Brown, Jr., eds., *Cracker Times and Pioneer Lives: The Florida Reminiscences of George Gillett Keen and Sarah Pamela Williams* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 105.

[11] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," 841. The author noted that "The peculiarity of the scenery of Fort George Island is that more than any other spot I have seen in our country it seems to unite the vegetations of two zones. The trees are more Northern than Southern—the pine and the oak—but they assume a form and richness of growth that ally them to the rank vegetation of the jungles of the Amazon; and neither the cocoa nor the date palm grows there, the cabbage-palms are so masterfully added here and there at the most effective points, like the last and most telling touches in a painting, that they give the effect of consummate art, and convey the idea of a tropical isle, which is heightened by the lovely beaches of coralline sand, which are often approached by woody avenues, where the darkling light speckled with sunlight gives the impression of noonday struggling through the pictured panes of a Gothic cathedral."

[12] "Notes of an Invalid. –No. 9," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 20, 1837; two generally unreliable accounts of Kingsley and Anna are found in the testimonies of ex-slave William Hawley and Kingsley relative Elizabeth Dismukes. Hawley's reminiscences are all local legend, while Dismukes' (she was then

faithfulness is more than a trifle amusing given Kingsley's admitted practices. As it was, the patriarch had sexual relations with at least four women resulting in at least nine children. Ever the gracious host, Kingsley undoubtedly would have left the sordid details out of the day's conversation.[13]

Over the years much has been made of the relationship between Zephaniah and Anna. In recent years, for example, by combining an overwhelming amount of Florida legend with the few remaining sources on Anna, historian Daniel L. Schafer has argued that the substance of Anna's life was as a near equal partner to Zephaniah. By placing Anna, contrary to any firm evidence, within a particular area of West Africa, he sets up a scenario that dictates the total sum of their relationship. The basis of Schafer's argument hinges upon three primary factors. First, because of a reportedly longstanding friendship with Kingsley slave Sophie Chidgigine—"a woman of Jolof," as Zephaniah noted—who he speculates *may* have been a shipmate of Anna's during the Middle Passage, he posits that Anna was probably from there as well.[14] Yet as a host of scholars

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90 years old), among other things, grossly distorted Anna's appearance, describing her as "not black". Given her birth of March 23, 1848, it is doubtful that Elizabeth's supposed encounter in 1854 or 1855 ever transpired. Anna did not live at Fort George Island in the "Ma'am Anna House" during that period, as it was sold and resold by Zephaniah's nephew Kingsley Beatty Gibbs first to a John Lewis who promptly sold it to a Charles R. Thomson of South Carolina. She would have had no reason to be on the grounds and no opportunity to see Anna, then residing elsewhere. Rose Shepherd, "Interview of William F. Hawley," Federal Writers' Project, June 24, 1940, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LOC); Shepherd, "Interview of Mrs. Elizabeth Dismukes," Federal Writers' Project, May 11, 1939, LOC; Dismukes' birth date in Margaret Gibbs Watt, *The Gibbs Family of Long Ago and Near at Hand, 1337-1967* (Privately Published, 1968), 35; Daniel W. Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve: Historic Resource Study* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Field Area, 1996), 54; another account that mixes what appears to be some semblance of fact and local legend is in Madeleine L'Engle, *The Summer of the Great-Grandmother* (New York: HarperOne, reprint 1984), 187-88.

A persistent myth about Kingsley's appearance as well crowds local legend. Earlier accounts refer to Zephaniah as a dwarfed hunchback atop a large white horse draped in Spanish attire, complete with cape and large hat. The description was actually that of Kingsley's nephew and plantation manager, Charles J. McNeill. McNeill was described as "a cripple" and stood but four feet, eight inches tall. The Kingsley Plantation Field Office possesses a portrait of McNeill with his trademark hat. Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 96.

[13] "Notes of an Invalid," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 20, 1837; Zephaniah Kingsley, "Last Will & Testament, July 20, 1843," in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 120.

[14] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 30, 59, 139n5.

have demonstrated, the traumatic experience of the slave ship created lifelong bonds that in many cases even rivaled blood ties. Communication between the two captives could easily be facilitated by a number of factors. The Wolof represent both a language group and an ethnic group. In the case of the former, non-Wolof speakers can and often do speak the language, sometimes as one of two or more languages used in exchange.[15]

The second and most important factor in Schafer's argument is that the living arrangement between Zephaniah and Anna indicates a similar one that he witnessed in polygamous Wolof households in recent years. The male figure typically lives in a dwelling with a series of attached huts for a slew of co-wives, he says, that effectively comprise a single household structure. In truth, the Wolof have a rather diverse set of spatial living arrangements: from polygamous to monogamous in separate dwellings to single household compounds and enclosed clustered settlements. At Fort George Island, legend persisted that Anna lived in the kitchen house behind the plantation's main house during Zephaniah's residency there along with their children. Zephaniah later deeded the plantation to their now married son George in 1831, giving Anna "the use of her house and whatever ground she may desire to plant during her life" in a stark legal sense. There is little reason to suggest that, beyond local legend, she made it her *primary* residence before George's marriage. Schafer unconvincingly argues that Kingsley placed Anna in the kitchen house in regards to similar arrangements in what he attributes to her native Wolof. Far be it from a sign of inequality in the union, he argues that it was a sign of

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[15] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 559-80; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 204; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 164-68; Paul E. Lovejoy, "Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade and the Reconstruction of the History of Trans-Atlantic Slavery," in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 19-21, 32-38; David Northup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131-32.

cultural respect. However, it makes little sense simply given the earlier arrangement that persisted at Laurel Grove. She had her own dwelling house and operated Zephaniah's merchant store at some distance from the plantation complex. If one would even grant that Anna was in fact from Wolof, nothing resembled the supposed arrangement from her purchase in 1806 until the move to Fort George Island several years later. Should Zephaniah have suddenly given "the spatial separation that Anna would have expected based on her experiences with polygamous families in Africa," as Schafer suggests that the patriarch did sometime "in the 1820s," he would have done so almost two decades *after* her arrival from West Africa. All told it is rather incomprehensible how the arrangement at Fort George constitutes even his homogenized cultural portrait.[16]

Near the Florida-Georgia border Zephaniah's White Oak plantation on the St. Marys River continued to represent a fundamental problem with the weakened Spanish government in the province. Slaves no longer appeared firmly within their masters' grasps. It remained problematic, for example, as Kingsley continued to buy slaves to restock his plantation workforces.[17] As early as 1816 he fretted over the "dangers and vicissitudes such as are daily experienced in this Province on account of the small and precarious security which there is

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[16] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 47-48, 50-51, 55-6. Additionally, Anna's names that she referred to herself as and was received as throughout her lifetime retained a variety of spellings, phonetic and otherwise. While Schafer similarly suggests that the full weight of her names indicates a resemblance to Wolof meanings that constitute lineage retention (p. 138n18), scholars such as Sidney W. Mintz and Charles Joyner argued that cultural borrowing and phonetic resemblances can be easily confused when removed from their contexts and remain at best "superficial resemblances". What I am suggesting is that while the names more likely than not constitute an African retention, it is indeed too presumptuous to assign them a definitive lineage. In doing so, Schafer has taken a variation of the phonetically constituted names and given them a particular cultural origin. Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1974), 12, 14-20; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 204, 206; Lovejoy, "Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade," in Lovejoy and Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity*, 16-18; George married Anatoile V. Travers, with whom he had two sons and two daughters.

[17] Samuel Gale to Zephaniah Kingsley, Bill of Sale for 4 Slaves, Charleston, January 18, 1818, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia. Kingsley paid Gale $1000 for the slaves "Ceceem, Bella, Tomba, and Duramame."

afforded for this kind of property."[18] After a prolonged series of diplomatic wrangling between the Americans and the Spanish, news of a finalized peace treaty had not yet arrived in Florida in mid-January 1821. To Joseph Hernandez, Kingsley expressed the ambiguous nature of the cession from his own viewpoint. He deemed the ratification process "certain" for both parties. "I wish it not from any belief that we shall aquire [sic] a better Government that Our New Constitution (if Established)," he said, "but that we shall be more fixed & less liable to misfortunes."[19]

Kingsley's anxiety was understandable given the context of his holdings. By December 1819 he had, after all, commenced improving White Oak which then held about twenty slaves and had enough buildings he deemed qualified him for a proper land grant to the property. Just over a year later, he was plagued "by the bad season" in crops and recurring downturns in the cotton markets. Worse yet, Kingsley considered White Oak "precariously situated" given that "no less than three Robberies have been commited [sic] on it lately." "This shews [sic] how much we want Purging."[20] An advertisement in November of that year as well spoke to the extensiveness of the improvements Kingsley had made in recent years, particularly suited for sugar, rice, and cotton cultivation:

> *For sale on very accommodating terms,*
> That excellent and healthy PLANTATION, called *White Oak*, in East Florida, about 14 miles distant from the town of St. Mary's. It is formed by that rich neck of Land at the confluence of Big and Little St. Mary's Rivers, on a five font pitch tide, where the water is permanently fresh, and approachable on all sides for large shipping. It contains about 2000 acres—of which 400 are low rich

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[18] Zephaniah Kingsley for the Estate of John Fraser, St. Augustine, January 17, 1816, Zephaniah Kingsley & John Frazer [sic] Estate File, St. Augustine Historical Society, St. Augustine, Florida (SAHS).

[19] Zephaniah Kingsley to Joseph M. Hernandez, Fort George Island, January 16, 1821, Buckingham Smith Papers, NYHS.

[20] Kingsley to Hernandez, January 16, 1821, NYHS.

> hammocks, 600 well timbered, thrifty cattle range and good for cultivation, and 1000 acres of rich river swamp, 250 acres of which is well banked and drained, and now under cultivation in Cotton, Corn, Sugar and Rice, never liable to river freshes; the Gin House, Cotton House, Barns, Dwelling Houses, Scaffolding, Trunks, &c. are new and mostly cypress on the most convenient and improved plans, with excellent fences, machinery and other conveniences for clearing Cotton on a large scale, with Negro Houses, &c.—the excellence of the soil can be best proved by the productive results of the crop, where it can be viewed on the premises.[21]

While the plantation Kingsley ultimately decided not to part with for the time being, a rather abrupt turnaround in his fortune in sugar production was likely the reason.[22]

Seizing the opportunity to take advantage of the recent transfer of Florida to the United States government, Kingsley's sister Isabella and her husband George Gibbs arrived from New York at St. Augustine in March 1821.[23] Under Kingsley's tutelage and host of powerful connections, the merchant effectively attended to his brother-in-law's legal and business affairs as he quickly advanced in the local Superior Court system. An astute but courteous businessman, George Gibbs provided Zephaniah with a crucial ally close at hand with a good name and powerful benefactors.[24] Also a learned culturist, Gibbs travelled the plantation landscapes on business and pleasure visiting friends and old merchant contacts from New York to Florida. On one such trip to visit the Couper family at St. Simons Island, George and Isabella

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[21] *City Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, November 27, 1821; See also George Morrison's claim from Camden County, Georgia, for Kingsley's land, *Savannah Museum*, January 5, 1822.

[22] *Florida Herald and Southern Democrat*, March 22, 1823; reprinted also in *East Florida Herald*, March 23, 1823; J. Carlyle Sitterson, "Ante-Bellum Sugar Culture in the South Atlantic States," *Journal of Southern History*, 3.2 (May 1937), 175-80, demonstrates that sugar cultivation came about largely from efforts to diversify economic productivity largely after the financial crisis of 1819 and the subsequent drop in cotton particularly.

[23] Kingsley to Hernandez, Fort George Island, February 28, 1821, NYHS.

[24] George Gibbs to William Page, New York, May 9, 1818, William Audley Couper Papers, 1795-1870, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, microfilm. Gibbs makes explicit references to direct communications with, among others, John Couper, indicating it as a regular occurrence; Jacqueline K. Fretwell, ed., *Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and His Journal of 1840-1843* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1984), 3, 36n45.

had a child named George Couper Gibbs in honor of their hosts.[25] In late March 1823 the *East Florida Herald* reprinted a lengthy series of comparative observations on sugar cultivation from Georgia to Florida. A highly informative and well written piece, Gibbs' column placed Zephaniah's planting ventures in the highest circles of the recent Lowcountry sugar boom that swept from South Carolina to Florida and the burgeoning frontier to the southwest.[26] Once more, the business and personal success seemed not only to bolster Kingsley's formerly dismal prospects, but also lofted him to a short-lived peak in the circles of Florida respectability.[27]

The rapid advancement of sugar cultivation in the Lowcountry owed at once to the opening frontiers of the Untied States, the promise of profit and planter "independence", and exposed the extensiveness of communication and transatlantic interaction that dispersed enlightened, evolving standards for mastery over both slaves and nature.[28] Kingsley's Georgia planting friends, for example, were part of a network that linked the Caribbean methods of sugar cultivation to early efforts along the southern seacoast in the early nineteenth century. The likes of Thomas Spalding on Sapelo Island and John Couper on nearby St. Simons wrote frequent letters to their acquaintances offering personal experiences on methods that worked or failed

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[25] Margaret Gibbs Watt, ed., *The Gibbs Family of Long Ago and Neat at Hand, 1337-1967* (Privately Published, 1968), 21.

[26] Stewart, *What Nature Suffers to Groe*, 122-26; Patricia C. Griffin, "Life on the Plantations of East Florida: 1763-1848," *The Florida Anthropologist*, 56.3 (September 2003), 171; Edward E. Baptist, *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida's Plantation Frontier before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 20-21.

[27] President James Monroe appointed William P. DuVal as governor of the Florida Territory in 1822. DuVal in turn nominated Kingsley to the Legislative Council for the Territory but was not recommended at that time by Monroe. The following year Congressman Joseph Hernandez, Kingsley's close friend, again recommended Kingsley for the position and was subsequently accepted. Judge [William P.] DuVal to President James Monroe, Washington City, April 16, 1822, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXII: The Territory of Florida, 1821-1824* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), 406-07; Delegate [Joseph M.] Hernandez to President [James Monroe], Washington City, February 10, 1823, in *Ibid*., 616; and President James Monroe to Commission of Members of the Legislative Council, March 3, 1823, in *Ibid*., 640-41.

[28] Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 56-7, 71-91, 108-110, 124-28, 153-55.

entirely.[29] Others, like Couper's son James Hamilton Couper, kept journals that carefully copied a wide range of planting techniques and recipes into ledger books filled with notes and observations collected in their travels.[30] All of which comprised early efforts that culminated in a host of agricultural journals and publications specifically designed to facilitate scientific improvements in a wide arena of farming experimentation.[31]

For example, a significant technique for improving the extraction rate "from weak or immature juice" Kingsley learned from a source popular in Martinique at the time. Firmly within the spirit of the times, he considered knowledge of "converting the juice of the cane into Sugar" in such cases as wholly lacking for the majority of its would-be cultivators. "Having read in some liberal systems of economy, that individual knowledge ought to be common stock to which every member of society has an equal right, and believing in this creed, my sentiments are at variance with all secrets and privileges," he later professed to the popular sectional journal *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs*.[32] As George Gibbs' article attested, Kingsley's sugar enterprise dated to about 1819 or 1820. In about three years' time, the planter had increased his output of the product immensely. Gibbs asserted that such knowledge was obtained firsthand, as Kingsley told him that he "had been in most, and resided for years in some of the West India Islands." "I am convinced," Gibbs said of Kingsley's sugar making process,

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[29] E. Merton Coulter, *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1940), 87-127.

[30] James Hamilton Couper, "Notes on Agricultural and Rural Economy, No. 1, February 1824," James Hamilton Couper Plantation Records, Volume 4, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, microfilm.

[31] Stewart, *What Nature Suffers to Groe*, 100.

[32] Z. Kingsley, "Process of Manufacturing and Clarifying Sugar from weak or immature Juice, and of obtaining Sugar from Molasses; by Z. Kingsley," *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs*, October 1830. Kingsley claimed that he had received the information on sugar processing in about 1818 or 1819 from the "Marquis Lafougere" while at St. Augustine. The Martinique planter was actually Marquis De Fougere. Such an interaction was a prime example of the transatlantic exchange of information at the time.

"it had attained perfection." The result seemed to catch Kingsley by surprise. "His first object appears to have been to sell his surplus this year for seed," Gibbs said, "but it exceeding the quantity required, and having then no works of his own to manufacture it, sent a sloop load of it to the mills of Mr. [Richard] Carnochan, near Darien [Georgia], which I understood *from others*, produced at the rate of two thousand weight of sugar per acre."[33]

News of Kingsley's impressive numbers made headlines. Aware that more and more planters came to the territory to seek their fortunes, bringing with them increasingly alarming numbers of slaves and a host of cultural expectations, the editors noted that such impressive gains might jumpstart a sour economy, which was obviously "a question of national importance." Examining trends in sugar imports for consumption indicated a rather staggering net amount required to keep pace with demand. Papers like the *East Florida Herald* speculated that Kingsley's efforts might be reproduced elsewhere in the region. "Is there 50,000 acres of Sugar land in Florida?" the paper asked rhetorically. "Patriotism in any individual of ability, who had explored the interior," the paper added, "would induce him to give the result of his observations publicity."[34]

The cash crop surge in Florida and the Lower South generally was firmly rooted in an ambiguous situation, as Kingsley well knew. As prospective planters flocked to the frontier areas to cultivate cotton and sugar, they required more and more slave laborers to improve the land and forge plantations from the wilderness. Slavetraders and small speculators brought coffles of slaves from the Upper South to the Lower in droves, eventually dispersing over two million slaves in the process—made and remade for buyers seeking everything from

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[33] Gibbs quoted in *Florida Herald and Southern Democrat*, March 22, 1823; *East Florida Herald*, March 23, 1823.

[34] *East Florida Herald*, April 12, 1823.

independence to paternalism, and inviting a hailstorm of wrath from abolitionists in the process.[35] Bringing large amounts of credit and kinship connections as well, migrant planters relied on wide networks of information and contacts to ease the transition.[36] Such networks commonly extended across and throughout the Atlantic. Effectively creating saturation points of African slaves littered throughout the Lower South, the increasing numbers simply compounded the existing problem of a high ratio of black-to-white inhabitants (also known as the "black majority"). At issue was an incessant drive for profits coupled with the cyclical drive for acquiring more slaves, all in endless repetition. More to the point, the influx of southern planters to areas like former Spanish Florida and the southwest meant that bifurcated views of racial categories came to be the dominant tendency for racial relations.[37] Whiteness was equated with freedom and blackness with slavery.[38]

The Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy that engulfed Charleston from May to July 1822 marked the culmination point of race, economic, and political forces emanating from the Atlantic

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[35] Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 23-25, 44-77, 107-15, 214-15; Robert H. Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 41-42, 99-100, 102, 114; Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 41-42, 113, 116, 120-23; Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, 178, 184, 186-87; Michael Tadman, "The Hidden History of Slave Trading in Antebellum South Carolina: John Springs III and Other 'Gentlemen Dealing in Slaves,'" *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 97.1 (January 1996), 16, 19-24, 28-29.

[36] Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 29-32; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 212-15.

[37] Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 64-5; Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), 17, reminds us that "The migration of cotton and slaves was not a mindless east-west movement from exhausted to virgin soils, but a rational process of geographical expansion and relocation which continued along similar lines well after the [Civil] war."; compare to James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, New Edition (W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 69-95, that portrays a roving , "restless" group of slaveowners that seemed incapable of thinking of anything but simply moving.

[38] Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W.W. Norton & co., 1984), xiii.

in the expanding slave South.[39] Vesey, a free man of color, was a former slave and established carpenter in Charleston. Tolerated more in the urban centers than in rural settings, legally anomalous free blacks like Vesey could (and often did) navigate the remaining spaces of power neglected or overlooked by white masters and local law. Adept at negotiating in the Atlantic world of his birth, Vesey reportedly understood all too well that true freedom did not exist in the United States but certainly knew where it did.[40] From any number of vantage points throughout that world, the specter of Haiti appealed to many blacks for that reason. In Charleston, Vesey likened it in a similar manner as Cuban free colored Jose Antonio Aponte had a decade earlier. For many Haiti represented the best and perhaps only opportunity for black freedom in the hemisphere.[41]

The magnitude of the Vesey debacle at once reignited the threats of a widespread insurrection of slave and free blacks as well as conjured up the unconquerable ghost of the Haitian Revolution and its rhetoric of liberty, freedom, and equality for all—a synergistically explosive combination to white mastery.[42] Free blacks were certainly in a precarious position. Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark demonstrate that notions of black freedom were often complicated and fraught with instability. "The freedom of free people was egg-shell thin," they argue, "and its fragility caused them constant concern. Their ability to defend their families was

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[39] *Ibid.*, 42.

[40] Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, reprint 1992), 13-14, 44-45.

[41] Leon Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 16-20; Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 41; Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 44-45.

[42] Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1988), 119-20; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 113-15.

subject to crushing pressure from the hostile climate for freedom created by the antebellum environment friendly to slavery."[43] For free blacks like Vesey, an unspoken dialogue with the Haitian Republic was very much a conversation about the future as much as the past. The same tides, after all, carried notions of black freedom and revolutionary republicanism throughout the Atlantic world and flowed in the opposite direction as well. Haitians knew all too well that their painful existence weighed on the western world in more ways than one. Denmark Vesey saw the republic as the "island of liberty." That he and many others were apparently willing to die to reach its shores was a lesson not lost on white masters.[44]

Zephaniah Kingsley arrived in Charleston in late summer 1822 as the frenzy over the Vesey Conspiracy had begun to wane.[45] Only days before on July 12 "Gullah Jack" Pritchard—the same slave Kingsley purchased in East Africa in 1805 and brought to Charleston on board the *Gustavia*—was hung by white authorities for his supposed large role in the plot Guilty, the court said, of "wicked designs" and for his use of "all the powers of darkness" for ill, Jack was sentenced to death on July 9 before the magistrates. In pronouncing the sentence, the Charleston court issued a crushing decree meant to stamp out the remaining vestiges of Pritchard reputed invincibility. In turning the boasts of a proud and rebellious spirit against him, the authorities meant to dispel his "conjuring implements," odd dress, and seemingly bizarre practices as nothing more than "strange [and] credulous superstition." To the prisoner they stated:

> You represented yourself as invulnerable; that you could neither be taken nor destroyed and that all who fought under your banners

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[43] Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, "Strategies of Survival: Free Negro Families and the Problem of Slavery," in Carol Bleser, ed., *In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 89.

[44] Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 29; Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*, 170-71.

[45] *City Gazette & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, August 15, 1822.

> would be invincible. While such wretched expedients are calculated to inspire the confidence, or to alarm the fears of the ignorant and credulous, they excite no other emotion in the mind of the intelligent and enlightened, but contempt and disgust. Your boasted Charms have not preserved yourself, and of course could not protect others. 'Your Altars and your Gods have sunk together in the dust.' The airy spectres, conjured by you, have been chased away by the special light of Truth, and you stand exposed, the miserable and deluded victim of offended Justice. Your days are literally numbered. You will shortly be consigned to the cold and silent grave, and all the Posers of Darkness cannot recue you from your approaching Fate! Let me then conjure you to devote the remnant of your miserable existence, in fleeing from the 'wrath to come'.

Pritchard reportedly came undone at the news. "Shorn of his whiskers and deprived of his bag of amulets," in historian Douglas R. Egerton's words, "Jack was powerless. His courage vanished." Until his death a few days later, Pritchard was said to be devoid of beliefs in his own immortality and was literally "dragged forth to the gallows" where he in fact proved to be all too human.[46]

Such was the new unfolding reality that Kingsley and other slaveowners faced in the Lower South. A particularly irritable and frightened master class quickly sought to limit the movements of free blacks across the South generally as it rallied around more evolved standards of Christian benevolent slave ownership.[47] In South Carolina the legal process predated Vesey's alleged conspiracy; elsewhere, restrictions seemed to have come in dialectic fashion.[48] So even before Kingsley took his place as a delegate for the Florida Territory's Legislative Council in 1823 the racial atmosphere had changed. At Fort George, his colored children (by Anna, at least) received tutors and all of the refined training expected of wealthy slaveowning progeny.[49]

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[46] Quoted in Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Trials of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1999), 195.

[47] Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 168, 170.

[48] Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 182-84; Johnson and Roark, *Black Masters*, 35-36, 41.

And yet, the same forces of "progress" that bolstered his increasingly massive profits from sugar and cotton ushered in an era the likes of which Kingsley himself was suddenly powerless to halt. It was a bitter pill to swallow.[50]

Appointed by President James Monroe by his friend Joseph Hernandez's request, Zephaniah Kingsley served as a delegate to a small governing body for the new Territory of Florida. The appointment was confirmed by Monroe on April 23 and the Legislative Council met in St. Augustine on a temporary basis, beginning on May 5, until a permanent location was chosen by a select committee.[51] Kingsley's first official duty was in fact in that capacity, as well as a host of other committees, including presenting a petition to the Council from several citizens of Fernandina that desired "what civil authority they may think proper to establish" at Amelia Island.[52] After the initial matters were decided upon, within a few weeks the situation reached an impasse over Kingsley's June 2 appointment to a select committee charged "to consider the duties of masters of slaves and the duties of slaves and free persons of colour, and the regulations necessary for their government; with leave to report by bill or otherwise." Between the second and the nineteenth of the month, when Kingsley stated that the "said committee could not agree and asked to be discharged, which was agreed to." Barely a month into his duties, he effectively quit the position in haste; and, in short order, lost a considerable portion of his reputation in the

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[49] *Christian Observer and Boston Observer*, September 30, 1837.

[50] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 305-06; Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 18-19, 209-10; Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 64-65, 357; Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 184, 186.

[51] Monroe to Commission of Members of the Legislative Council, March 3, 1823, in Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of Florida, Vol. XXII*, 640-41.

[52] *East Florida Herald*, May 31, 1823; Petition of the Inhabitants of Fernandina to Zeph. Kingsley Esq., Fernandina, May 10, 1823 (Photocopy), Dena Snodgrass Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville (PKY).

process.[53] To add insult to injury, former Patriot War leader-turned-public enemy, the embittered John Houstoun McIntosh, named Kingsley as a financial supporter of the fledgling effort that ultimately caused destruction throughout the region a decade earlier, in a July 1823 account in a national newspaper. The unflattering and pitiable account probably did nothing to offset Kingsley's sagging reputation.[54]

From a financial standpoint, at this juncture Kingsley's agricultural efforts were paying handsomely. Politically, however, he found himself in an increasingly uncomfortable position. Coinciding with the sugar boom on several notable plantations both in East and Middle Florida, the so-called "three-caste system," once a staple of the Spanish Periods, steadily eroded under the unfolding new economic reality of an enticing plantation frontier. Astute politicians like Governor William P. DuVal recognized the economic prospects that Florida held for both cotton and sugar production. "The interior is, in my opinion," he stated in 1824, "the most valuable Southern country I have ever seen...." As slaveholders relocating to the region were reluctant to risk their property where slavery was inherently unstable, accommodating Florida politicians left no room for doubt as they heartily welcomed the influx of capital.[55]

Kingsley's resignation over the trajectory of racial laws in the Florida Territory coincided with nationwide debates over colonization as well. In addition to the early voices of the American Colonization Society, destinations such as Liberia, Haiti, and the Mexican Texas territory were espoused by the likes of the "tireless" and seemingly fearless Benjamin Lundy and a host of newspaper writers of the period. President Jean Pierre Boyer of Haiti extended offers

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[53] Quoted in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 5-6.

[54] John Houstoun McIntosh, "Communication," *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1823.

[55] Daniel L. Schafer, "'A Class of People Neither Freemen Nor Slaves': From Spanish to American Race Relations in Florida, 1821-1861," *Journal of Social History*, 26 (1993), 589-90, 592; Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 20, 21 (quote), 22; see below notes 84 and 108 on the three-caste system in Spanish colonies.

of freedom, citizenship, and a new identity to would be migrants as earlier as 1820 through American newspapers. And despite the general failure of the earliest efforts to colonize the Haitian Republic beginning in 1824, many still thought the situation preferable to the American Colonization Society's alternative of Africa.[56] Lundy's peripatetic travels for the antislavery cause took him to Haiti, across the slaveholding South, and into the Mexican Frontier. Witnessing firsthand the paradoxical and confusing dynamics that kept blacks enslaved left a distinction impression on him. As was usually the case with frequent travelers, Lundy could scarcely keep his worldview from splintering from the tensions therein.[57]

In rapid succession the Florida Territorial Council passed a series of restrictive laws that directly affected all people of color. In 1824, for example, as Kingsley had another mixed child by Anna Madgigine, restrictions imposed on the assembly of unsupervised slaves and the forbiddance of slaves to carry firearms and participate in the market economy, in some cases carried de facto practices into concrete law (areas like Pensacola, however, remained largely exempted in reality), but quickly spiraled into offering new legal prescriptions for local practice.[58] Following suit after South Carolina's example, Florida too passed a provision in late 1826 that barred "Free Blacks or Mulattoes" from entering the territory under penalty of law. Daniel W. Stowell notes that the law was then superseded again two years later by a harsher, "more comprehensive law" that proved a watershed in Florida race relations and the slave system

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[56] Dixon, *African America and Haiti*, 47-50; Benjamin Lundy, "A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States, without a Danger of Loss to the Citizens of the South," *New Harmony Gazette*, October 1, 1825.

[57] Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U. S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 314-28.

[58] Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 130-31; Douglas R. Egerton, "Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26 (Winter 2006), 617-39. Egerton's reminder seems to have been one that local authorities in Florida were waking up to as well: "One does not have to argue that these craftsmen were bourgeois or even petty capitalists in mentality to suggest that the coming of a cash economy provided these men with a vision of new possibilities that lay beyond their tiny village of their lord's estate (p. 638)."

in general. "These clauses," he writes, "collapsed all distinctions between free blacks or mulattoes and enslaved blacks or mulattoes." "Slaves and free blacks would be punished in the same manner for the violation of these laws; forms of punishment included whipping and nailing the offender's ears to a post."[59]

At various points across the Greater South, white property holders in tandem appeared to micromanage the physical space of their power, leaving less room for free blacks to navigate but at the narrowest peripheries and always with isolated and contested exceptions.[60] In his "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida on the subject of its Colored population," Zephaniah Kingsley counseled lawmakers to proceed carefully on the subject of free and enslaved blacks throughout the Territory. Arguing that "it seems necessary to do something for the preservation of our southern Property," he proceeded to use the force of historical example to sketch the changing dynamics of slave systems throughout the Atlantic world. The broad framework of his arguments formed the crux of a philosophical system that Kingsley added to in greater detail as he experienced his rather momentous "social death" in slaveholding society in the 1820s period.[61]

"Our Population consists and to do well must consist of three classes or casts of people," he stated. Citing several examples, Kingsley noted that in slave rebellions in Barbados,

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[59] Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 6-8.

[60] Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 5-6; Melvin Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s through the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 73-83; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5-36, 44-45; I have also been influenced by Scott Nelson, "Livestock, Boundaries, and Public Space in Spartanburg: African American Men, Elite White Women, and the Spectacle of Conjugal Relations," in Martha Hodes, ed., *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 313-27; Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 66-89.

[61] Zephaniah Kingsley, "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida on the subject of its Colored population by Z. Kingsley, a Planter of that Territory (c. 1826)," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 26-35 *passim*.

Demerara, Brazil, in the American Revolution, in wars throughout South America, and in the Patriot War of 1812 and 1813 as well, free blacks aligned with whites for ultimate victory. He denied the ability of slaveholders to ever achieve "permanent" security in property and in persons simply by force. In line with prevalent Enlightenment theories of the time that equated sensibility with reason, he prodded his audience, noting that, "It is a humiliating proof of human weakness and should serve to warn us of the danger we incur by following our Passions instead of being guided by our reason & discretion."[62] Only by "treat[ing] our slaves with justice prudence & moderation," he argued (also very much in step with a modern, evolving standard of paternalism), can the certainty of the slave system be assured. If anyone should be feared, Kingsley said, echoing his earlier concerns to Joseph Hernandez, "I merely wish to shew that Negroes without Law or restraint are no more to be dreaded than the lower orders of Whites...."[63]

Dispensing with white class solidarity entirely, Kingsley went further in his remarks on Haiti. At once suggesting that the specter of racial warfare endemic to that revolution seemed to lurk just beyond the horizon, he concurrently maintained that simple meddling and carelessness forced the hand of otherwise obedient bondmen to rise up and seize the *Declaration of the Rights of Man.* And while only hinting at that point to the misguided portrait of Haiti in the slaveholding imagination, it perhaps sealed his fate as it effectively separated him from nearly every proslaveryite before or after.[64]

The crux of Zephaniah Kingsley's rather chaotic worldview was his transnational family. He himself, as has been shown, embodied the refractions of the Atlantic. The union with his

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[62] *Ibid*.; Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), 110-11.

[63] William B. Hesseltine, "Some New Aspects of the Pro-Slavery Argument," *Journal of Negro History*, 21.1 (January 1936), 11-12.

[64] Kingsley, "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, xii, 26-35 *passim*.

former West African-born slave, Anna Madgigine, produced four mixed-children. His two sons and two daughters, reportedly Kingsley's favorites, were European educated and refined (he had at least nine children by four different women).[65] At the time, a proper education for European children owed much to the theories of Locke and Rousseau, as it did from subsequent pedagogical trends in primers, picture boxes, and cabinets. As Anke te Heesen explains, "In accordance with the ideals of the Enlightenment, a child was considered capable of development and gradual perfection."[66] Kingsley naturally would have agreed. From his children by Anna, his son George was Zephaniah's ideal. Handsome, intelligent, strong-willed, George Kingsley grew to maturity under the choke of southern slavery's expansion. Kingsley responded by fashioning an antiracist but proslavery pamphlet that hinged on the formation of an ideal, mixed-race class. As Zephaniah's growing anxieties over finances and slavery mounted, George had given his father an exemplary basis from which to mount an ideological defense.[67]

In his "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida" Kingsley briefly sketched the contours of what he professed to be simply another path to maintaining the slave system. Part of an increasingly self-conscious proslavery southern identity, Kingsley's address was one of several that heavily criticized Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787). Despite its appearance some four decades before, the late Man of Monticello was still a formidable obstacle. As Jeffrey Robert Young has argued in *Domesticating Slavery*, "To rally the South around a coherent rationale for unfree labor, proslavery ideologues proved willing to repudiate

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[65] The Kingsley children from Anna had "tutors [that] have attended them from infancy" and were well versed in literature, languages, music, art and social graces. Anon., "Notes of an Invalid—No. 9," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, September 20, 1837.

[66] Anke te Heesen, *The World in a Box: The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Picture Encyclopedia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 4-5.

[67] Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 17.

even the most cherished symbols of the Revolutionary era."[68] The number of blacks in America made racial colonization abroad a sheer impossibility, Kingsley said. Groups like the American Colonization Society, with the support of some southern slaveholders, advocated sending the slave population back to Africa. North Carolina Quakers for their part, a group Kingsley knew intimately, had as recently as January 1825 even sent some 700 former slaves to Haiti in a colonizing effort of their own.[69] As yet, he was quite critical of the ventures and, referring to the latter, considered it impractical and ill-fated.[70]

The argument was that such a move would alleviate the possibility of overwhelming black numbers and potential for racial warfare. Going much further than Jefferson, Kingsley promised to remedy the weaknesses that plagued Jefferson's manifesto. The Virginian, after all, had coyly suggested, "I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks…are inferior to the whites in the endowments of body and mind." To prevent the degeneration of the white race, Jefferson warned that all freed blacks must "be removed beyond the reach of mixture." Kingsley disagreed wholeheartedly. Instead, he proposed a realistic plan that professed to "set all metaphysical queries at rest by Palpable facts...."[71]

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[68] Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 173-74; John Taylor was one of the best known examples of evolving slaveowners that attacked Jefferson. "Circumstances affect the mind," Taylor said, "as weather does beer, and frequently produces a sort of moral fermentation, which throws up bubbles of prismatick splendour, whilst they are played upon by the rays of some temporary effervescence, but destined to burst when the fermentation ceases." Jefferson had been affected by the revolutionary context in which he wrote the *Notes*. As to the underlying message, Taylor said that "from a profound mind is awful." John Taylor, *Arator: Being a Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical and Political, in Sixty-One Numbers, Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Baltimore: J. Robinson, 1817), 44, 47.

[69] *The Supporter and Scioto Gazette*, January 27, 1825 (Chillicothe, Ohio).

[70] Kingsley, "Address," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 34.

[71] Jefferson, *Notes of the State of Virginia*, in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 102-3; Kingsley, "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida on the Subject of Its Colored Population," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 26, 28 (quote), 34-35; Kingsley repeated this almost verbatim in his *Rural Code of Haiti* pamphlet of 1837.

The reality was simple, actually: "For all around us which ever way we turn our faces, colored people still exist, so numerous that perhaps two thirds of all the remaining population of America is more or less composed of them." Lacking the topographical advantages of defense, Kingsley argued that common sense and sheer practicality (and blatant self-preservation) required an alliance with the free black population. As it was, the only thing that prevented southern slavery from succumbing from the forces of international plundering was the protection of the United States government. "In short," he said, "there is no back door for us to get out at, we are fixed in Florida with the sea on both sides." More importantly for the sake of Kingsley's future proslavery stance, he reasoned that the consequence of slavery was the free population itself: "[W]e cannot have the one without having the other and we must be there ourselves and do the best we can with them both."[72] Clearly, the signs of a fundamental intellectual impasse had appeared: Zephaniah was stuck at the crossroads of an increasingly brutal plantation frontier in a self-consciously "southern" sectional identity; at once birthed of the Atlantic and yet avowedly divorced from it.

Unwilling or unable to discard the tenets of his philosophical defense of slavery, Kingsley submitted a considerably expanded version of his outlook in a pamphlet entitled *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society, as it Exists in America, and in the United States, Under the Name of Slavery, With its Necessary Advantages. By an Inhabitant of Florida* (1828). It formed the core of his efforts for roughly the next decade to formulate a suitable theory and plan of execution for a new social arrangement.[73] Borrowing the concept of

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[72] Kingsley, "Address," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 35.

[73] Zephaniah Kingsley, *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society*, in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 39-75. Kingsley dedicated his *Treatise* to, among others, political economists; however, Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 68, suggests that the references should not be taken as anything more than "understanding how slavery

a united or unified labor arrangement then prevalent in some religious communities, Kingsley applied the concept to slave labor.[74] Such was the suggestion widely reprinted for example in an earlier issue of the *New Harmony Gazette* of October 1825.[75]

The "co-operative system of labor" practiced in the experimental "utopian" communities, the *Gazette* suggested, might be used for a gradual plan of *emancipation*. The ambitious scheme proposed "holding out, as the great stimulus to exertion, the prospect of liberty, together with the liberty and education of their children." By instituting a comprehensive series of educational reforms, slaves would be taught both the "value" and "necessity of industry" required for freedom. The period of their labor would depend on their overall value, set by their slave masters. Slaves could expect their freedom for good behavior and faithfulness to their duties after the completed period. Those that were disagreeable or otherwise less than willing laborers could expect more time and obstacles to liberation. The system as a whole functioned cyclically to bring in indentured labor in the form of slaves, keep them for a specific amount of time, civilize them, and "remove, by gradual and gentle means, a system fraught with danger, as well as crime...." In theory at least, the idea was "to assimilate the industry of the south to that of the north, and enable it to multiply its productions, and improve all the rich advantages of the southern soil and climate." Of course, should the proposed scheme work too well, masters still

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fit into the current system of economic values and practices in the United States." All references to the *Treatise* refer to the corresponding page number in Stowell's volume.

[74] C. S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 103-114. Levy executed a short-lived scheme himself to build a Jewish colony, called Pilgrimage, in the heart of the Florida frontier. Sacked with failure upon failure, the settlement ended up as a sugar cane plantation run by slave labor. Levy's "utopianism" was regarded as "common knowledge" in Florida and thus would be strange if Kingsley had *not* managed to hear about it.

[75] *New Harmony Gazette*, October 1, 1825.

had a failsafe solution: "It must be remembered also, that with the same facility that the door of colonization is opened, so also can it be closed."[76]

Reformers like Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker, scrutinized slaveholders' justifications for the peculiar institution while praising the relative merits of "a mild but steady system of order and economy...." However, the two groups did agree more or less at that point on the suitability of black labor to warm climates, the growing need to address the plight of the benevolent master, and diverging economies of the American North and South.[77] Particularly as it related to producing social harmony by reinforcing and fostering the organic doctrine of paternalism, some slaveholders like Zephaniah Kingsley could (and apparently did) take note of reformers' promises that their schemes would serve to strengthen the bonds between groups "already bound together by the ties of kindness and friendly feelings...."[78]

And still other critics of co-operative ventures deemed the schemes as hopeless. "It may be expected," observed Englishman E. S. Abdy, "that all the slave States will run a similar career; and share the crisis as they have shared the crime. There is but one alternative before them. They must choose between coercion and concession, --they must suffer with Hayti, or be safe with Antigua," he reasoned. "...[F]or it may be proved, almost to mathematical demonstration, that the self-love of man, if unchecked, leads inevitably to self-destruction: and

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[76] *Ibid.*

[77] For example, Moses E. Levy, an acquaintance of Kingsley during their earlier residence at St. Thomas and later Florida resident as well, wrote an antislavery pamphlet that appeared at almost the same time that the *Treatise* did, though in London. *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned,* followed quite closely the plans offered by Lundy in the New Harmony Gazette, though with a twist. Levy believed that the West Indies suffered under the taint of black skin and "vicious habits". He instead proposed sending European convicts to the region if settlers could not be procured, in order to intermix. Similar in substance to Kingsley's views on miscegenation in the *Treatise*, Levy argued that, "The spirit of the black population will be thus neutralized, and, by attending to the education of their freeborn offspring, the now wild wastes of America will be populated by an enlightened generation, in which the black skin will be lost with slavery in the gradual shades of improvement." Levy, *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned*, edited by Chris Monaco (Micanopy, FL: Wacahoota Press, 1999), 15; Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida*, 145-46.

[78] *New Harmony Gazette*, May 24, 1826.

that no society, whether its principles be 'competitive' with Pope... or 'co-operative' with Owen, can be permanently prosperous, where the head that speculates is to have all the profits, and the hand that works none of the wages of the industry that supports it," Abdy argued. Abdy had little doubt as to the motives of those in power: "The chances these people have of obtaining justice from the whites, may be estimated from the Appendix to a work called 'The Patriarchal System of Society', --a defence of slavery, by a Florida Planter of twenty-five years' standing."[79]

In the *Treatise* Kingsley articulated his modification of the "co-operative" plan within the context of modern, proslavery arguments that skillfully wedded an enlightened, transatlantic framework that emphasized the domestic obligations of organic reciprocity and the (professed) recognition of human rights to an alternative vision for the forging of a sectional slaveholding identity.[80] Picking up where contemporary plans for a gradual emancipation seemingly fell short, Kingsley slightly modified the basic tenets of the reformers' plan. Following Montesquieu's famous concept of a climate-based slavery, Kingsley's plan shared much in common with several strands of Enlightenment teachings generally. Montesquieu, for example, famously argued in *The Spirit of the Laws* that slavery was justified by virtue of the hotter climates. Jefferson and many of his contemporaries followed the same rationale. Such an idea, for example, was reinforced by the startlingly number of British deaths reported during the

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[79] E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833, to October, 1834* (London: John Murray, 1835), 2: 71, 267. Abdy met Kingsley on at least two occasions during his travels, both in New York and Philadelphia. References to Kingsley in the *Journal* vary, from praiseworthy when referring to him by name, and less so when discussing the *Treatise*. For example, Abdy referred to him as having "remarkable intelligence, and one of the most benevolent men, though a slave-holder, I ever met..." It is interesting, again, to note that Abdy called Kingsley a "Scotchman" and was convinced of his "benevolence" despite being "unable to visit" him "at his own home"; Charles Vignoles, *Observations on the Floridas* (New York: E. Bliss & White, 1823), 12, before Kingsley's fall from public popularity referred to his intelligence as well, calling him "an enlightened and valuable citizen of Florida".

[80] Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 161-92.

attempt to quash the slave rebellion in Haiti.[81] However, Kingsley parted with Jefferson's racial degeneration narrative by turning it on its head. To best protect slavery and prevent racial war, he suggested that a stable workforce must be socially engineered to thrive in such conditions.[82]

Ideally, a prototypical slave would balance the "moral sentiments" of the white race (intelligence and mental capabilities, ala Adam Smith) with the "robust and durable" aspects of the African race (following Montesquieu). Persons of mixed-race, such as his children, of course would be ideally suited to a *temporary* form of slavery, which he believed gave way to freedom through merit and natural advantage. Slaveholders could look to an alliance with free blacks only if the latter were allowed to hold property. Self-interest, he argued, bred loyalty. Such a view was in fact contrary to Kingsley's recent experiences. The Denmark Vesey conspiracy in Charleston and Florida's Seminole War, Eugene D. Genovese argues, provided two very clear cut examples of free blacks' "ambivalence" in aligning with whites.[83] Where Jefferson predicted that racial war and sexual politics would annihilate the white race, Kingsley instead sought to reemploy an ordered, three-caste hierarchal system that solved the first problem by the second. "Experiment," Kingsley said, "is the fairest and most convincing argument; truth itself is only proved by connecting insulated facts; our mistaken system of policy has proved its fallacy by late events, and showed us that we are wrong; to persist in error is dangerous...." Its justification, simply put, would blend scientific curiosity and sound Enlightenment philosophical doctrine

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[81] David Geggus, "The Sounds and Echoes of Freedom: The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on Latin America," in Darien J. Davis, ed., *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 24-25; Michael Duffy, "The French Revolution and British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies," in David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 86-87.

[82] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 73, 74.

[83] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 411.

with experience, to create a perfectly organized social setting. In other words, it was a slaveholding utopia.[84]

The three-caste system corresponded to Spanish and French colonial models found most prominently in Kingsley's Caribbean travels. The merits, to him, were obvious. It sanctioned Kingsley's lifestyle and maintained both his racial privilege and social standing.[85] His fractured Atlantic mentality saw it as both sensible and realistic. The utopia he promised fully embraced the Enlightenment pursuit and coincided with a wide assortment of similar proposals. Condorcet's immensely influential *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, for example, suggested the best way to ideal society. Condorcet rationed that, "This unstoppable progress cannot be observed without having enlightened men search unceasingly for ways to make the other branches of learning follow the same path. It offers them at every step a model to follow, according to which they will be able to judge their own efforts and recognize

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[84] *Ibid*., 58; te Heesen, *World in a Box*, 163-64.

[85] Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida*, 146; Laura Foner, "The Free People of Color in Louisiana and St. Domingue: A Comparative Portrait of Two Three-Caste Societies," *Journal of Social History*, 3.4 (Summer 1970), 409; John D. Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue," *The Americas*, 50.2 (October 1993), 247, 249, 257-60.

The portrait of slavery as a "milder, gentler" institution under Spanish rule has been exaggerated most notably since the work of Frank Tannenbaum (*Slave and Citizen*, 1947) and has influenced recent interpretations as well. Leslie Rout suggests that to compare the suffering of slaves is a misguided approach and sorely neglects the chattel principle. The authors of the recent work Many Middle Passages likewise suggest that "Any such comparison is as repugnant as it is absurd." However, if Jane Landers suggests that slaves "voted with their feet" by choosing Spanish slavery over its Anglo counterpart, it requires pause to ask what the "votes" meant by those slaves that flocked to the so-called Negro Fort in droves as well as to British lines at Cumberland Island in the War of 1812 period. The persistence of rumors and hopes of freedom compelled many bondmen to better their plight and should not be taken to suggest that the Spanish form of slavery was in any way "better" or "worse". To suggest otherwise is also to implicitly suggest that slavery was uniform within its respective national boundaries. It seems that to be a slave was, at bottom, to *yearn* for one's freedom, regardless of the master. See Leslie Rout, "Review of Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3.1 (Summer 1972), 214-15; Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 8; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 1-3; the recent work of Andrew McMichael, *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 47-48, also challenges the Tannenbaum thesis from the West Florida perspective.

false paths on which they have embarked."[86] Kingsley's plan of improvement was simply following in step. And while his theory posited that Jefferson was mistaken, it also went beyond Jefferson to do away with extremism on both sides of the slavery issue. Whereas Condorcet's theory of utopia hoped to dispel superstitions about humanity and foster equality, Kingsley's disproved fallacies to opposite ends.[87]

Kingsley's *Treatise* expanded on some of his earlier statements and hinted at several complicated themes then developing in the Atlantic world.[88] The text bore the marks of many prevalent discussions of class formation, the rights of the individual, and the ethics of imperialism. On another level, Kingsley's work appears consistent with elements of Enlightenment thought. Its frequent comparative observations, particularly in Latin America, the Caribbean, and across Europe, share much with popular conceptions of travel narratives and newer geographical conceptions of the globe. The world, Kingsley implied, seemed smaller than it had before; people and places were connected intimately somehow despite oceans between. However, he also curiously suggested (quite paradoxically) that the world was also often ruthless and driven by profit. As such, Kingsley made no apology for his unwillingness to dispense with slavery. Yet it was his inability to embrace the corresponding tide of racism some scholars have argued flowed directly from the Enlightenment as well that made him appear almost comical, a character straight out of the era's more popular novels.[89]

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[86] Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1796).

[87] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 75. Kingsley ended the *Treatise* rhetorically: "Any extreme is said naturally to produce its opposite. Will an excess of error ever produce truth?" Critics seem to have thought Kingsley did not heed his own words. This idea is discussed below.

[88] *A Treatise on Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society* (four editions: 1828, 1829, 1833, 1834).

[89] For example, see Denis Diderot's unnamed European chaplain in "Supplement to the voyage of Bougainville, or dialogue between A and B on the inappropriateness of attaching moral ideas to certain physical

The *Treatise* appeared in print at an auspicious moment. After Britain and America abolished the slave trade, a transatlantic attack on the institution of slavery gained momentum. Slavery was no doubt profitable; its opponents granted that much. Yet colonization had been a splendid failure to that point also. Kingsley proposed a solution that held out hope for some other realistic outcome, praising the virtues of Haiti and denouncing the "savage and sterile climate of Liberia".[90] American newspapers, as he well knew, constantly reported in detail emigrations to Mexico, Haiti, and Africa.[91] In titillating detail, politicians, abolitionists, and slaveholders alike doted on every word of such publications. Despite rather dismal results, several more emigration attempts sought to remedy defects of past experiments in hopes of creating a profitable and viable situation for all concerned.[92] Responding to increasing dissent over the brutality of turning people into prices, Kingsley had an answer that promised to satisfy all parties. In one of the *Treatise's* most memorable passage he rations that, "The idea of slavery, when associated with cruelty and injustice, is revolting to every philanthropic mind; but when that idea is associated with justice and benevolence, slavery, commonly so called, easily amalgamates with the ordinary conditions of life."[93] A weary and concerned public was simply unwilling to listen; his character and allegiance, after all, had come into question.[94]

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actions that do not accord with them," in John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler, eds., *Denis Diderot: Political Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35-75.

[90] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 57.

[91] Dixon, *African America and Haiti*, 21, 51.

[92] *Ibid.*, 2-3, 19.

[93] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 40.

[94] The lone reviewer in *The Free Enquirer* of November 5, 1828, I was able to find slightly praising Kingsley's *Treatise* did so because they perceived him the bearer of "no ordinary head or ordinary heart;" that his philosophical system "by no means substantiated, to my conviction, either the advantage or necessity of slavery under any form or in any country;" and, most tellingly, "that the course of internal policy which it shadows out is the only one calculated to effect a safe, gradual, peaceful, and finally universal enfranchisement of the American race of

A particularly damaging public scandal implicated Kingsley and friend Joseph Hernandez with a cargo of Africans that was placed in Federal custody in 1828 and 1829. The Spanish slave ship *Guerrero* had been run down 100 miles off the coast of Key West and the remaining cargo of about 400 slaves taken to local authorities. Setting in motion a chain of dubious actions by many parties, 121 of the group were transported to St. Augustine where the able bodied were hired out to offset their expenses. Though Kingsley had about 200 slaves at that point on his plantations, he required more labor at that period for making sugar and other crops. That year he raised "five thousand bushels of rough rice, fifty hogsheads of sugar, besides a large quantity of cotton, corn, peas, potatoes, &c." One particularly lucrative year for crops was valued at some $10,000.[95] Kingsley himself claimed the sugar grown at White Oak was "equal to the best St. Croix," and stated that "he [had] never seen any from New Orleans equal to his own."[96] Newspapers quoted that the planter cleared anywhere from "nearly one thousand dollars for each hand employed."[97] He later published his method of sugar processing in the sectional publication, *Southern Agriculturalist and register of Rural Affairs*.[98] In addition, Kingsley was responsible for fulfilling a potentially lucrative government contract recently agreed upon "for the improvement of the inland navigation between the St. Marys & St. Johns river."[99] The

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color". It is little wonder that southern slaveholders likewise considered Kingsley's plan little more than a plan for abolition!

[95] John Lee Williams, *The Territory of Florida: or Sketches of the Topography, Civil and Natural History, of the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes, from the First Discovery to the Present Time* (New York: A. T. Goodrich, 1837), 134-35.

[96] *Saturday Evening Post*, February 7, 1829; *Christian Watchman*, April 3, 1829.

[97] *The Mountaineer*, May 30, 1829 (Greenville, SC).

[98] Z. Kingsley, "Process of Manufacturing and Clarifying Sugar from weak or immature Juice, and of obtaining Sugar from Molasses," *Southern Agriculturalist and Register of Rural Affairs*, October 1830.

extensive job would not be completed until mid-year 1830. Hernandez for his part needed the labor for his own sugar making enterprise on his Mala Compra plantation located south of St. Augustine. The two planters hired approximately fifty-six of the Africans from authorities for a stipulated period. The group would then be resettled in Africa.[100]

Thanks to diplomatic wrangling and bureaucratic negligence, the matter of what to do with the Africans ground to a halt. No one seemed quite sure what to do, legally speaking, with the group; they had been rescued from slavetraders and not introduced as part of an illegal shipment. Thus, the law was somewhat silent on the formalities. Predictably, at the expiration of the agreed term, neither Kingsley nor Hernandez was willing to release the Africans. Zephaniah consulted an attorney and argued that they were "free men" under American law; while Joseph Hernandez altogether refused to pay for the labor. Several Africans under his care actually died and some had absconded due to the horrid treatment. Federal Marshal Waters Smith, apparently one of a select few of honor involved in the case, had a more difficult time

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[99] Joseph White to Martin Van Buren, Washington, March 10, 1831, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXIV: The Territory of Florida* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 508.

[100] Gail Swanson, *Slave Ship* Guerrero (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity, 2005), 60-62; Jean B. Stephens, "Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans," *El Escribano*, 15 (1978), 71-75; Connecticut Herald, January 29, 1828 (New Haven); *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, February 8, 1828; James Gadsden to the Chief Engineer, July 12, 1829, in Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXIV: The Territory of Florida*, 246-48; Gadsden to Chief Engineer, December 31, 1829, in *Ibid.*, 312-13; and Gadsden to Chief Engineer, July 10, 1830, in *Ibid*., 426-28; Kingsley, apparently aided by his friend, Delegate Joseph M. White, was successful in bidding for the improvement contract. The opening of the channel would have benefited Kingsley himself as well as local business. In a surviving extract, Kingsley's confidence in his own enlightened mastery over Nature, somewhat common among the elite planters, is evidenced thus: "To obtain this great national, as well as individual advantage, and lay all this part of Florida open to convenient inland navigation, would require only a trifling labour, in straightening the present crooked channel between St. Mary's and St. John's [sic], and deepening the middle, (which is dry at low water,) about four feet—this would give eight feet at high water, in common tides; or by cutting new channels of connexion through the marsh, between the creeks, amounting in all to about one and a half miles of excavation in length, which would have the same effect.

"This work, if economically performed, would not, in my estimation, exceed ten thousand dollars, and would complete an entire inland tide navigation from lat. 28° 30´, the head of the navigation of the river St., John's [sic] in Florida, to Cape Roman in South Carolina, lat. 33° 8´." Of course Kingsley's slaves would be performing the grueling labor. Quoted in John Lee Williams, *A View of West Florida, Embracing its Geography, Topography, &c.* (Philadelphia: L.E. Bailey, 1827), 171-72.

with Kingsley. "Partly by force and partly by persuasion I have obtained from Mr. Kingsley 33 of the 36 Africans which were in his possession," Smith wrote to his superior. Alleging that the remaining had "run away and could not be found," an adamant Smith persisted until the three were delivered in a week's time. After a prolonged period of setbacks, the remaining Africans traveled to Liberia to a mixed fate.[101]

More damaging to Zephaniah Kingsley's reputation in Florida society was a political battle that ended with the planter in the losing faction and his published racial views the source of national ridicule. Middle Florida's rabid brand of Old South politics and society grafted onto the unstable frontier made for explosive times. Unfortunately, it was also the seat of the Territorial Government. In what appears to be altogether typical of the Florida Territory, corrupt protean figure Governor William P. DuVal manipulated the throes of power politics within a constantly changing web of shifting alliances. Elite politicians like Kingsley's friend Congressional Delegate Joseph M. White grew bitter with DuVal's antics.[102] In retaliation Kingsley circulated a petition (in White's telling) "respectfully remonstrating against the re-appointment of William P. Duval, as Governor of Florida." Obtaining a copy, the governor drafted a "leaked" blistering critique of White, Kingsley, and their cohorts.[103]

Writing to Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, White was appalled at the governor's actions and hasty pronouncements. "Mr. Kingsley is a classical scholar, who would consider it a degradation to be put on a footing with Governor Duval in point of intellect, or education," White explained. "This gentleman has a large property in the Territory and exercising the right

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[101] Swanson, *Slave Ship* Guerrero, 57-82, 109-22.

[102] Baptist, *Creating an Old South*, 100-01.

[103] Joseph M. White to Martin Van Buren, Washington, March 10, 1831, in Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXIV*, 508, 511.

of a citizen, had written a respectful petition to the President, praying that some other person should be appointed Governor." "If a respectable gentleman cannot petition for a redress of grievances without such assaults on his private character," White told Van Buren, "we are under the dominion of our provincial Satrap, in a worse condition than we were under the Spanish Government."[104]

Local papers carried the exchange which captured headlines for weeks. The governor refused to back down from his allegations, firm in his convictions. DuVal, a former acquaintance of Kingsley's, mockingly referred to him as "the learned, didactic, and *patriarchal friend of Africa*...." The attack did not end there. Continuing his response to the portrait of Kingsley as a "classical scholar," DuVal sarcastically intoned that

> He is a gentleman of exquisite *taste* as well as learning; for it is said, that while he carries in his pocket the poems of the immortal Horace, he also cherishes in his bosom his *ebony wife*. this is the learned friend of the delegate, who, come three years ago, published a philosophic work, in pamphlet form, and distributed it among the citizens of Florida, advising them to intermarry with the *black race*, as the best means of improving their persons, society and manners. It is this work, I presume, that has given Mr. Kingsley his high literary standing with the delegate! I should be extremely unwilling to part such 'learned' and congenial friends, and wish them no worse fortune than that—as they are already linked together, in the closest union, for the balance of their lives. I cannot, however, believe (although Mr. Kingsley is a very accomplished scholar) that he is exactly qualified to assume the *guardianship* of the *rights* and *morals* of our fellow-citizens in East Florida…."

Before ending the very public rant on Kingsley and his *Treatise*, DuVal added that, "it will, I hope be some hundred years to come, before the philosophy of Mr. Kingsley's *unsavory* doctrines, shall find many, or zealous advocates in our Territory." Another editorial found much to snicker about. Taunting as it asked when yet another edition of the "amalgamation pamphlet"

[104] White to Van Buren, March 10, 1831, in Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXIV*, 511-12.

for "the breeding of Mulattoes" might appear.[105] Upset by the attacks on himself and his acquaintances, Joseph White rushed to defend Kingsley's character, but wisely disavowed defending his ideas. "As I have never became [sic] the defender or apologist of Mr. K.'s opinions," White wrote, "I leave the public to determine how far Governor Duval's practices authorize him to become the *censor morum* of the community." As to Kingsley's racial views, he responded, "I am entirely ignorant of them."[106]

The public rift between supporters of DuVal and White effectively introduced Zephaniah Kingsley's *Treatise* to a wider audience in April and May 1831. By that time Kingsley had produced two editions of the pamphlet, the second with extensive revisions and an appendix. The abolitionist newspaper *Genius of Universal Emancipation* of May featured the first of a two part series on the *Treatise*. Erringly attributing the authorship to "T. Kingsley, an inhabitant of Florida," the expose highlighted several lengthy excerpts with extended commentary. The anonymous author scarcely knew what to make of the work. Though brief, "it is unusual to find a work of this size so many accords and discords; sympathies, and antipathies, as the intelligent, benevolent, reader must experience in perusing the work now under review." The logic of the *Treatise's* argument, the editorial suggested, was convoluted by the author's inability to reconstitute an ordered worldview. For example, the reviewer noted that, "Many of the author's facts, and more of his reasons, prove cogently the opposite of that which he professes to establish; namely, that slavery may be so regulated, as to increase the sum of human happiness."

[105] William P. DuVal, "To the Freemen of Florida," *Florida Courier* (Tallahassee), April 21, 1831 (emphasis in original).

[106] Joseph M. White, "To the Public," *The Floridian & Advocate* (Tallahassee), May 14, 1831.

Yet the author noted that it was "difficult to ascertain whether this is his position—or whether he is not serving up milk, to stomachs, illy prepared to bear solid nourishment."[107]

The reviewer ultimately found Kingsley's proslavery defense unconvincing. Kingsley's portrayal of an irrepressible black majority that masters were somehow powerless to restrain appeared strained. Climates suited only for black workers also seemed a half truth; the Irish, for example, were one of many immigrants that acclimated to the southern heat. Moreover, the reviewer found the substance of Kingsley's argument simply clouded "by the handsomely sounding epithet, 'patriarchal.'" The crux of the *Treatise* hinges upon what its author calls "the grand chain of security." Owing to their biological origins, free coloreds in Kingsley's scheme would naturally "become identified with the whites on the one side, and with the slaves on the other; a connexion which perfectly cements the three castes of which the nation is composed...." The three castes would each play a distinct role in maintaining slavery: upper class whites would hold property; free coloreds should also be allowed to hold property as well as provide a buffer between white and slave by military defense and good example; and slaves, finally, if loyal and hardworking, might one day expect the right to purchase their own freedom. However, Kingsley then posits a static view of the slavery system that accounts for no appreciable change, when he states that "each being perfectly contented with its permanent, lawful privileges, the jealousy, which might otherwise arise from caste or difference of complexion or condition, is totally extinguished, and no one feels an interest in disturbing that with which every one is satisfied."[108]

The key to Kingsley's argument rested on elusive freedom. "The door of liberty is open to every slave who can find means of purchasing himself," Kingsley stated. Anticipating the emerging proslavery defense moving in quite the opposite direction at the time, he quickly

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[107] "The Florida Pamphlet," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, May 1831.

[108] *Ibid.*

qualified the statement. "It is true, few have the means," he noted, "but hope creates of spirit of economy, industry, and emulation to obtain merit by good behavior which has a general and beneficial effect."[109] The admission the *Genius* reviewer found most despicable. To own property in slavery was one thing, the reviewer suggested, but manipulating fragile human needs was quite another. The reviewer argued, "If they [slaves] cannot get into the Hall of Freedom, it is not that the door is shut again them—if they should fail to enter, one good thing is effected—the sight of the door makes them industrious, and economical—so that if the *slaves* are not benefitted, it is easy to perceive who is." "He who understands the structure of the human mind," the author commented, "well knows that the stimulus of this fallacious, and deceptive hope, will effect what coercion never did, and never can. Where, after all, is the manly, generous mind, that does not revolt at the idea of such cruel duplicity."[110]

In the June issue of the *Genius* the editor continued its commentary on the *Treatise* from the previous month with minimal notation. In highlighting a series of extracts the reviewer let the passages stand virtually alone. In the final analysis, the reviewer said that the substance of the *Treatise* invariably led to emancipation. Kingsley's ideas, said the editorial, "if carried into operation, have, whether he perceives it or not, a certain tendency to that end...." The *Treatise* hoped to dispense with the "fear" of slave revolts generally; to strengthen the slavery system from within and without; and to "extinguish that general, foreign or northern prejudice, against

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[109] In a recent article that analyzed self-purchase prices in relation to market prices, Shawn Cole, "Capitalism and Freedom: Manumissions and the Slave Market in Louisiana, 1725-1820," *Journal of Economic History*, 65.4 (December 2005), 1019, 1021, 1023-26, discovered that Louisiana slaves during the period 1725-1820 "paid a substantial manumission premium." His findings indicate that slaves, particularly after the United States acquired Louisiana, were frequently subject to the increasing racial fears of the period and "charged about 20 percent higher than market prices." Cole's findings, however, suggest that 20 percent was simply the *minimum* and the reality was probably *higher* still. A frequent visitor with ties to the area, Kingsley's assertion that self-purchase would hardly be a realistic option for slaves seems true enough; see above footnote 84 for its conclusions applied to Spanish areas.

[110] "The Florida Pamphlet," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, May 1831.

holding slave property, which commonly arises from their mistaken view of our policy and laws, to regulate slaves and free colored people." In short, said the reviewer, Kingsley's only hope rested in "simply *destroying in the human mind, all distinction between* VIRTUE *and* VICE: by banishing all correct reasoning, and feeling, from the head and heart."[111] All ideas, of course, were little comfort to a white master class reeling from the chilling threats of David Walker's *Appeal* (1829) and Nat Turner's August 1831 rebellion that killed dozens.[112]

Noted abolitionists responded with a vengeance as well. In 1836, author Lydia Maria Child included Kingsley in her collection on the "evils of slavery." Inspired by reading William Lloyd Garrison's antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*, Child felt compelled to bring down slavery by attacking its defenders. "He [Kingsley] is one who wants to regulate the evil," she said, "not abolish it." She asked rhetorically why slavery's defenders did not want to admit to the success of recent emancipation in parts of the British West Indies. "It is," the abolitionist posited, "because they are conscious that if it *does* work well America has no excuse left to screen her from the strong disapprobation of the civilized world."[113] Jefferson and a slew of others likewise did not escape unscathed, taken to task for the hypocrisy.

Despite overwhelming public ridicule, Kingsley revised and published four editions of the *Treatise* in six years (1828, 1829, 1833, and 1834). He had paid dearly for attempts to defend his private relations in public. It likely explains the editorial decision to remove any trace of authorship from the final *Treatise*.[114] Jefferson understood the folly of such a venture and

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[111] "More of the Florida Pamphlet," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, June 1831 (emphasis in original).

[112] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 410-11.

[113] Lydia Maria Child, *The Evils of Slavery and the Cure for Slavery: The First Proved by the Opinions of Southerners Themselves, the Last Shown by Historical Evidence* (Newburyport, Charles Whipple, 1836), 3-5, 10-11, 19 (emphasis in original).

never dared such a feat. Even newspaper editor James Callender's columns accusing Jefferson of sexual relations with Sally Hemings received nothing in response.[115] Kingsley lacked the Virginian's public restraint.

Zephaniah Kingsley's circumstances continued to change, as did his philosophical system. The prospect of relocation appeared in a more favorable light after the *Treatise* failed to influence lawmakers. Despite the overwhelming failure of colonization there a few years prior, he looked seriously to Haiti to demonstrate the merits of his philosophical system. Nevertheless, his disordered worldview could not fully commit to dispensing with some basic tenets. For one thing, he incessantly praised the example of the Haitian Republic for years while concurrently promoting the very slave system that promised to safeguard against situations like Haiti in the first place! Dependant upon slave labor for his fortunes, he was also determined to establish a colony in the Black Republic. "It is certainly humiliating to a proud master," he once said, "to reflect that he depends on his slave, even for bread to eat."[116] Convinced of Haiti's superiority in land, resources, and sheer beauty, he began formulating a plan.[117]

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[114] Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 15; The criticisms haunted Kingsley in the Florida press particularly long after the last edition of the *Treatise* appeared. *The Floridian* (Tallahassee), April 4, 1840, stated that "...Zepheniah [sic] Kingsley was the wealthiest man in East Florida; he was an avowed and open Abolitionist and Amalgamationist, and published a pamphlet in favor of both, and PRACTISED his principles, having a negro wife and several children by her—but was forced by the local legislation of the Territory, a few years since, to shift himself off to Hayti. It is said, he was, in early life a—slave-trader! He now returns, once or twice a year, from the West Indies, to see to his property. He has many friends and connexions in the East." An increasingly closed, proslavery sectional identity was clearly closing ranks in this late account.

[115] Douglass G. Adair, *Fame and the Founding Fathers* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, reprint 1998), 227-73 *passim*. Incidentally, before DNA testing, Adair was incorrect in his conclusions that it was Peter Carr, Jefferson's nephew, who had fathered Sally's children.

[116] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 74.

[117] Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 12, 13, 19; Christopher L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 246-73, is a fascinating account of an eerily similar venture. Baron Jacques-Francois Roger, appointed the first civilian governor of Senegal by King Louis XVIII, in 1828 (the same year as Kingsley's *Treatise*) wrote the novel *Kelédor, histoire africaine*, that rigorously argued against colonizing Haiti in place of West Africa. Roger's scheme, apart from the location, was in every way similar to Kingsley's plan in Haiti. The workers would also be, in theory, indentured servants; however,

The process of relocation in the Atlantic world was an unsettling one for many Enlightenment figures. Little good ever seemed to come from it. Denis Diderot, for one, argued at length against the long train of evils that typically arose under the pretexts of relocation. Given European disposition for riches and excess, it was a short step from visiting to pillaging. It mattered little, Diderot said, for "[t]o conquer, or to plunder with violence, is the same thing." The problem for Diderot was that the western traveler, like Kingsley, removed from the cultural confines of their national borders became utterly devoid of civility and self-restraint.

> Beyond the Equator a man is neither English, Dutch, French, Spanish, nor Portuguese. He retains only those principles and prejudices of his native country which justify or excuse his conduct. He crawls when he is weak; he is violent when strong; he is in a hurry to enjoy, and capable of every crime which will lead him most quickly to his goals. He is a domestic tiger returning to the forest; the thirst of blood takes hold of him once more. This is how all the Europeans, every one of them, indistinctly, have appeared in the countries of the New World. There they have assumed a common frenzy….

By the time Kingsley began looking to relocate his family abroad, such ideas formed part of a significant Atlantic narrative against such proposals. It proved a formidable obstacle. Black and white responded alike. As Diderot continued, the narrative was predictably tragic, "I almost always write it bathed in tears."[118]

Three years after the final edition of the *Treatise* appeared Kingsley tried a different tactic. He edited a pamphlet published in 1837 on Haiti's labor laws to entice others to relocate.

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they would essentially be slaves by another name. As Miller states, "How much difference the politically correct vocabulary made to those workers is questionable (p. 253)." The colony collapsed shortly after its founding, well before Kingsley opted for the Haitian scheme.

[118] Quoted in Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*, 103, 74 (second quote), 90 (third quote). Muthu's summary of Diderot on the psychology of relocation seems apt for Kingsley: "Given his view that people are inclined to be attached to their homelands or at least to more familiar lands because of a fondness for such societies, the ties of blood and friendship, acquaintance with the local climate and languages, and the variety of customary associations that we associate with places in which we have lived and worked, he suspects that very powerful inducements must exist to get people to leave their societies (p. 86)." The struggle for wealth and to avoid dependence, as was the case after the American Revolution, again seems to be the underlying factor for Kingsley Jr.

He considered it well timed, "since it is every day becoming more apparent, that the increase of the colored population of the United States forbodes [sic] an evil, which a large portion of the people are evidently anxious to avoid." The pamphlet reproduced six laws passed by the Haitian government in May 1826 aimed at agricultural reform for its faltering economy (commonly called *The Rural Code*). The laws, however, were merely a subject of further transnational debate. Critics viewed them as harsh and aimed at mandatory labor. Kingsley and other proslavery theorists saw it as a necessary and beneficial move. After all, Toussaint Louverture enacted similar laws to jumpstart production and protect Haiti's independence, as did the country's first king, Henry Christophe. President Jean Boyer's decision to do the same, Kingsley believed, could succeed.[119]

The Florida planter had good reason to hope for an economic turnaround in Haiti. He was preparing to send his family, along with a group of slaves, to the island. If Zephaniah could not convince his fellow southern planters to realize an enlightened utopia in America, he would simply build it elsewhere. What better foundation for a new society than a leader that symbolized Enlightenment perfection: his son, George. In preparation, George had been in Haiti for a year accompanied by six of his father's slaves. Kingsley himself met with President Boyer, chose the land, and secured government approval. With help from his father, George settled near Puerto Plata on the northern coast of the island (on the western end of modern day Dominican Republic) and established a settlement there called *Mayorasgo de Koka* at Cabaret.[120]

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[119] Zephaniah Kingsley, *The Rural Code of Haiti, Literally Translated from a Publication by the Government Press; Together with Letters from that Country, Concerning its Present Condition* (Granville, Middletown, NJ: George H. Evans, 1837), 2; Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 20-22; based on the prevailing trends at the time, Kingsley was considerably late and with the dated colonization scheme for a locale that had proved from the beginning, a failure for that purpose. However, his own colony seemed to do quite well, at least for a time, before splintering considerably. It was not until much later that renewed efforts to colonize Haiti again became fashionable, particularly in the days before the American Civil War. See Dixon, *African America and Haiti*.

The transatlantic fight over the future of slavery coincided with the institution's expansion. The endless series of racially restrictive laws became increasingly burdensome as Zephaniah's health waned. He could ill afford a false step. Anna and his male heirs would thrive on their inheritance, if given the proper setting. The relocation effort, should it have a sound basis, presented Kingsley with an opportunity to realize the utopia of his earlier writings. With somewhat less fanfare than his other ventures, Zephaniah followed verbatim what Diderot outlined for "ideal relations in the modern world among European and non-European peoples". Although he was categorically opposed to colonization, Diderot made some allowances for what he considered just "forms of settlement"; and as one author conveniently summarized Diderot's plan:

> Such settlement…would not involve colonization; rather, Europeans should settle in settled areas of the non-European world only with the permission of the host society and in the spirit of ancient hospitality that has been so often abrogated by modern travelers….A wise people…will never encroach upon the liberty or property of the host country or destroy their places of worship, but will conform to their customs and laws.[121]

Motivated by "necessity and self preservation," Kingsley said, he nevertheless referred to his endeavor as "my Colonization experiments". At *Mayorasgo de Koka*, George Kingsley's example at last proudly demonstrated the substance of Zephaniah's divided Enlightenment mind.[122]

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[120] Stowell, *Balancing Evils*, 19-20, 96, 102-06; see particularly "Letters from Haiti—No. III," that appeared in the *Working Man's Advocate*, New York City, November 21, 1835 and *The Christian Statesman* Washington, D.C., June 30, 1838.

[121] Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*, 87.

[122] Kingsley, "To the Christian Statesman," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 102.

CHAPTER FIVE

"I WANT TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HAITI": THE COLONIZATION EXPERIMENT IN THE BLACK REPUBLIC

Leaving New York City in August 1835, Zephaniah Kingsley had arrived at Haiti in the early days of September to scout a suitable tract of land for his venture. Sailing into Puerto Plata on the north coast on September 4, he promptly walked about the town, toured the gardens and observed the local culture. After a few days, Kingsley sufficiently approved of the surrounding town, hinterlands, and its people. "...[T]here is nothing that I have ever seen in any country," he claimed, "not even the low lands of the Mississippi, nor the alluvial deposits of Guiana, in South America, equal it in fertility." On Sunday, despite his firm aversion to religion, he even attended two different church services in the morning and evening hours. In all, the traveler was impressed by the manners and customs of the townspeople, suggesting that they were agreeable and enthusiastic to visitors (a necessary requirement that the American Colonization Society failed to take into account in Africa and elsewhere). "...[W]hich ever way I travelled, I have been treated with hospitality and attention, and all possible kindness rendered to me voluntarily and without reward," he reported to a newspaper editor.[1]

From Puerto Plata Kingsley rode west on horseback, first to Cape Haitien (formerly Le Cap Francais)[2] and then onto Gonaives, before finally arriving by boat at Port-au-Prince in mid-

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[1] Zephaniah Kingsley, "Letter I, Puerto de Plata, Haiti, September 13, 1835," in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 87, 88 (first quote), 89 (second quote). The first of four letters sent to George H. Evans, editor of the *Working Man's Advocate*, a New York City newspaper, they comprised a detailed account of Kingsley's two-month journey throughout Haiti in 1835. They were subsequently reprinted along with Kingsley's edited pamphlet, *The Rural Code of Haiti, Literally Translated from a Publication by the Government Press, By a Southerner* (Middletown, NJ: George H. Evans, 1837).

[2] Kingsley, "Letter II, Cape Haitien, 29th Sept., 1835," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 91-93.

October. He spent a day in "a long and familiar interview" with President Boyer, likely explaining his plans and hopes for a future settlement near the coast. After arriving at what seems to have been a satisfactory agreement between all parties, Kingsley remained some time in the Haitian capital before returning to Florida to prepare for relocating his family.[3] He had, after all, done considerable business there years before. Before leaving, Kingsley gathered that the population there "certainly [was] increasing most rapidly" and the propensity to business was gaining steadily. After two months, he thought it "a most salubrious place of residence."[4]

A year later, Kingsley himself sailed into the Puerto Plata with his son George and "six prime African men," all former slaves, "liberated for th[e] express purpose," to begin clearing the lands for settlement. After applying to the local authorities and renting a considerable portion of land, Kingsley took the men to settle about twenty-seven miles due east of the town at Cabaret. By mid-November 1836, Kingsley set George and the former slaves to clear the heavily wooded lands before departing for Florida.[5]

Writing to his father frequently, George kept Zephaniah constantly updated on the settlement's progress. That January, for example, he reported that the last of the loose timber had been cleared before planting commenced. In the coming weeks, George and the servants planted some eight acres of corn, some sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, rice, beans, and plantains. He finished planting cotton in April in time for oranges in May. As Kingsley himself explained later, the settlement achieved abundant crops of foodstuffs every three months, or four times per year. As few actually resided at the settlement of *Mayorasgo de Koka* that first year, George and

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[3] Kingsley, "Letter III, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12, 1835," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 94-95, 98, 96.

[4] *Ibid*., 97 (first quote), 98 (second quote).

[5] Kingsley, "To the Editor of the Christian Statesman, Hayti, June 30, 1838," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 103, 104. George's settlement there was known as *Mayorasgo de Koka*.

the others achieved a fairly lucrative business in selling their surplus to the local population for cash. In about twelve months' time, the operation was off to a promising start.[6]

Departing from St. Mary's, Georgia, in the last week of October, Zephaniah purchased a 150-ton brig specifically to carry George's wife, children, and those of his servants to Haiti. Two additional families of freed slaves accompanied the group on the five-and-a-half day journey to Puerto Plata.[7] Spirits were high among the group, though much work needed to be done. In January, for example, Zephaniah returned for the entire month for the express purpose of aiding George both legally and materially. He helped George construct a two-story wooden home before going on to Port-au-Prince in response to George's petition for land. Boyer agreed to the provisions of the petition, which allotted some 35,000 acres in all to own in fee simple for $3000. Kingsley of course paid the amount in full, rejoined George at Cabaret, and left for Florida the next month.[8]

One contemporary observer visited the settlement at this time and generally approved of the efforts there. The anonymous writer spoke of "the fertility of the soil," "the pleasantness of the climate, the luxuriance of every kind of tropical vegetation, the noble growth of timber, the fine streams, the convenient neighborhood of a harbor, to which a good road was already opened, and the progress which has been made in the various projected improvements" as sincere and noble efforts. With only a slight qualification, they added that, "I am quite inclined to believe that the prosecution of those purposes will confer no small benefit on Haiti, and will place his [George's] laborers in a condition much better than the chattel slavery of Florida."[9]

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[6] *Ibid*., 104, 105.

[7] "Emigration to Hayti," *Boston Recorder*, August 9, 1839.

[8] Kingsley, "Letter to Christian Statesman," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 105.

[9] Anonymous, "Kingsley's Plantation," *Emancipator and Free American* (Boston), September 1, 1842.

Nearly a month after his letter of June 30, 1838 appeared in a Washington, D.C., newspaper, Kingsley's settlement was heartily endorsed in Cincinnati's antislavery *Philanthropist* of July. "He talks like a man of sense," the editorial commented. Addressing the paranoia of southern slaveholders, it asserted that colonizing the island as Kingsley had would ensure its cooperation rather than hostility. "Hayti will stay just where it is," was the newspaper's answer to the South. Lest their opinions be open to debate, the paper gave Kingsley a ringing endorsement few others could claim: "As to Mr. Kingsley's Colonization schemes, they are visionary."[10] Coupled with the first year's successes and a potential shift in public opinion, Kingsley gathered enough momentum now to think much bigger. Based on his own calculations, he surmised Haiti could accommodate some fourteen million people.[11] Having recognized the faults of the American Colonization Society (ACS) before him, the patriarch again reprinted his early pamphlet on Haiti's Rural Code and prepared for the following growing season.[12]

In a year's time, despite increased hostilities in the region with the Seminole Indians of Florida (that devastated some property, carried off slaves, and interrupted the cotton cultivation at his Drayton Island plantation),[13] Kingsley orchestrated an impressive array of skilled workers to leave for Cabaret in July 1839. Leaving Florida for Haiti on July 20 onboard the brig

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[10] Anonymous, "Hayti.," *Philanthropist*, July 24, 1838; the full editorial is also reprinted in *The Colored American* (New York, New York) of August 11, 1838, and retained a typographical error that gave the name as "C. Kingsley".

[11] Kingsley, "To the Editor of the Christian Statesman," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 106; incidentally, this number and Kingsley's general argument was seized upon by one "Friend in New-York" that used it as a stern warning to abolitionist audiences on the front page of *The Liberator*, February 25, 1832.

[12] Kingsley, *Treatise*, in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 54, 73, 74. Kingsley was extremely critical of the ACS's efforts to relocate African and African-Americans abroad under situations which were diametrically opposed to favorable adaptation. References to the *Treatise* are from Stowell's volume.

[13] *Niles' National Register*, August 10, 1839 (Baltimore). The same editorial ran nationally and was widely reprinted throughout the month of August.

America, the *Boston Recorder* reported that Kingsley had "nearly 100 free colored and some white passengers" bound for his settlement near Puerto Plata. In Zephaniah's spirit of improvement, the group naturally consisted "mostly of the useful and laborious classes," with agriculturalists, "assorted blacksmiths and carpenters, together with some first rate ship builders and other mechanics...." Apart from the straight version of the facts, the paper interestingly offered no other comment on the venture.[14]

Newspapers, particularly near port cities, carried a lengthy notice in the fall of 1840 on the subject of black emigration. Admitting of the dismal failures of African repatriation, it asserted that Haiti afforded potential émigrés unrivaled resources. The Wednesday issue of the Baltimore *Sun* stated that Haiti categorically "offer[ed] greater facilities to advancement and easier access," and that it was "where rich land with every advantage of a good and convenient market for selling produce, and of the most fertile description of river valley land, near to good harbors, is offered to industrious agriculturalists for nothing but the trouble of settling."[15] The familiar descriptions of course were likely Zephaniah's own and amounted to his micromanagement of the venture. As he had returned from Cabaret as recently as late July,[16] Kingsley was in an excellent position to provide the details of the settlement and its progress.

For example, he asserted that at the time "a water mill convenient to grind…corn" was raised and that the fertile lands were as productive as ever. As little as a quarter of an acre, Kingsley promised, "will yield, in three months, one hundred bushels of very fine sweet

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[14] "Emigration to Hayti.," *Boston Recorder*, August 9, 1839.

[15] [Zephaniah Kingsley,] "Emigration to Haiti," reprinted in *The Sun* (Baltimore), Wednesday, November 11, 1840. Kingsley evidently wrote this piece from New York, dated October 4, 1840.

[16] Registers of Vessels Arriving at the Port of New York from Foreign Ports, 1789-1919, M237, R43, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Kingsley is listed as arriving from "Port-au-Platt" at New York on July 22, 1840.

potatoes, of the white Taheita kind, many of them weighing ten pounds and upwards." Corn and other provisions would be equally plentiful. And as before, four crops per year was the norm.[17]

As Zephaniah Kingsley demonstrated in his earlier *Treatise*, the ACS had failed in its endeavors. The religious element in particular, he claimed, was responsible for a situation which amounted to submitting to the yoke of southern slavery, "or of leaving the country to which nativity has given them a natural right, to go where sickness, privations and barbarity must soon put an end to all their troubles; it is this dilemma it is to be hoped that some way of escape will present itself."[18] To compound the problem, the typical émigrés sent by the ACS overwhelmingly lacked both the agricultural skill and work ethic necessary to thrive in a new environment.[19]

Kingsley naturally had in mind a quite specific émigré to send to Haiti. In theory, he supposed that the problems had by the ACS could and would be overcome by "industrious agriculturalists." Concluding his notice to the public, he invited all "agriculturalists or industrious farmers who are not afraid of work, and can apply themselves to the use of the axe of hoe" to emigrate. Conditions were so ripe that "a common laborer, with a little industry" might "become, in a few months, owner of his own farm." Following approval of "character and circumstances" by George Kingsley himself, the would-be emigrant could purchase, for one hundred dollars, land, "as much as he and his family have means to cultivate."[20]

Such émigrés, the editorial neglected to mention, were legally bound to contract with George for a period of indentured servitude not to exceed nine but not less than two years, as

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[17] Kingsley, "Emigration to Haiti," *The Sun*, November 11, 1840.

[18] Kingsley, *Treatise*, 54.

[19] Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth* Century (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 19.

[20] Kingsley, "Emigration to Haiti.," *The Sun*, November 11, 1840.

specified by Haiti's Rural Code (Law III). Issues of sustenance were strictly regulated by the government as well. For example, under Law II, "On every rural establishment, they shall be bound to cultivate provisions, grain, fruit trees, such as the bread tree, &c." Additionally, the law stipulated that each household would be "bound" to keep a personal "garden of provisions", to be attended to when not otherwise contractually engaged.[21] As might be imagined, such telling restrictions invariably brought tensions. Within the settlement's first few years, a visitor attested that "some difficulty had arisen between him [George] and some of his hands, about the terms of their contract, a while before." "Unable to settle it to mutual satisfaction," the parties instead appealed to the authorities at Puerto Plata thirty miles away.[22] Nothing more is known about the incident.

Within a half decade, the settlement in Haiti was still underway. By 1842 the lands, "thickly timbered with lofty woods," lush with mahogany and some cedar, were felled by the laborers and sent by the web of "connecting streams" to nearby Holly Springs Mill, situated east of the settlement. From there, workers sent the timber to Puerto Plata, where it was transshipped to the United States, Europe, and other available markets.[23] That same year, if Kingsley is to be believed, he stated that his "Haitian colony" was a testament to "how happy the human race can be." "...[T]he people are improving, and everything is prosperous." In a fit of hyperbole, he continued: "It is in a fine, rich valley, about thirty miles from Port Platte; heavily timbered with mahogany all round; well watered; flowers so beautiful; fruits in abundance, so delicious that

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[21] Kingsley, ed., *The Rural Code of Haiti*, 8, 10.

[22] Anon., "Kingsley's Plantation," September 1, 1842.

[23] Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 68; Kingsley, "To the Editor of the Christian Statesman," (June 30, 1838), in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 103.

you could not refrain from stopping to eat, till you could eat no more."[24] But notwithstanding the paradisiacal setting and descriptions of utopia, by all accounts the murky status of the émigrés seemed to amount to something approaching quasi-slavery.

When asked to account for the "sort of qualified slavery" that the émigrés were kept in, Kingsley adamantly denied the allegation. In his answer, Kingsley revealed both the true nature of the settlement and left little doubt of who controlled affairs there. "My labourers in Haiti are not slaves," he said. "They are," he insisted, "a kind of indented apprentices. I give them land, and they bind themselves to work for me. I have no power to take them away from that island; and you know very well that I could not sell them there."[25] Others who had visited the settlement could not be sure. Although stating that "Geo[rge]. Kingsley was not a slaveholder, nor his workmen slaves," one visitor remarked that the situation "still does not come up to a Yankee laborer[']s...."[26] Bound by penalty of law to work the lands for nearly a decade, many no doubt felt that they had exchanged one kind of bondage for another.

When Zephaniah arrived at the Port of New York at the end of May 1843, he perhaps had visited the settlement at Haiti for the last time. His visits seem to have increased, possibly because of his failing health. At Jacksonville, Florida, he drafted his Last Will and Testament on July 20. Appointing a "trusty friend," a nephew, and his son George as executors of the estate, Zephaniah planned one last outing.

"I want to do great things for Haiti," Kingsley had said before. "...[A]nd in order to do them, I must have money." Justifying the continued enslavement of about 100 slaves still on his

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[24] Kingsley quoted in interview with Lydia Maria Child, "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 109-10.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Anon., "Kingsley's Plantation," *Emancipator and Free American*, September 1, 1842.

Florida plantations, Kingsley maintained that his Haiti ventures took precedence over manumission of his bondmen.[27] Fortunately, resolution to a nagging financial matter was steadfastly approaching. Nearly three decades before, in an ill-fated attempt to take the province of Spanish East Florida, soldiers and militiamen of the United States government wreaked havoc on plantations throughout the region. The damage was catastrophic. John Fraser, an international slavetrader and friend of Kingsley, drowned during the hostilities and left Kingsley as co-executor of his massive estate. As per the later Treaty of Cession between Spain and the United States, the American government agreed to pay damage claims of Spanish residents at the time of the invasion (1812-14). Kingsley and Fraser were two such claimants.[28]

The Honorable Judge Isaac Bronson settled the terms of the Fraser estate in late 1842 to the staggering the amount of $157,140.[29] After bureaucratic shuffling and some preliminary payouts, Kingsley himself travelled to New York City in late August 1843 carrying some $70,000 in cash belonging to the estate. Depositing most the sum with the firm of Hussey and Mackey (and made payable *only* to himself), he curiously opted to keep some $15,000 on his person. Some doubts remain as to Kingsley's intentions at that point. Fraser's heirs, after all, were expecting their share of the estate from their Rio Pongo, West Africa, home. Battling

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[27] Child, "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 111.

[28] James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 305-6; Daniel L. Schafer, "Family Ties that Bind: Anglo-African Slave Traders in Africa and Florida, John Fraser and His Descendants," *Slavery and Abolition*, 20.3 (December 1999), 8; East Florida Claims, "Case of Zephaniah Kingsley," n.p., n.d., P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville (PKY); East Florida Claims, "Case of John Fraser," n.p., n.d., PKY.

[29] Jacqueline K. Fretwell, ed., *Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and His Journal of 1840-1843* (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1984), 29-31. Gibbs was Kingsley's nephew and attorney and handled most of his uncle's legal matters, which included the Patriot War claim of Fraser; East Florida Claims, "Case of John Fraser," PKY, 5, 8. In modern terms, the value that Bronson set for the claim alone would conservatively be valued at about $5 million dollars; Kingsley was then at Philadelphia where he arrived from Port-au-Prince on November 10 aboard the schooner *Caroline*; his age is listed incorrectly as 75 years with a birth year of "abt 1767." Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1882, M425, R59, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

international red tape and racial prejudice, the family hired a slew of attorneys to act on their behalf.[30]

Kingsley and another executor had deliberately mismanaged the estate for decades. As Daniel L. Schafer notes, "between 1833 and 1836 Kingsley paid off his mortgage, with two-thirds of the payment intended for Fraser's daughters and one-third for [Fraser's son-in-law, William] Robertson."[31] Before he left for New York, Kingsley wrote to an acquaintance of his plans. "It is my intention to proceed to the North in a week or so with a view of making some arrangements for a trip to the West Indies for a short time," he wrote on August 12 from his plantation near Jacksonville.[32] Kingsley instead died of pulmonary disease on September 13 in New York City[33] with part of the Fraser fortune exclusively in his hands, most likely on his way to Haiti, as part of his ambitious plan "to do great things" there. Nothing of Rio Pongo is mentioned. "So will all in Haiti be effected [sic], through coming time, if I can carry out my

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[30] Schafer, "Family Ties that Bind," 9.

[31] *Ibid*., 9-11, 12.

[32] Zephaniah Kingsley to Joseph M. Hernandez, San Jose Plantation, St. Johns River, East Florida, 12 August 1843, Probate File 1203, Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, Florida (DCC).

[33] The single-line obituary is in the *St. Augustine News*, September 30, 1843; a copy of the death certificate from New York City is in the Zephaniah Kingsley Collection, 1812-1946, Box 1, PKY. Kingsley's birthplace is listed, characteristically, as "Scotland." His Pearl Street residence listed is located waterside near the current location of the Brooklyn Friends School. His Last Will and Testament (in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 116-21) requested "that whenever I may happen to die that my body may be buried in the nearest, most convenient place without any Religious ceremony whatever, and that it may be excused from the usual indiscreet formalities and parade of washing, dressing, &c., or exposure in any way, but removed just as it died to the common burying ground." The "most convenient place" nearby for burial was for Quakers, which formed a sizeable community that he seemed at pains to distance himself from for the better part of his life.

I have spoken with several Society of Friends scholars based in the Brooklyn area regarding possible burial locations for Zephaniah. The 1840s to 1860s period was one of immense growth in the Brooklyn area particularly. Several cemetery relocation projects occurred during that era; the graves were disinterred and relocated in a private plot within today's Prospect Park, Brooklyn (not open to the public). A location near Pearl Street was part of the relocation process. However, many plots in today's Prospect Park are unmarked and records have been lost. Such is the likely fate for Zephaniah Kingsley.

plans," he once stated. "To do good in the world," Kingsley concluded emphatically, "we *must* have money."[34]

With Kingsley gone, the settlement in Haiti flourished but a fleeting moment. The flow of money from Zephaniah's estate slowed to a trickle as his youngest sister, Martha, and a host of other white petitioners contested the will in the winter of 1844. That November the claimants submitted a lengthy petition to bar *all* of Kingsley's nonwhite heirs from receiving their share of the estate.[35] George returned from Haiti as spokesman for the family but was indignant over the mismanagement of his father's estate. Writing from New York City on May 28 to his white brother-in-law, John Sammis, George quickly surmised that the executors had sold a series of his properties and collected the money. "I do not understand how any property can be sold that the Will does not call for, all those properties up the river are not in the Will and 60 odd slaves, therefore, how can they be disposed of except at rick of the buyers and sellers? You know very well all those properties are not in the Will," he fumed, "and my father was my agent."[36] Although he was a wealthy man, George (and his family) had thrived under Zephaniah's forceful example and were unwilling to let the matter rest.[37] Navigating a daunting series of legal hoops and obstacles, he frequently returned to the United States to oversee the legal proceedings.

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[34] Child, "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 110-11 (emphasis in original).

[35] Petition of Martha McNeill, et al. to Judge Farquhar Bethune, November 30, 1844, Papers Concerning the Will of Zephaniah Kingsley, M87-20, State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee (SLAF).

[36] George Kingsley to John S. Sammis, New York City, May 28, 1844, quoted in James Johnson, "History of Zephaniah Kingsley and Family," January 4, 1937, Federal Editors' [Writers'] Project, unpublished manuscript, State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, 10. Of Scottish descent, Sammis married one of George's sisters (Mary), also born of the union between Zephaniah and Anna. Martha, his other sister, married Oran Baxter, also of Scottish lineage. Once part of Probate File 1205, DCC, for the estate of George Kingsley, the letters are now missing. Johnson's excerpts are all that remain. See also footnote 88 below.

[37] The issue, to reiterate this point, is not the capability of the Kingsley children or Anna herself. The prevailing patriarchal hierarchy simply trumped those below Zephaniah from acting in any manner as they saw fit. It would have gone against everything Kingsley himself or the prevailing norms would have been accustomed to as

June next brought a bit of news to Haiti that was encouraging. Supposedly trusted family friends of Zephaniah's predictably had their hands in the estate, adding insult to injury. However, through the hard work of the white family patron, John Sammis, some effective legal counterarguments were well underway. From Haiti George wrote with great sarcasm again to Sammis explaining his own position on the legal battles and determination to press for his inheritance:

> I am glad to think you are able, and find an opportunity of giving battle to Mr. Gibbs for the recovery of my property and hope you will be able to show to the world as a striking example of the abuses of power which seem are becoming quite a prevalent disease notwithstanding all the reform societies that are daily made for the improvement of our morals.[38]

In a striking example of both legal and racial consciousness, George held out one last measure for any upcoming legal problems. He determined to "create as much noise as I could," in hopes that Zephaniah's white heirs would back down from the legal challenges. Lest there be any room for interpretation, George added: "I wish you to hold out that if there is a likelihood of my losing my property I am going straight to Boston where I can be near the family of Kingsley."[39]

At the time a complex series of legal moves occurred in the Florida courts that promised to bring some resolution to George and family in Haiti. It seems that Circuit Court Judge Farquhar Bethune, a long-time acquaintance of Zephaniah, struck down the Florida case

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well as a potential threat to Zephaniah's mastery had they done so. His views are quite evident even in the June 1842 interview with Lydia Maria Child and the language he employs. See Child, "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*. Only with Kingsley's death did George take a leading role in the family hierarchy, to be replaced by Anna after *his* death.

[38] George Kingsley to John S. Sammis, Haiti, (June) 1845, quoted in Johnson, "Zephaniah Kingsley and Family."

[39] *Ibid*., (underlined in original); my reading of legal consciousness in the Latin America and Caribbean worlds is indebted to Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2003); and Zephyr L. Frank, *Dutra's World: Wealth and Family in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

instituted by Kingsley's white heirs sometime in 1845. From the available evidence, it appears that news to Haiti was dreadfully slow and perhaps convoluted. George had contemplated residing again in the United States to oversee the legal proceedings. Perhaps uncertain about the future of the case, he arranged meetings with a New York City merchant and friend of the late Zephaniah.[40]

As both the financial source and micromanager of the Cabaret settlement, Zephaniah's death in late 1843 meant that the experiment would be short-lived. The once lush, "heavily timbered" lands surrounding the settlement rapidly dwindled, leaving the community without a stable income. Workers, tired from their plights, left in droves. Politically unstable at the time, the Haitian Republic slowly fractured as the Spanish returned to take possession of their former colony of Santo Domingo. In the midst of these various elements, George Kingsley left for New York in January 1846, determined to secure the necessary funds to continue the settlement.[41]

En route to Puerto Plata from New York in February, the ship *Frank Henry* was lost at sea. On board at the time was George, the family spokesperson and head of Cabaret, desperate to recover his portion of Zephaniah's estate. In his will, George left a real and personal estate appraised at $16,167.31. In addition to the settlement at Cabaret, he still possessed 3,000 acres and about forty slaves in Florida. Left with little choice, Zephaniah's common-law wife, Anna, returned to the United States to pick up where her son had left off. Ruthlessly determined to secure the family property, Anna pressed her claim and was ultimately successful in gaining her rightful share by 1847.[42] Unable to save Cabaret from the effects of political and material destabilization, and grieving the loss of her son, the victory was likely bittersweet.[43]

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[40] Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 70-73.

[41] *Ibid*., 71-72.

In the tumultuous years after the deaths of Zephaniah and George, members of the extended Kingsley family in Haiti came to form by the turn of the century some of the 40,000 people that comprised the Province of Puerto Plata. An observer to the city at the time noted that the "rich valley" area was "amid extensive plantations of tobacco," the bulk of which was then transshipped from Puerto Plata itself. Travelling throughout the region, the same visitor noted the "prosperous colony of United States Negroes, who are known as the 'Kinsley boys,' from the Florida planter, Kinsley, founder of the settlement."[44] Despite the inaccuracy of the surname, the writer hinted that the remnants of the *Mayorasgo de Koka* settlement survived after all.

Wracked by war and environmental devastation, the aims of Zephaniah's grand plan were decidedly mixed.[45] Cast into the seemingly endless transatlantic battles of his estate, Kingsley's careless legal loopholes thrust his black family into the labyrinth of white legal privilege and backroom dealings.[46] Amazingly, one member finally emerged victorious and secured what

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[42] Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and Benjamin Putnam, Executors of the Estate of Zephaniah Kingsley, Response to Petition of Anna M. Kingsley, September 5, 1846, Kingsley Will Papers, SLAF; Anna M Kingsley, Inheritance Payout Receipt [signed], January 5, 1847, Probate File 1203, DCC.

[43] Johnson, "History of Zephaniah Kingsley and Family," 11, lists these totals; "Inventory of the Real and Personal total of the late George Kingsley," Probate Record 1205, DCC. Different totals were calculated for George's estate based on the number that was pending to be awarded from his father's estate. As Zephaniah's estate had yet to be decided at the time of George's death, competing claims for slaves rendered the total ultimately unknown. In his claim against the executors Gibbs and Putnam, George claimed forty-seven of his father's slaves.

[44] A. H. Keane, *Central and South America, Volume II: Central America and West Indies* (London: Edward Stanford, 1901), 319, 341.

[45] Schafer, Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley, 72; *Liberator*, June 3, 1842; *Liberator*, July 15, 1842, features coverage of the "awful earthquake" from Puerto Plata. The damage to the trees was apparently extensive, which would only have exacerbated the growing problem of rapid deforestation from the timber industry.

[46] Kingsley, "Last Will and Testament," in Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils*, 120, curiously left the legality of the entire document up in the air, based on the union to Anna, with the following clause: "…nor do I know in what light the law may consider my acknowledged wife…"; compared to other white men that had relations with black or mixed-race women, Kingsley's acknowledgement of a legitimate union and his efforts to ensure that Anna would receive her share of the estate are sufficiently weaker. It should be noted that he was well aware of the dangers and obstacles non-white relations had in securing inheritance. As co-executor of the estate proceedings for John Fraser for nearly three decades, he benefitted handsomely at Fraser's family's expense. His paltry administration was ironic given that he sustained a lengthy correspondence with Joseph Hernandez over what he considered threats to the Fraser heirs' holdings. See the Kingsley-Hernandez correspondence in the Buckingham Smith Papers, NYHS.

remained of the family's share. Both victim and survivor of Zephaniah Kingsley's refracted Atlantic Mind, Anna represented the complicated byproduct of the frenzy that was the Atlantic world in the Age of Revolution. Her story, like that of the settlement, is a testament to survival against overwhelming odds.

A telling acknowledgement of such practices is found in Kingsley, *Treatise*, 59: "Query. Has any property left by will to any colored person, ever been honestly and fairly administered by any white person?" "Answer. Such instances might possibly have happened, but never to my knowledge."

A bizarre and blatantly fictionalized version of Kingsley's will appeared in the Florida *Times Union* in the early part of the 20th century. It replaced the beginning of the legitimate will and wedded the fictional addition to the real document, though not seamlessly. It is reprinted in Stetson Kennedy, *Palmetto Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pierce, 1942), 80-83; on other white males leaving property to non-white heirs, see, for example, Cynthia Kennedy-Haflett, "'Moral Marriage': A Mixed Race Relationship in Nineteenth-Century Charleston, South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 97.3 (July 1996), 206-26; Louise Biles Hill, "George J. F. Clarke, 1774-1836," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 21.3 (January 1943), 197-253.

CONCLUSION

THE ATLANTIC MIND

In her article "Letter from New York: Letter XXIII" of July 7, 1842, abolitionist Lydia Maria Child spoke of her meeting with a most curious character the previous week. Her subject was a familiar one. After years of criticizing him publicly, Child met Zephaniah Kingsley in New York City. To be sure, she thought him the epitome of what may be termed the "Atlantic Mind"—that is to say, "a circle of contradictions" who talked incessantly "on the subject of conscience...." "I found his conversation entertaining, but marked by the same incongruity, that characterizes his writings and his practice," Child said. "His head is a peculiar one; it would, I think, prove as great a puzzle to phrenologists, as he himself is to moralists and philosophers."[1]

Nearing his eighth decade and plagued by poor health, Kingsley was well aware of his own mortality. Like Jefferson before him, his fragmented self weighed heavily in old age. Time and again, Kingsley repeatedly dodged Child's questions with a deceptive phrase. "All we can do in this world is to balance evils," he uttered. The tension bound in such answers was evident to Child. Her analysis is a biting critique of the Atlantic Mind and its stain on the fabric of American society. After all, Child's assessments could apply equally to a Jefferson as to Kingsley himself. Her attack is not personal per se; the real target is the pitiable and prejudiced mind behind slavery. Child believed the frenzy of the Atlantic world in the Enlightenment Age was the culprit:

> Probably this mixture with people of all creeds and customs,
> combined with the habit of looking *outward* for his guide of action,

[1] Lydia Maria Child, "Letters from New York: Letter XXIII," in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 107.

> may have bewildered his moral sense, and produced his system of 'balancing evils!'[2]

Undaunted at the prodding, Kingsley was characteristically evasive and difficult to corner. He invariably but insincerely turned the conversation to the Bible.[3]

Although raised a Quaker, Kingsley himself turned away from religion, which he regarded as little more than meddlesome "superstition."[4] Instead, he perhaps feigned biblical piety while he talked at length about "conscience" and the famed Quaker dictum of the "light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world." If she were hoping for more, Child was surely disappointed. Putting on appearances, the patriarch likely changed his demeanor, shifted in his seat, and relaxed his brow. "I have known the Malay and the African, the North American Indian, and the European," Kingsley told the abolitionist, "and the more I've seen of the world, the less I understand it. It's a queer place; that's a fact." Child, in haste, reflected on their meeting, suggesting, "it was altogether vain to argue with him about fixed principles of right and wrong; one might as well fire small shot at the hide of a rhinoceros."[5]

Child's portrait of the man illustrates perfectly her chaotic subject. Kingsley appears at times almost jovial, unassuming, and to a certain degree, inoffensive. But behind the elderly patriarch's good natured tone, Child finds the stubbornness and blatant calculation that led him to acquire a small fortune in human chattel. Above all, she finds a pitiful mass of contradiction, compartmentalization, and blatant fiction. She is forced to conclude (in response to Kingsley's phrase that "The best thing we can do in this world is to balance evils judiciously.") that his

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[2] *Ibid*., 112.

[3] *Ibid*., 112-13.

[4] Kingsley, *Treatise*, in *Ibid*., 70.

[5] Child, "Letters from New York: Letter XXIII," in *Ibid*., 109, 111, 112.

chameleonic tendencies and cunning nature are his strongest attributes. A lifetime in the transatlantic shuffle, that cutthroat and grueling locale, she said, left him unable to reconstitute an ordered worldview. "Whether this utilitarian remembers it or not," Child concluded in haste, "he must have stifled many convictions before he arrived at his present state of mind."[6]

Movement marked the Enlightenment Age. While many celebrated the speed with which goods and ideas traveled the Atlantic, others warned that it had consequences. Diderot, after all, had been correct: a lifetime spent crisscrossing borders left one sorely fractured and bewildered. The course of the Enlightenment's tenuous relationship to race convinced the likes of Jefferson that slavery was incapable of a suitable remedy. He cleverly likened it to a wolf held by the ears. Not to be outdone, Kingsley too justified a life that would have brought Diderot to tears. "To do good in the world," he reasoned, "we *must* have money. That's the way I reasoned when I carried on the slave trade." And yet, despite his failing health and troubled conscience, Kingsley's "bewildered" self could not free the last of his slaves. Retreating, perhaps in defeat or shame, he could only utter, "The best we can do in this world is to balance evils judiciously."[7]

Following his death, friend, business partner and fellow planter Joseph M. Hernandez summed up Kingsley's legacy and character. Recognizing the vastness of his travels and the sheer magnitude of his ambitions, Hernandez perhaps most poignantly and accurately summed Kingsley's impact while carefully sidestepping his controversial racial doctrines. "Kingsley prospered not because of the soundness of his theories," he said, "but because he was one of those rare individuals whose unusual courage, vision and adaptability and industry would have

[6] *Ibid*., 112.

[7] *Ibid*., 111.

made him a leader under any other conditions."[8] Heretofore, Kingsley's protean character has dubiously led more than one scholar to misinterpret the devout slavery defender's ruthless ambitions. If we continue to be blinded by the ramifications of Kingsley's brutal worldview in doggedly adhering to half-truths and a comforting fairy tale image lived across the color line, we likewise ignore the complex dynamics involving the uses of power to manipulate race and identity in the Atlantic world. While it might ease some modern anxieties and form the crux of engaging and colorful tales of a distant past, at bottom it nevertheless serves to ignore the equally brutal reality of the lives lived in slavery, born from the width and breadth of Zephaniah Kingsley's remarkable travels. As historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown reminds us, "Historians, with a last, forlorn, optimism unique in the arts and letters, demand a happy ending. Romance, not reality, leads to such a conclusion."[9]

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[8] Quoted in Margaret Gibbs Watt, *The Gibbs Family of Long Ago and Near at Hand, 1337-1967* (Privately Printed, 1967), 84.

[9] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Review of Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*," *Journal of Southern History*, 41.2 (May 1975), 242.

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