Runaway Slaves

REBELS ON THE PLANTATION

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rly demonstrated in the case of Edward Johnson. In 1860, Edward's nts, poverty-ridden free blacks, bound their son as an apprentice Villiam Chaney of Baltimore until he reached age twenty-one. Al-igh the youngster was supposed to remain within the jurisdiction ıe court where the indenture was issued, the boy's unexpired term sold to William Martin of Baltimore, who took the boy across sapeake Bay to eastern Maryland and sold Edward's indenture to erman-born couple who lived on a farm near Easton in Talbot nty. In an attempt to return to his parents, the young boy ran y and was captured and ran away again and was captured and onded for a third time. To punish "this very bad fellow," the nan couple called in the local constable who, Edward testified:

le me with a rope put my 2 neas thrugh my hands, then and ıere striped me nacked, with a sticke run trugh my hands and ees pinning me down with my hed to the ground sticking my ıre backside up, then and there struck me 30. licks with a heavy ckrey paddle with a number of holes bored through it brusing e in an offel manner, from that position I was tacon and plased ith a rope a round my rists my back intiarly naked and swong) then and there Each of them tuck a cow hide one on Either le and beet me in such a manner when they let me down I nted and lay on the ground 2 hours when I came too I maid ıt to get to the house my privits ware very much injered and ollen very large I was confined to the hous for 2 weeks my ck is very much schared at this time

, when his master planned to whip him again, Edward escaped, vas shot in the hand as he fled. He headed straight for the county Easton, and turned himself into the sheriff for protection. A few later, the Baltimore City Orphans Court ordered Martin "to pro- in this court" a certain "colored apprentice named Edward L. son." It was difficult to see, however, how the court could make ıds for the brutal punishment he had endured.[61]

ıe struggles of free blacks in some parts of the South were not e the struggles of their brethren in bondage, as the runaway chil- of Maryland indicate. But even among the most prosperous and known free blacks, there was always the nagging fear that some eseen circumstance might thrust them backward into bondage.

Profile of a Runaway

ON 25 OCTOBER 1816, WILLIAM W. BELL, a North Carolina farmer, placed a notice in the *North Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Advertiser* about his runaway slave. Explaining that he had purchased Frank from John Patterson of Matthews County, Virginia, Bell wrote:

> RUNAWAY, from the Subscriber, on Friday Evening last, Near Enfield Court House, a NEGRO MAN, named FRANK, pretty stout, one strait scar on his cheek passing from the under part of the ear towards the corner of the mouth, of a common dark color, something of a flat nose, a short, round chin, and a down look, about 26 or 27 years of age. Had on, brown yarn homespun Pantaloons, striped homespun waistcoat, and a white yarn round-about. TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS reward will be given *for lodging* said runaway in any gaol in this state or TWENTY DOLLARS if in any gaol out of the state.[1]

Forty-one years later, in the fall of 1857, a South Carolina planter, E. M. Royall, published a similar notice in the *Charleston Mercury*:

> TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.—Ranaway from the subscriber's plantation, in Christ Church Parish, his Negro Man TONEY. Said fellow is about 5 feet 6 inches in height; stoutly built, is very black, has a broad, full face, black eyes, and when he laughs, shows a very white set of teeth. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to the Work House in Charleston, or to the subscriber on his place.[2]

In size, build, color, gender, age, attire, reward, probable occupation, and personality—at least as perceived by whites—the "NEGRO MAN, Named FRANK" and the "Negro Man TONEY" fit the profile of typical runaway slaves. The largest segment of the runaway army included

strong, young field hands in their late teens and twenties. The two advertisements also demonstrate the continuity that existed among typical runaways from one generation to the next.

If the typical runaway was a young, male plantation hand, runaways also included a range of other slaves, young and old, black and mulatto, healthy and infirm, female and male, skilled and unskilled, urban and rural. They absconded from farms, plantations, urban residences, town houses, job sites, and riverboats. Indeed, despite the norm, runaways were a diverse lot, and judging from the comments of slave owners, it seemed impossible to predict who might abscond.

In the sections that follow, there will be an examination of the salient characteristics of runaways resulting from a statistical examination of more than two thousand slaves advertised in newspapers in five states during two time periods: early, or 1790–1816, and late, or 1838–60 (see appendix 7). It will show that, while the profile of runaways was diverse, there was a remarkable consistency over time. Indeed, as the peculiar institution evolved and changed in unprecedented ways over more than sixty years, the profile of runaways, with few exceptions, remained virtually unchanged.

Age and Gender

As the descriptions of Frank and Toney suggest, the great majority of runaways were young men in their teens and twenties. During the early period, males constituted 81 percent of those who were advertised as runaways, and among them, 78 percent were between the ages of thirteen and twenty-nine. Exactly the same proportion of males was listed during the later period and, again, about three out of four—74 percent—were in their teens and twenties. During both periods, these men were described as healthy, strong, and stout, and only about one out of six possessed skills as artisans or house servants. The proportion of men to women was slightly higher in Virginia and Louisiana than in North and South Carolina and Tennessee during the early period, and it was lower in Louisiana during the later period, when male runaways dropped to 71 percent, but the variations were less important than the remarkable consistency: the precise male-female percentage remaining exactly the same over a period of more than two generations.[3]

Young men ran away in greater numbers because often they had not yet married or, if they had married, had not yet begun a family. Those who married sometimes took their loved ones with them, but in most cases, they were forced to leave wives and children behind. Young men also ran away more often because they were more willing to defy overseers and owners if they felt aggrieved. Once away from the plantation, young men could better defend themselves and were willing to resist recapture. The young slave Jack of Orangeburgh District, South Carolina, had been out for some time when he was discovered in 1807 by a white farmer. In the struggle that ensued, Jack slashed the white man so severely that he remained bedridden for weeks and more than a year-and-a-half later had not fully recovered. A few years later, the slave Sampson, also of South Carolina, was confronted in a similar manner by William Villard, a white farmer in Barnwell District. Sampson brandished a knife in one hand and a hatchet in the other, and as Villard approached him, he cut the white man across the forehead and swung the hatchet into his ribs. Six months later, Villard was still disabled "from the Severe Injury he sustained in the apprehension of this desperate out Law."[4]

Not only did young men offer fierce resistance, but many realized that if they did not make an attempt to escape time would run out. Death came early to slaves, and those who reached their twenty-first birthday could expect to live about sixteen or seventeen additional years. In some sections, yellow fever, dysentery, pneumonia, and cholera carried off many slaves still in their teens and twenties.[5] It was not difficult for those who survived to observe the small number of elderly slaves or know about the funerals that occurred so often on their own and nearby plantations. This, coupled with the energy and vitality of youth and the physical stamina it took to go on the run, prompted young men to leave in greatest numbers. Among the 424 runaway males whose approximate ages were given in the early period, the average age was twenty-five; among the 835 during the later

Table 3
Gender of Runaways by State, Early Period (1790–1816)

	Virginia	North Carolina	Tennessee	South Carolina	Louisiana	Total
Number of females	14	18	29	55	13	129
(percentage)	(15)	(18)	(21)	(23)	(11)	(19)
Number of males	81	82	109	185	109	566
(percentage)	(85)	(82)	(79)	(77)	(89)	(81)
Totals	95	100	138	240	122	695

Table 4
Gender of Runaways by State, Late Period (1838–1860)

	Virginia	North Carolina	Tennessee	South Carolina	Louisiana	Totals
Number of females	17	18	20	89	104	248
(percentage)	(9)	(14)	(12)	(19)	(29)	(19)
Number of males	178	114	148	369	259	1068
(percentage)	(91)	(86)	(88)	(81)	(71)	(81)
Totals	195	132	168	458	363	1316

period, the mean age was twenty-seven. The oldest runaways were in their forties and fifties, a handful in their sixties, but those forty or older represented only 5 percent in the early period and 6 percent in the later period.

Young slave women were less likely to run away because they had often begun to raise families by their late teens and early twenties. With youngsters to care for, it became difficult to contemplate either leaving them behind or taking them in an escape attempt. Lying out in the woods or fleeing to more distant points would only mean suffering, danger, and hardship for their children. As several historians have pointed out, although slave women desired freedom as much as slave men and were often as assertive and aggressive on the plantation as male slaves, the task of uprooting and carrying children in flight "was onerous, time-consuming, and exhaustive." As a result, a smaller proportion than among men decided to run away.[6]

Like their male counterparts, however, those who did abscond usually did so in their teens and twenties. These young females represented more than two-thirds of the women in both periods—69 and 68 percent respectively—who ran off. Some took their children with them or, following a sale, attempted to find their sons and daughters, despite the difficulties of such undertakings. Others ran during pregnancy. In her twenties, Letty left her owner John J. Zollicofer of Nashville in 1814. She was a "likely negro," her owner said, quick spoken, with "handsome countenance"; she was about six months pregnant. Similarly, the "American Negress *Nancy*," who ran away in New Orleans in 1828, was "with child." Purchased by a South Carolina man in Maryland in 1816, Sawney quickly fled from her new owner but remained out only a few months before being captured. By the time her owner claimed her, she had given birth to an infant. The North Carolina slave Delph also bore a child on the run. Angeline escaped from Richmond slave traders in 1836 to return to Greenbrier, Augusta County, Virginia, where she had been raised and had six children.[7] Angeline, too, was pregnant. Despite these desertions, women thought long and hard about the consequences for their families and themselves before making any decision to abscond.

Among both males and females, some did not fit the profile. Some preteen-age youngsters fled. Transferred at age ten to the household of an Anne Arundel County, Maryland, woman following the distribution of an estate, Alice was about twelve when she went "running out at night." Catherine, a French-speaking girl in New Orleans, was also about twelve when she absconded in 1831, and Henry, a "young mulatto," was about ten when he ran off two years later. In 1841, an eleven-year-old apprentice barber, Walter Scott, who traveled on steamboats, ran away. When Elias was arrested in 1828 in Charleston, he was advertised as being four feet nine inches tall and about twelve years old.[8]

At the other end of the age spectrum was a black man who worked in the kitchen at the Pontchartrain Hotel and as a hawker of hay in New Orleans. He had outlived several of his owners, and in 1830, at age fifty-five, he absconded. Although her exact age was not given, Nelly was "an elderly Negro woman" who had been sold from Virginia to South Carolina. Other slaves were described as old, decrepit, elderly, gray-haired, bent, and aged. The fifty-year-old Sumter District, South Carolina, man stooped over when walking, and was "quite grey." Some slaves were similarly described with physical defects and as being "quite gray." The Charleston carpenter Andrew was quite "elderly looking." Committed to the jail of Orangeburg, South Carolina, in 1832, another runaway was described as being "about eighty years old."[9]

Color and Physical Characteristics

Most runaways were black. They were described as having dark complexion, dark skin, black complexion, being "coal black," remarkably black, or very black. Some had "not a very black complexion" or were "not remarkably black" or "nearly quite black," but others were described as "a negro boy, perfectly black," "jet black," with a dark complexion, "very dark complexioned," or exceptionally dark. Abel was about sixteen years old and "dark complected," William B. Flowers of Smyrna, Barnwell District, South Carolina, said in his 1855 notice;

Abram was about twenty-eight years old, plausible and intelligent, and also very black, Z. B. Oakes of Charleston, said in the same issue of the *Charleston Mercury*.[10] Although at times the precise color of the runaway was not stated and "negro wench" or "negro fellow" could describe a person of mixed origin, 70 percent of the runaways in the early period were either black or their skin was so dark that readers of runaway newspaper advertisements would assume they were.*

Although a minority of runaways were mulattoes, persons of mixed racial ancestry ran away in greater numbers than their proportion in the slave population would suggest. Except for the virtual elimination of African-born blacks, the increase among mulatto runaways between the early and late periods represented one of the most significant changes that occurred in the profile of runaways. The precise proportion of mulattoes in the slave population for the early period is not known, but due to the importation of Africans at least until 1808, it was surely smaller than during the late antebellum era, when it reached 10 percent. The nearly one-third mixed blood among runaways during the early period was therefore at least three times larger than would be expected in the general population. By the later period, the proportion of advertised mulattoes had risen to 43 percent, more than four times what would be expected. Even if mixed blood slaves were more readily advertised—and there is evidence that they were—this large percentage was remarkable.[11]

Persons with light skin possessed certain advantages as runaways. The prejudices against them were generally less than against those of darker hue. They were more likely to be able to pass as free persons since the proportion of mulattoes in the free Negro group was much higher than in the slave population. The proportion of mulatto runaways in the slave population during the late period (561 of 1,316, or 43 percent) was almost exactly the same as the 41 percent of mixed racial origin in the free black population.

Sometimes they could pass as white. This was the case when the Georgia slave Coleman left his owner during a trip the two men took on the Western Atlantic Railroad in October 1839. Coleman was in his mid-twenties, with a very smooth face, straight sandy hair, blue eyes, and was "very white to be a slave." Bonaparte, a Virginia slave, possessed the physical appearance of a white man: very light skin and straight hair. A Georgia runaway named Guy would "no doubt endeavor to pass himself off as a white man," and the Haywood County, Tennessee, runaway John, was described as "a bright red Mulatto" with straight hair and fashionable attire. He would certainly attempt to pass, either "for a free fellow, or perhaps a white man." Other owners described their slaves as "very nearly white," could easily pass for white, a "white mulatto boy," three-fourths white and "shows the negro blood but very little," "remarkably white for a slave," could easily "pass for a white man." "Stop Mabin!!" read the advertisement of Georgia planter Zachariah Booth in 1833, "He will pass for a white man where he is not known." Apparently, Mabin did pass, as he was still at large seven years later.[12]

*In the RSDB, if "negro" was used with no additional information on color, the runaway was considered black; if no color was indicated, the runaway was also cited as black. Since owners were quick to point out those of mixed racial origin even when they used the term "negro" (i.e., "negro mulatto"), this method, which gives a color designation to all slaves in the RSDB, is probably relatively accurate.

Mulatto slaves were often given positions as house servants, maids, cooks, tailors, waiters, and barbers. With such skills, they could more easily attempt to pass as free blacks. Given their often privileged position as slaves, runaway mulattoes found it less difficult to affect the manners, habits, and general demeanor of free persons of color. During the later period, they were twice as likely to be literate as black runaways and more often carried freedom papers or passes. Even during the early period, when the literacy rate among runaways was only between 1 and 2 percent, nearly 10 percent of mulatto runaways possessed forged papers, compared with 6 percent among blacks.

The diversity among runaways was perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the descriptions of mixed blood slaves who ran away. In South Carolina between 1822 and 1831, they were described as yellow, brown, mustee (brown), mulatto, pale yellow, "of rather a yellow cast," Sambo (dark), and red. In Virginia during the early and late periods, they were described as tawny, nearly black, brown, mulatto, yellow, red, reddish, yellowish, dark yellow, bright yellow, "tolerable light," "dark mulatto," and as having "a lighter complexion" than was "common among negroes." Others were a "little light complected" or "tolerably bright complected," "more of a bright mulatto than otherwise," and of a "dark ginger color." A Richmond owner said his carriage driver was of a "dark copper complexion," and other Virginia masters said their slaves were "light copper or mulatto," "pumpkin color," or "light bacon color."[13]

Louisiana owners advertised their runaways as bright yellow, very brown, "a negro, but not of the blackest cast," "a light colored black," "of a light dark color," pale yellow, rather red, and "rather light." They described their slaves also as "a dirty mulatto color," "copper colored negro man," bright mulatto, light mulatto, bright yellow mulatto, "dark freckled mulatto negro," "not very black," "dark copper color." In New Orleans, the term "griff," or "griffe," changed from a noun to an adjective. Used in the Caribbean to denote the offspring

of a black and mulatto, in New Orleans it became a color to describe runaways. "Ranaway from the subscriber, about three weeks ago," one master said, "a griffe colored slave named Joe."[14]

Other physical characteristics of runaways also revealed their diversity. Owners rarely gave specific weight information, but they did suggest size and build—slight, average, heavy, stout—in about one-third of the notices. For men and women in the early period, the largest proportion was described as "stout," meaning strong, sturdy, fleshy, large—(39 percent of the females and 41 percent of the males); in the later period, this category was still prominent although there was wider distribution among groups. With regard to height, the data on females are sketchy, although it does appear that they were shorter than what was considered "average" at the time they absconded. The information for males is much better, and in more than 55 percent of the cases owners provided specific height data. Among the 314 males age thirteen and over during the early period, half were five feet seven inches or taller, a third were five feet ten inches or taller, and 12 percent were six feet or more. Among the 637 runaways males in the same category during the later period, the figures were almost exactly the same. In the early period, the average height of between five feet seven inches and five feet eight inches for runaways was as tall as the average white male height.[15] In both periods, many were tall, strong, young men. There is little doubt that physical strength, stamina, and size played a role in determining who was likely to flee.

A significant segment of the runaway population was identifiable by marks, scars, and disfigurements. The list was very long, including facial mark, cheek mark, unusual forehead mark, upper arm mark, finger deformity, missing finger, limp, unusual gait, leg deformity, unusual feet, missing toes, lame arm, lame hand, smallpox scars, missing ear[s], and scars from whipping and branding. It was not usually stated how, where, or when runaways lost their fingers, toes, limbs, or acquired their marks and brands. In the early period, African-born slaves often acquired tribal marks before their journey to the New World, and even in the later period some of the physical problems described were the result of accidents or disease. Such was probably the case for those described with "white swelling," "very remarkable lumps," a foot "deformed and nearly half off," "a web on one of his eyes," missing "one-half of her right foot," "lame in the left knee," "diseased in his left thigh." The frequent mention of missing teeth might also be the result of natural causes.[16]

It was clear, however, that for a number slaves there was a direct connection between deformities and prior punishment. The Virginia slave Reuben of Culpepper County, who "eloped" in 1807, had a scar on the right side of his neck below the ear; another on the left, lower on his neck; he has also a scar on the right leg a little below his knee, occasioned by a burn; his back has many scars on it from flogging he has received which he justly merited.

The "mark of a whip" could be seen on the arms of Celia, a fifteen-year-old girl who ran from her master in Rutherford County, Tennessee, in 1814. Fond of drinking, swearing, and fighting, the runaway Dennis had his back "very much cut with the cow-hide." Slaves had scars on their backs, shoulders, arms, legs, sides, and faces, "occasioned by the whip." Neither the young nor old were spared. Fourteen-year-old Mary, who had a "quick and lively air," had two marks on her cheek inflicted with "a cow hide." An elderly Virginia slave, transferred to South Carolina, had several marks between her shoulders caused by the lash. In 1826, the sheriff of Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, described a captured slave as having "around his neck an Iron collar with three prongs extending upwards" and "many scars on his back and shoulders from the whip."[17]

In some cases it was almost possible to trace a slave's history by the various scars. By the time he reached age twenty in 1839, William had been sold from Virginia, to New Orleans, to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and finally to a plantation on Bayou Sara, near Woodville, Mississippi. "[H]e ranaway about the 1st of April," his Mississippi owner said, "was caught and put in jail in Woodville." He falsely gave the name of another man as his owner. Now he was out again, but could be recognized by a scar just above his left eye, a scar above his left thumb, and when "stripped, many scars may be seen on his back, caused from a severe whipping with a cowskin (as he says) at the time of the Southampton insurrection."[18]

The notices contain ample evidence that branding and cropping of ears continued well into the nineteenth century, especially to punish the most obdurate runaways. The Virginia slave Archie was branded on both cheeks, and the facial scars were much darker than his normal skin color. A Georgia slave had also been branded before he ran away in 1808. It was unclear whether the "R" on each cheek stood for "Runaway" or "Richard Thurmond," the Oconee River planter who claimed Joe as his slave. One Kentucky master described a runaway in 1815 as having "a black streak on his nose, which is very plain, it extends on his left cheek near the size of one little finger." "I filed several notches between several of his upper fore teeth, which I expect is also very plain," he added; "I also branded him on each cheek . . about twelve months ago, which is not very perceivable."[19]

Similarly, advertisements in the *New Orleans Bee* during the 182C

and 1830s describe runaways with brands on their backs, hands, breasts, and faces. He "made two trips to Louisville the last time he ranaway," one notice in 1833 read. He was about thirty years old, had sunken cheeks, sulky looks, and should be easy to spot: he had a brand on his forehead of an inch-high cross, a brand on his cheek of the letter "O," and a brand on his back of the word "Orleans." He also had "the mark of the whip" on his back. The French-speaking slave Dio worked on a plantation of P. B. Marmillion, located in Orleans Parish. When he departed with two other slaves in a skiff, Marmillion warned the public to beware of Dio's "pleasing countenance" and added that the slave would be easy to recognize. "He is stamped on the forehead and on the breast," the owner commented, "with the large letters P.M." A slave who left Andry Boudousque's plantation stooped when he walked, had lost part of a thumb, and was branded "with the letter B on the left side of his breast."[20]

The scars from whippings, beatings, and branding, described by slave owners themselves, bore witness to the harsh realities of slavery. Yet there were many runaways whose marks and scars were never advertised in the newspapers. London was "neither the best nor the worst Kind of a negroe," his overseer in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, said; rather he was "a middling hand," or a "Very Good Second rate Negroe." London, however, ran away on numerous occasions and bore marks "of Very Violent Punishment." In August 1835, after a severe whipping, a physician wrote:

> his face was sufficiently full and round as past but on seeing the other parts of the body which were extremely poor it [his face] seemed to be swollen, that the skin on his posteriors was lank and wrinkled and that his bones protruded in such a way as to resemble more a skeleton than a living person, that not satisfied with this examination he introduced his finger into the fundament around which the[re] were a number of small flatulent Blisters that having intruded his finger as far as the intestines he found them very hard and Extremely sensitive and felt some very hard tumours & that on withdrawing his finger it was coated with putrid Matter on his finger that from the appearance of this matter that there must have been internal Tumours or Fistulaes.

A short time after the doctor's visit, London died.[21]

Among the 695 slaves listed in the runaway notices for the early period, 54 (7.8 percent) showed scars from whipping, beatings, cropping, torture, and other forms of severe violence. Among the 1,316 slaves listed for the later period, 76 (5.8 percent) showed the same types of scars. Only 6 slaves in the early period were obviously branded by their owners, but the 6 represented nearly 1 percent of the total, and only 15 had one or both ears cut off (a punishment usually reserved for runaways), but they represented 2.2 percent of the total. While the number of those branded by their owners in the later period dropped to 4, and those with cropped ears to 12, the fact that 1 out of 13 and 1 out of 17 fugitives (early and late periods) were identified by scars resulting from extreme forms of punishment reveals much about the peculiar institution.*

Appearance

It is doubtful that many runaways branded on the face or disfigured from the violent retribution of their masters made it to freedom. But others could and did hide their scars by wearing shirts, pants, and jackets, and the great majority of runaways, at least as indicated in the advertisements, could not be readily identified by the results of severe whipping or other violence. They could be recognized, their owners believed, by other means, and often this included a description of their clothes.

Most runaways fled in the clothing that their owners had issued them. Field hands were generally provided with a least one coarse suit of clothes per year—shirts and pants for men, dresses for women, long shirts for children. During the early period, the clothing was often homespun by black women on the plantation or sewn by them from "Negro cloth" purchased by their owners from retailers in the North. The attire of a Louisiana hand was typical: in 1830 his clothing consisted of a gray jacket, straw hat, blue striped "drilling" pantaloons, and work trousers made from "coarse cotton cloth." During the later period, hands sometimes wore ready-made clothes provided them by their masters and made or acquired special shirts, trousers, and dresses for holidays and church services.[22]

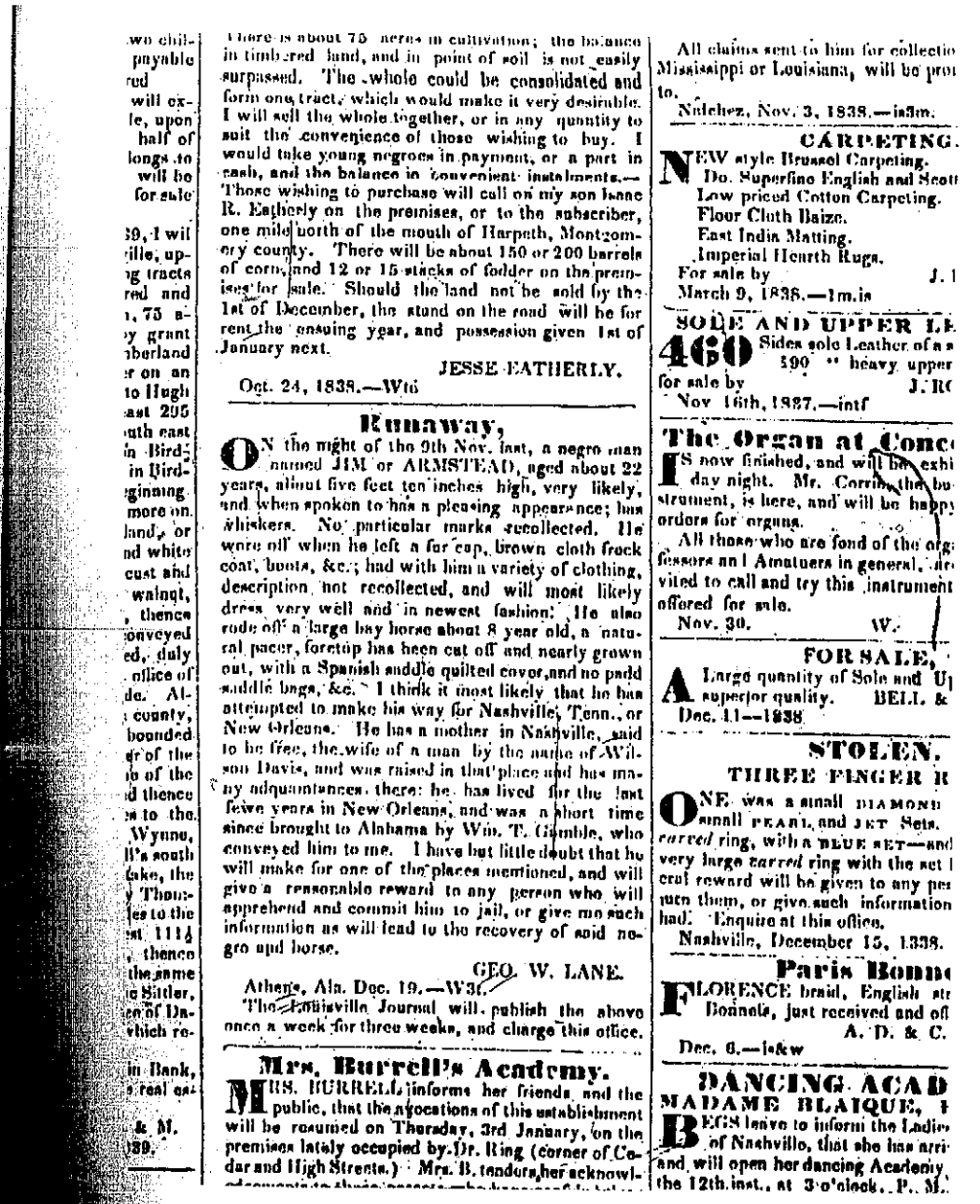
Given their limited wardrobes, what is striking about the appearance of runaways was the remarkable variety of clothing they took with them at the time of their departure. Some stole extra apparel, others made special clothes for their flight, and still others simply accumulated a selection of different garments. Even those who left wearing homespun often took other items. In 1814, the Tennessee slave Celia had a yellow calico frock, a blue calico frock, a white cambric dress,

*This discussion excludes slaves who had missing toes, fingers, a leg, arm, or hand, as well as those with various marks and scars, unless it was explicitly stated or obvious that these deformities were the result of severe punishment.

and two "homespun coarse" dresses, a pair of red morocco-eyed slippers tied with a yellow ribbon, and a "checkered gingham bonnet (or scoop)." The runaway Solomon wore a blue Lindsey coat with yellow metal buttons, an old fur hat, and a worn yellow waistcoat; he carried with him a buffalo robe, two or three pairs of homespun cotton pantaloons, and "several other articles of clothing." A South Carolina slave wore a "blue negro cloth round jacket with new yellow buttons, and blue pantaloons, a grey waistcoat with black velvet on the pockets, new boots, and grey worsted stockings." Another South Carolina runaway wore homespun shirt and pants and an old cloak, but carried "a large stock of Clothing." Myal, a Tennessee runaway, wore plantation-made pants, a cotton shirt, and a wool roundabout. He also had an extra pair of white woolen trousers, blue jeans, and a black fur hat. "The latter clothes are missing," the master confided, and Myal probably took them when he left.[23]

Other plantation slaves discarded their homespun altogether. The Virginia slave Laban fled with a grey lamb's skin coat, white trousers, a double-breasted grey coat, a black cape, and "sundry other clothes." A Kentucky field hand wore a cashmere coat, nice pants, shoes, stockings, and a fur hat, taking along a cotton waistcoat and three extra pairs of cotton trousers. "She is very fond of dress," one South Carolina owner said of his twenty-year-old black Hannah "and carried three or four changes of clothes with her." When he ran away from the plantation of Andre Deslondes in St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, Alexander took two suits of clothes, two pairs of trousers—one dark cloth, the other striped woolen—a blue-and-white-striped jacket, shoes, and a "drab colored hat." The Mississippi plantation hand Patrick dressed "very fine" and had a "fine stock of clothes." Six feet tall, with gold rings on his fingers, Patrick was "a very fine looking negro." Else would "appear in a black Silk or white Muslin gown," her Virginia owner wrote in 1805, "as she had many very good clothes, and is fond of dress." The young North Carolina field hand Oba ran away wearing cotton trousers and a short coat "napped with black wool and cotton, wove plain." He also had two pairs of "buff casimere breeches," a grey waistcoat, a white waistcoat, a pair of ribbed, woolen stockings, and a double-breasted, grey broadcloth coat.[24]

The wardrobes of urban slaves often included a larger selection than was available to plantation hands. Those who worked as waiters, house servants, stewards, seamstresses, tailors, and barbers possessed several suits, dresses, shirts, trousers, jackets, and hats. The Richmond house servant Claiborne took with him "a great variety of wearing apparel, all of excellent quality," his master said, "much better than is usually given to servants." Despite being employed as



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There is about 75 acres in cultivation; the balance in timbered land, and in point of soil is not easily surpassed. The whole could be consolidated and form one tract, which would make it very desirable. I will sell the whole together, or in any quantity to suit the convenience of those wishing to buy. I would take young negroes in payment, or a part in cash, and the balance in convenient instalments.—Those wishing to purchase will call on my son Isaac R. Eatherly on the premises, or to the subscriber, one mile north of the mouth of Harpeth, Montgomery county. There will be about 150 or 200 barrels of corn, and 12 or 15 stacks of fodder on the premises for sale. Should the land not be sold by the 1st of December, the stand on the road will be for rent the ensuing year, and possession given 1st of January next.

JESSE EATHERLY.

Oct. 24, 1838.—Wt6

Runaway,

ON the night of the 9th Nov. inst, a negro man named JIM or ARMSTEAD, aged about 22 years, about five feet ten inches high, very likely, and when spoken to has a pleasing appearance; has whiskers. No particular marks recollected. He wore off when he left a fur cap, brown cloth frock coat, boots, &c.; had with him a variety of clothing, description not recollected, and will most likely dress very well and in newest fashion. He also rode off a large bay horse about 8 year old, a natural pacer, foretop has been cut off and nearly grown out, with a Spanish saddle quilted cover, and no padd saddle bags, &c. I think it most likely that he has attempted to make his way for Nashville, Tenn., or New Orleans. He has a mother in Nashville, said to be free, the wife of a man by the name of Wilson Davis, and was raised in that place and has many adquaintances there: he has lived for the last fewe years in New Orleans, and was a short time since brought to Alabama by Wm. T. Gamble, who conveyed him to me. I have but little doubt that he will make for one of the places mentioned, and will give a reasonable reward to any person who will apprehend and commit him to jail, or give me such information as will lead to the recovery of said negro and horse.

GEO. W. LANE.

Athens, Ala. Dec. 19.—W3t.

The Louisville Journal will publish the above once a week for three weeks, and charge this office.

Mrs. Burrell's Academy.

MRS. BURRELL informs her friends and the public, that the avocations of this establishment will be resumed on Thursday, 3rd January, on the premises lately occupied by Dr. Ring (corner of Cedar and High Streets.) Mrs. B. tenders her acknowl-

All claims sent to him for collectio
Mississippi or Louisiana, will be pro
to.

Natchez, Nov. 3, 1838.—in3m.

CARPETING.

NEW style Brussel Carpeting.
Do. Superfine English and Scott
Low priced Cotton Carpeting.
Floor Cloth Baize.
East India Matting.
Imperial Hearth Rugs.
For sale by J. I
March 9, 1838.—1m.is

SOLE AND UPPER LE

460 Sides sole Leather of a s
590 " heavy upper
for sale by J. R
Nov 16th, 1837.—intf

The Organ at Conc

IS now finished, and will be exhi
day night. Mr. Corrin, the in
strument, is here, and will be happy
orders for organs.

All those who are fond of the org
fessors and Amateurs in general, are
vited to call and try this instrument
offered for sale.

Nov. 30. W.

FOR SALE,

A Large quantity of Sole and U
superior quality. BELL &
Dec. 11—1838

STOLEN.

THREE FINGER R

ONE was a small DIAMOND
small PEARL, and JET Sets.
carved ring, with a BLUE SET—and
very large *carved* ring with the set
eral reward will be given to any per
ture them, or give such information
had. Enquire at this office.

Nashville, December 15, 1838.

Paris Bonn

FLORENCE braid, English str
Bonnets, just received and off
A. D. & C.
Dec. 6.—1s&w

DANCING ACAD

MADAME BLAIQUE,

BEGS leave to inform the Ladie
of Nashville, that she has arri
and will open her dancing Academy
the 12th inst., at 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Alabama runaway Jim or Armstead, who had lived five years in New Orleans, was probably heading to see his free black mother in Nashville. He took with him "a variety of clothing" and would "most likely dress very well and in newest fash-

a carpenter and railroad hand, Jackson maintained a "general assortment of good clothes," his New Orleans owner said, and would no doubt assume "the appearance of a dandy." When the slave Willis boarded a steamboat in New Orleans in 1832, he wore a white shirt, brown linen pants, a blue cloth frock coat, and a black hat. He also took with him a bundle of clothing wrapped in a sheet. The Charleston slave George left his owner in July 1804 wearing a brown jacket, brown calico waistcoat, and brown linen pants with suspenders. George "is very fond of wearing a Neckcloth with a large Pad in it," his owner said, and although hatless, he would probably buy one along the way. Twenty-year-old Walley, also of Charleston, wore a blue cloth coat with yellow buttons, thin black pants, and a black fur hat when he left in January 1828 but carried an extra jacket and two pairs of wool pants wrapped in a carpet.[25]

Other city slaves took large wardrobes. One New Orleans owner did not describe the dress of his slave, a waiter at the St. Charles Hotel, but noted he was "genteel, and little on the dandy order." In 1832, the twenty-six-year-old personal servant of Kinsey Burden of Charleston left wearing a black hat, grey wool pants, a striped gingham jacket, and a black bombazette frock coat. In addition, he carried along a black sealskin cap, two extra suits, two extra waistcoats—one black cassimere and one striped gingham, two pairs of white trousers, and a worn, light blue, broadcloth frock coat. When he left his owner in New Orleans, Nelson had on a tarpaulin hat, blue cotton calico shirt, and cotton pants, but he also possessed "an array of clothing" and might be dressed with "a white silk hat, blue dress coat, and cloth pantaloons." George W. Prescott's petite slave Lucy in Charleston wore a handkerchief on her head and a calico gown with wide ornamental ruffles, but, he warned, she "may change her dress as she carried her trunk." Others took "an abundance of clothing," "an array of clothing," "a bundle of clothing." Several owners echoed the sentiments of a New Orleans man who complained that his slave had taken with him so many articles of clothing that "it is hard to tell what he might wear."[26]

There were practical as well as stylistic reasons for taking many articles of apparel, as the fur or beaver hats and store-bought suits indicated. But principally they took along changes of clothing to use for disguise. Some slaves were best known in their communities because of their dress—Charleston and Christ Church Parish residents knew Cyrus, a coachman, for example, by his brown frock coat and black beaver hat—and when these slaves donned new outfits, they could more readily slip away, as did Cyrus. "She will of course appear in different dresses," a Johns Island, South Carolina, planter said of his runaway in 1822. She would be in a variety of colors because shortly before leaving she was observed dying a number of white dresses.[27]

Jim was well-known around Beaufort, South Carolina, and its vicinity not for his clothing, but as "a noted thief and runaway." He frequently disguised himself as a woman and took the name Sally Turner, his master said, "having once been apprehended in women's apparel." In 1828, he had made it as far as Savannah but was captured and brought back. A short time later he ran away again. The owner believed he would again disguise himself as a woman. Just the reverse was true for the "dark griffe" Crescent City woman Mariah, who would try to pass as a boy. She frequently "dressed herself in boy's clothes, and has her hair cut short for the purpose."[28]

Color, age, gender, distinctive marks, size, and clothing were all part of the profile of runaways. So, too, were hair styles. What is striking in comparing the early and late periods is the similarity of these styles. In both periods, very few runaways were described by their hair style. Persons of mixed racial origin were far more likely to have their hair described than persons who were described as black. In the early period, among 695 slaves, only 38 (5.5 percent) were described as having unusual or distinctive hair; mulattoes were three times more likely than blacks to have their hair described (24 of 207 mulattoes, or 12 percent, compared with 14 of 488 blacks, or 3 percent). It was rare for a male slave to have his hair described as bushy, plaited, or standing high on his head. In the later period, among 1,316 slaves, only 97 (7 percent) were described by their hair style, and persons of mixed origin were nearly five times more likely than blacks to have their hair described. The most important change involved the proportion of women who were described as having unusual hair. In the early period only 1 percent of the female runaways were described by their hair style, compared with 5 percent of the males; in the later period, each group represented 7 percent of their respective totals.[29]

The similarities and differences between the two periods are reflected in newspaper advertisements. First, owners in both periods were more likely to see straight hair as distinctive; second, with the growth of the mulatto population among runaways, this distinction became more common; third, in the later period, slave women of mixed origin may well have not worn the traditional head scarves in order to advertise their straight hair; and fourth, even in the early period, bushy or long hair among male runaways was rare. These changes were more than stylistic. They pointed to cultural changes among slaves as they made the transition from Africans to African Americans.

Personality Traits and Countenance

Runaways possessed many similar personality traits. Here, too, there was diversity, but most runaways demonstrated self-confidence, self-assurance, self-possession, determination, and self-reliance. They were resourceful, willful, focused, and purposeful. A number were quick-witted, wily, and intelligent, while most were deceptive and calculating, and not a few were duplicitous and scheming when it came to dealing with whites. Perhaps the most salient characteristic, however, was courage, especially for those who ran away more than once despite severe punishments. Very few among them appeared surly, morose, or sullen. Indeed, such qualities would have exposed their deep hatred of bondage and made them, in their owner's eyes, troublemakers and potential runaways.

Among the most significant characteristics of runaways was their intelligence. Masters warned the public to beware of black persons who were able to provide credible excuses as to why they were traveling in the area. In 1804, one Virginia owner, W. Gatewood, said that his "likely negro man by the name of TOM," alias Tom Smith, alias Smith, was a "proud, artful, cunning fellow" who had a "very smooth dissembling tongue." The Georgia mulatto Sam was "a keen shrewd fellow" who would "attempt to pass for a free man, and will doubtless make for a free state." She was very "artful and talks very properly, and is capable of deceiving any person," the owner of Maria, a "fine tall mulatto" woman, about thirty years of age, explained. Her husband was literate and had probably written her a pass, and it was "therefore requested that if she should produce a pass to examine it very particularly, as she has none from me." The mulatto carpenter George was "very plausible when spoken to, and well calculated to deceive." The black cooper who left a plantation near Georgetown, South Carolina, in 1828 was "very credible" and often affected a "pleasant but bold smile." Other runaways were described in the same manner: they would change their names, produce false passes, wear fraudulent badges, profess to be free, lie about their owner, feign an illness. In short, as one master put it, they were "very smart and well calculated to deceive."[30]

In order to deceive, runaways assumed a friendly and polite countenance when dealing with whites. This was especially true for older runaways, who were often described as amicable, cordial, and congenial. The fifty-year-old Kentucky slave who was sent to Richmond, Virginia, as a hireling was remarkably polite, often repeating "master," and "making bows almost to the ground." When he absconded, the man who hired him said he was "a very artful fellow" and was probably attempting to secure a berth aboard a sailing vessel as a free man. It was also true for domestic servants and waiters who were often described in the same manner. At age twenty-two or twenty-three, Moses, the "waiting-man" for Theodore Gaillard, a Charleston gentleman, was described as pleasant, amiable, and congenial.[31]

The speech habits of runaways came under close scrutiny in the newspaper notices. About 7 and 8 percent of slaves were said to speak slowly or to a have a downcast look when they were addressed by whites. He has rather "slow speech," he speaks slowly and has "Rather a down look," she "is slow of speech," or in the words of a Louisiana master, he has "a smiling and downcast look when spoken to." Among this group were a few African-born slaves who experienced difficulty pronouncing English words. By 1833, Luck had been in the United States many years, but he still pronounced words with "difficulty as is generally the case," an observer said, "with all the Congo negroes." Others spoke in Gullah, "Savannah dialect," a Charleston dialect, or "a brogue different from Negroes raised in Eastern Virginia." Among those who spoke slowly, only a tiny number stuttered or had speech impediments. In the early period, they numbered only five; and in the later period, only twelve.[32]

Indeed, as many slaves were fluent in at least three languages as those who stuttered. Slaves in Louisiana during the 1820s and 1830s were often bilingual, and some spoke French, Spanish, and English. Advertised runaways were described as speaking English and French, English and Spanish, and as was the case of "creole *Negress* named CELESTINE," English, French, and Spanish. Others spoke English, French, and a little Spanish or French with "broken English." When masters in the region described slaves as "American creole," "American mulatto," "American negro," they were pointing not only to their American birth but to English as their principal language. In the upper states, including Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, a few runaways were bilingual in German and English, especially in sections where German settlers made up a significant portion of the population. Henry Kring of Rockingham County, Virginia, said that his Negro man Hons, who ran away in 1807, "speaks generally the German language."[33]

Whatever their dialect, accent, or language, runaways were generally articulate and well-spoken. They were often described as fluent and smooth with words and quick with speech. Forty-year-old Charles, who called himself Charles Wood, spoke "smooth language and will no doubt tell a good story to pass." The Mississippi slave Anthony, who absconded from Natchez in July 1803, spoke French and English "tolerably well" and was "artful in telling stories." Forty-five-year-

old Tom, who eloped from Soldier's Rest, Davidson County, Tennessee, was remarkably fluent in speech and when addressed would always respond without hesitation. A man who ran away from Nashville "speaks bold and sensible." The New Orleans slave Sam spoke "very quick, and from the top of the tongue." The South Carolina slave Jacob, who was sold to Louisiana in 1834, spoke "quickly, and is rather abrupt in his manner." One twenty-two-year-old black man was "smart and active and speaks very bold in conversation." The griffe man Sam was "soft and smooth in conversation." Sixteen-year-old Frances was quick with words and "very intelligent." A runaway railroad worker spoke in "an impudent, self-confident way," while a Virginia runaway possessed "very good language indeed for a slave."[34]

The personality traits attributed to slaves by their owners and by other whites in newspaper advertisements presented only part of the picture. Though they did note that some slaves were active, bold, surly, and nervous, they rarely described them as defiant, overtly resistant, violent. Nor did they admit that they were sometimes afraid of their slaves. Runaways often demonstrated all of these traits, and owners and overseers were sometimes timid in dealing with such runaways. In their owners' opinion, these slaves were "quarrelsome," "disorderly," and "disobedient"; they were vicious, turbulent, and violent. Whites admitted that they were unable to control such slaves. As one master said, his man was "utterly disobedient and ungovernable" and despite every "admonition and threat continued to disobey him and runaway." Since this owner refused to use chains or other restraints, the only solution was a sale. When a fifteen-year-old Maryland girl

Table 5
Countenance of Slaves as Described in Runaway Advertisements

Description	Early Period, 1790–1816		Late Period, 1838–1860	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Intelligent/Artful	81	12	142	11
Friendly/Polite	81	12	131	10
Cunning	52	8	51	4
Looks Down/Slow Speech	46	7	108	8
Active	46	7	79	6
Bold	27	4	34	3
Surly	20	3	37	3
Nervous	17	2	39	3

Source: Computed from RSDB; since some slaves were listed in more than one category, totals are not included.

named Eliza absconded, was captured, brought back, and threatened with sale to Georgia, she replied that she would "as leave go to Georgia as any where else." She ran away the next day. The owner went to Annapolis, looked up a business associate who knew Eliza's mother, and went to the associate's office. After being there a few minutes, he related, "the door opened and in walked Eliza." The master said he was glad to see her. She replied, " 'I want nothing to do with you.' " She might be forcibly taken back, she added, "but she would not stay with him." The owner sent her to jail and arranged for her sale.[35]

Such defiance was not uncommon among runaways. They were described as displaying "bad and vicious habits," refusing to obey orders, refusing to work, and refusing to "perform services required." Like Eliza, they vowed not to live on their owners' farm or plantation, threatened owners and overseers, and asserted that no amount of punishment would make them change their attitudes. The owner Cosmore Robinson said that his slave was "surly, morose and discontented," a man who was obviously "greatly dissatisfied with his state of servitude." Others were noted for their open defiance, "violent and determined temper," refusal to submit, and their threats against the master's family. When the owner of one runaway decided to sell him, he arranged for the sheriff to put him in jail. He was familiar with the slave's "Character and disposition to do harm" and believed that if the slave knew he was going to be sold the owner's family "would be in great danger."[36]

Three case studies—from South Carolina, Texas, and Maryland—illustrate this aspect of the profile of a runaway. Owned by Mary Cobb of Columbia, South Carolina, Leely ran away on numerous occasions. On one occasion when Leely was out, Cobb, who knew she was "concealed and lurking" about town, hired her out, if the hirer would "take the risk and trouble of finding and getting possession of said slave." After finding Leely, the hirer offered to purchase her, but Cobb would not sell because the black woman "was very evil disposed towards her," if "sold to any person in Columbia, she might do her mischief." A few months later, Leely insulted a member of Mary Cobb's family in the street and was arrested and publicly whipped.[37]

The testimony of a Texas overseer concerning the slave Miles, who worked on a farm in San Augustine County, suggests that runaways were often openly defiant. When a visitor arrived at the farm in 1852 searching for stolen goods, Gilbert B. McIver, the overseer, sent a slave to the field where Miles was plowing to procure the key to his locked cabin door. He refused to give it up. When this was repeated a second time, McIver broke down Miles's door but found nothing. Miles

became angry and told McIver that he "was the first Man that ever sent for *his* Keys, or that broke into his house." The overseer explained:

> In the day after the occurrence of the matter about the Key, of his, I went into the field where he was ploughing, and he had a hatchet, or Hand axe, tied and swung to his Plough: and I thought at the time, that he had it for the purpose, in case he was attacked by me, or if I went to Correct him, to resist me with it. I did not go near him at the time to attempt to Correct him, but just let him plough on, as I was unarmed, and had nothing to defend myself with at the time.

Miles refused to "mind, or give obedience to his overseer," and if he were to be corrected "he would fight; he might, if he had the opportunity, run," but in any event he would resist. He was "disposed to have his own way, and if a manager ordered him to do a task he would grouse and sometimes not perform the work if he were so inclined." When a few days later, armed with a gun and accompanied by a neighbor and his dogs, McIver went to the fields where Miles was plowing to correct him, Miles darted into the woods carrying his hatchet.[38]

Such defiance was also demonstrated by "a negro slave named Peter," whose owner was regarded as kind and benevolent. The owner, John Wood of Frederick County, Maryland, had provided for the future freedom of his slaves, including Peter, who was to be manumitted when he reached age thirty. By age twenty, in 1838, however, Peter had become extremely restive. Hired out to a farmer in the area, he ran away, then ran away again, and then, on a number of different occasions, absented himself without permission. After being jailed, Peter threatened his owner's family, vowed he would never return to his owner, and asserted that being put in jail would never break his spirit. He became, his owner said, unruly, insubordinate, and disobedient. Incarceration had "no effect on his bearing or his insurrectionary spirit." Indeed, even in jail Peter boasted "of his freedom from all fear or restraint."[39]

How and When Slaves Absconded

Although the spectacular escapes depicted in slave narratives and abolitionist literature were not without their basis in fact, the great majority of runaways left neither dramatically nor in the end successfully. Rather, they sneaked off at night, on Saturday afternoon or Sunday, or during holidays; they stowed away on sailing vessels and steamboats, crawled into the back of wagons, concealed themselves in barns, outbuildings, or abandoned houses; they camped out in the woods and swamps. A few rode off on their owners' horses or with their wagons or gigs. By the 1840s and 1850s, some slipped aboard trains or attempted to purchase tickets as free persons.[40]

Despite the unique circumstances surrounding each flight, slaves confronted a number of choices about whether they should run away alone, with members of their families, or in groups; whether they should attempt to use written passes, don a disguise, seek assistance from whites or free blacks, leave at a certain time; and whether or not they should strike out for a city, a remote area near the plantation, or to some distant land. Even in the early period, certain patterns emerged with regard to how and when slaves absconded. By then, the number of African- and West Indian–born slaves in the South had declined significantly, and American-born slaves, now second and third generation, were dominant. As in other aspects of the runaway's profile, there were only modest changes between the early and the later periods, and those that did occur were a result of virtual elimination of African-born blacks in the slave population.

In both periods, a large proportion of runaways set out alone. In the early period, nearly 80 percent in Virginia were alone, 71 percent in North Carolina, and between 51 and 57 percent in Tennessee, South Carolina, and Louisiana; the average in the five states was 60 percent. In the Lower South and Tennessee, there were eighty-eight African-born slaves, compared with none in Virginia and two in North Carolina. Africans were twice as likely as creoles to leave in groups, and their presence pulled the individual runaway percentages down in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Tennessee to slightly more than half. By the late period, the proportion of slaves who absconded alone in the five states had risen to 72 percent. This ranged from slightly more than 60 percent for Tennessee, to two-thirds in Virginia and North Carolina, to 73 percent in South Carolina and 82 percent in Louisiana. By then, those who ran away in groups were more likely to abscond with one or two others, and those in groups of five or more represented a meager 5 percent of the runaway population.[41] In short, by the 1840s and 1850s, the vast majority of runaways—95 percent—struck out on their own or with one or two others.

The "others" included slaves living on the same plantation, belonging to the same owner, working on the same projects, or hired out in the same industries. They also included slaves belonging to the same estate, to the same deceased owner, or the same new owner. Blacks absconded together after committing crimes in collusion with

one another or when they were about to be sold, occasionally after plotting with fellow slaves on a neighboring plantation. The largest group of "others" in the runaway population included slaves belonging to the same owner or to members of the same family. Various family members comprised about one out of three of the "others" in the early period, and about one out of four in the late period.

Similarly, only small changes occurred in the profile among hired and skilled runaways, those who obtained false papers, or who were literate. In both periods, between 2 and 4 percent of the runaways were hired slaves and 15 percent possessed special skills as house servants, artisans, tailors, seamstresses, cooks, barbers, waiters, butlers, laundresses, or vendors. In both periods, 7 percent of the runaways were believed to be carrying forged freedom papers or owners' passes, while the literacy rate among absconders between the early and late periods rose from about 2 percent to 4 percent. It appears that the proportion of hired runaways was somewhat smaller than the proportion of hirelings in the general slave population, while the percentage of runaways who were literate was about the same, and those with special skills slightly higher than in the general population.[42]

As suggested by the small percentage who carried—or were believed to carry—false papers, it was not easy to obtain forged papers. The problem was further exacerbated if a recipient were illiterate, as most were, and his or her explanation did not coincide with what was written on the forged documents. Occasionally field hands did obtain counterfeit certificates, but it was usually city slaves who obtained papers and attempted to pose either as self-hired slaves or free blacks. The New Orleans mulatto Robert, who ran away in August 1839, produced papers saying he had permission to hire himself out. Another Crescent City slave, Lewis, secured a pass to visit his wife, and since that time, his master noted, "I have not seen him." The Charleston drayman Frank posed as a free person of color and wore a fake badge "as a protection against being committed."[43]

Slaves who obtained passes or wrote them for themselves were described as intelligent, artful, and "plausible" men and women who appeared "to be very truthful." Virginia master Hopewell Parsons told readers that his slave Eve possessed a "signed" document saying that she was Henry Cooper's emancipated slave Sally Cole. Eve used the document to her advantage, remaining at large for nearly a year. A Tennessee owner said his slave obtained a pass "from some person in the neighborhood" and was heading for Ohio or Virginia. The owner of Georgia carpenter Jacob said his slave obtained "a sealed pass, en-

dorsed 'a pass for Jacob from Oglethorpe County Georgia, to the State of Delaware.' " It said that he should be permitted to ride any stage coach. He was last seen on the main road heading north out of Columbia, South Carolina.[44]

Literate slaves sometimes wrote their own passes. Kitt was a "very likely fellow," could read and write, and would probably "furnish himself with a pass," one New London, Virginia, owner wrote in 1805. "He is very intelligent," one advertisement said of a slave who escaped from a private jail in Richmond. The runaway could read and write very well; there was little doubt he would "have in his possession Forged Papers and Passes." The mulatto Charleston tailor Joshua, who belonged to the estate of Sabina Hall, could read and write and "may attempt to pass by forged papers as free." "There can be little doubt of his attempting to pass as a free man," the owner of Richmond slave Samuel Barker said in 1805, "as a forged certificate of his freedom was found the day after he went off."[45]

The effective use of papers is illustrated by the field hand Levi, who escaped in 1850 from a plantation near Goldsboro, North Carolina. He stole the manumission deeds of Luke and Ned Hall, free blacks in the neighborhood. Attempting to use Luke Hall's papers to board a train, he was detected and the papers confiscated. But Levi escaped, and with a second set of papers, he journeyed to the hamlet of Black Creek, about twenty miles from Goldsboro in Wayne County, where he inquired of a station master how he could get to Raleigh. This was probably a ploy, Levi's owner James G. Edwards explained, and "it is suspected that he may still be lurking somewhere in this region."[46]

The moment in time chosen by slaves to run away was in part determined by individual circumstances—sale of a child, punishment of a wife or husband, a severe whipping, the decision of a master to move, the death of an owner—but a number were biding their time until they were sure that their absence would not be immediately detected or that the weather would not be a hindrance. Among the runaways whose exact departure time could be determined from newspaper notices (611 of 695 in the early period, 1,073 of 1,316 in the late period), there were similar seasonal trends. In both periods, the number of runaways in the autumn months dropped, when harvesting made surveillance close. Between 17 and 18 percent of runaways left between late September and late December. In the winter-spring-summer, the numbers increased. Although there were variations among states, by the later period the numbers of runaways by season, excluding autumn, were almost identical: 296 in the winter, 289 in the spring, and 295 in the summer, about 27 percent per season.

African-born Runaways

In many ways, then, there was a remarkable continuity over a period of seventy years in the profile of runaways. The largest single disparity involved African-born runaways. In the late period, there were only three among the entire population, but in the early period, as indicated previously, there were 90 runaways among the 695, or 13 percent, who were Africans. As would be expected, their profile is unique. Indeed, many of the differences between the two periods were the result of the Africans, who made up a small but significant group of the early runaways.[47]

Even more than the American-born, African-born runaways were predominantly male (88 percent) and described as black or very black (90 percent), but their age groupings were not unlike other runaways, being mostly in their teens and twenties. There were none, however, who were beyond their thirties, and the proportion of those twelve or under was several times that of the American-born, as African-born parents more often took their children with them during flight. None was literate, one was said to have a pass, and one out of eight was said to be bilingual. Besides these differences, among African-born slaves nearly two-thirds (58 of 90) ran away in groups of two or more, and one-third (30 of 90) in groups of five or more; while among American-born slaves, one-third (223 of 605) ran away in groups of two or more and 14 percent (84 of 605) in groups of five or more. Among the African-born to an even greater extent than among creole slaves, those setting off together were members of the same families or kinship groups.

The physical characteristics of African-born slaves were more obvious than for any group of runaways. Described as Mandingo, Ebo, "Congo," "Guinea," or African, in most cases, their appearance was not unlike Nuncanna, a slave who lived on a farm in Tennessee. Absconding with two other African-born slaves in 1815, Nuncanna was about thirty years old, with "very long fore-teeth, appearing sharp as if the ends of them had been filed." He spoke "very bad English" and was marked "by the African mark." Other African-born runaways also had filed teeth and had marks of their "nation" on their cheeks, noses, forehead, and chins. The "Guinea negress" Rosalie in Louisiana, for example, had "marks of her country" on both sides of her face; while the Congo black Carloe had tattoos "from the ears to the eyes."[48]

Even in the 1820s and 1830s, the physical appearance of African-born slaves, now very few in number, had not changed significantly. Rosalia, alias Felicite, a forty-two-year-old woman, was owned by a New Orleans physician. Her master spoke disparagingly of her: she had "a stupid countenance," spoke almost no English and only "broken French," and had "marks of her country" on her cheeks. Despite her owner's remarks, in 1834 she left her employer, crossed the Mississippi River, journeyed to the suburb of Lafayette, then traveled to the various plantations where she had "many acquaintances." During her journey, she told anyone who questioned her that she had her owner's permission to seek a new owner. The few who spoke English or had in various ways adjusted to their new environment were still identified by their homeland: Congo-born Rose of Louisiana, who spoke French, English, and Spanish; the "African negro" Antoine who ran away from auctioneers in New Orleans; and "African" Billy who ran from a plantation South Carolina.[49]

Thus, the profile of a runaway reveals a diversity in origin, appearance, language, skills, color, physique, gender, and age. There were African-born blacks, slaves who spoke only French or Spanish, slaves who were highly skilled and privileged, others who worked in the fields. There were young boys and girls, and elderly men and women. There were some who began absconding at age eight and ten; there was a fourteen-year-old youngster who stood four feet seven and a half inches tall; and there were old men described as feeble, scared, crippled, and "quite grey."[50]

Yet, there was remarkable continuity over time and in different states in the profile of a runaway. It would probably be difficult to find any group in the United States that changed less over a period of seventy years. When one considers the expansion of slavery across the Appalachians, the growth and expanding economic base of free blacks, and the increase of the slaveholding class, the similarities among runaways—in gender, age, color, physical characteristics, appearance, personality traits, and methods of absconding—seem all the more remarkable. The persistence was not because those who ran away were successful or even because the young men who left in greatest numbers could best endure punishment following capture. Rather, it revealed the nature of slave resistance: those who could best defy the system with even a remote chance of success—young, strong, healthy, intelligent men—continued to do so relentlessly from one generation to the next.

York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 366–71; Theodore B. Wilson, *The Black Codes of the South* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1965); Richard Bardolph, ed., *The Civil Rights Record: Black Americans and the Law, 1849–1970* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970), 35–40.

51. Baltimore County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Caleb D. Owings vs. Elias Burgess, 9 January 1855, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA; copy of Elias Burgess's indenture to Caleb D. Owings, 3 January 1855, and Petition of Caleb Owings, 12 February 1855, in ibid.

52. Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1840–51, 230–31, Petition of Richard A. Harwood to the Orphans Court, 14 March 1848, reel #CR 63,127-2, MSA. Turner's indenture was extended one year. These cases were heard before the Orphans Court in each county. This court dealt with a range of equity cases, not merely ones dealing with orphans. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Richard F. Ensey vs. Jerry Matthews, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 14 March 1859, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Order of the Court, 18 March 1859, with ibid.

53. Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 203–4, Petition of J. B. Nichols to the Orphans Court, 19 April 1855, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA; and 252, Petition of J. B. Nichols to the Orphans Court, 14 August 1855, in ibid. In each instance, Nichols was able to extend Boston's time of service.

54. Baltimore County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Indenture of Charles Turner, Free Negro, to Catherine A. Johnston, 6 June 1857, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA; Petition of Catherine A. Johnston, 11 September 1860, with ibid. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of William Creamer to Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 17 August 1859, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Mary Jane Mason vs. Margaret H. Winchester, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 15 June 1860, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA. Comment of another master in Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Jesse A. Murphy vs. Charles Henry Grandison, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 20 February 1860, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA.

55. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), James S. Wilson vs. Augusta Sprigg, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 2 December 1856, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA. Quotes by other masters in Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of William Creamer to Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 17 August 1859, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Mary Jane Mason vs. Margaret H. Winchester, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 15 June 1860, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA.

56. Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 509–12, Petitions of John H. Caples to the Orphans Court, 12 July 1859, 9 August 1859, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA; Baltimore County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Thomas Biddison vs. Negro Henry Stockler, 3 August 1858, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA. Example of William Gaugh in Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 520–22, Petition of Robert H. Carr to the Orphans Court, 22 November 1859, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA. The court granted the request. Baltimore County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Indenture of Washington Boston to David W. McKlendin, 20 March 1854, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA; Petition of John H. Toffling, 18 April 1860, with ibid.; Copy of Proceedings of the Baltimore City Orphans Court, 17 June 1858, with ibid.

57. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Margaret A. Newman vs. Louis Henry Foulks, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 26 April 1859, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA.

58. Records of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, Segregated Habeas Corpus Papers, Record Group 21, Petition of Nancy Jones, 24 August 1835, Entry #28, Box 1, NA; Copy of Indenture Between George Jones and James Mullinax, 27 May 1835, with ibid.; Unidentified newspaper clipping, 25 July 1835, with ibid.; J. Walsh to E. Mason, 22 August 1835, with ibid. Mullinax's name was also spelled Millinix, and Milinix.

59. Baltimore County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Hezekiah Linthicum vs. Ann Marie [also spelled Maria] Carter, 6 November 1855, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Joseph Swinney vs. Hester Ann Powell, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 6 January 1860, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Order of the Court, 15 February 1860, with ibid.; Petition of Hannah Powell, 10 September 1860, with Hannah Powell vs. John Hinesly, 10 September 1860, ibid.

60. Information on Levi Stevenson in Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1840–51, 260–62, Petition of William H. Bird to the Orphans Court, 12 September 1848, reel #CR 63,127-2, MSA; also see Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Richard F. Ensey vs. Jerry Matthews, Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 14 March 1859, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Order of the Court, 18 March 1859, with ibid. Ensey received permission to sell free black Jerry Matthews at a private sale.

Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), John Russell vs. Thomas Galloway, Orphans Court of Baltimore County, 21 June 1848, reel M-11,025, SC, MSA; Petition of John Russell, 21 June 1848, with ibid.; Answer of Thomas Galloway, 30 June 1848, with ibid; Deposition of William B. Perine, 5 July 1848, with ibid.; Indenture of John Russell to Thomas Galloway, 17 July 1841, with ibid. There was no final decree from the court given in this case.

61. Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of Edward Johnson to the Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 8 March 1862, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Order of the Court, 14 March 1862, with ibid. The farmer's lawyer wrote the court: "This boy Johnson is a very bad fellow. His running away has not been because of bad treatment but because he knew he deserved punishment for stealing and other vicious conduct." None of the other black workers on the farm had ever been punished, he said, and "are within my knowledge contented." C. W. Powell to Isaac P. Cook, Register of Wills, Baltimore City, 27 March 1862, with ibid.

Chapter 9

1. *North Carolina Minerva and Raleigh Advertiser*, 25 October 1816, in *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791–1840*, ed. Freddie L. Parker (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 120.

2. *Charleston Mercury*, 18, 21, 25 November 1857, 9, 16, 19 December 1857.

3. The statistics here and for the remainder of this chapter are computed from RSDB. For an explanation of how the data were drawn, see appendix 7. The gender delineations are comparable to those found in secondary sources. See Betty Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 110; Freddie L. Parker, *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775–1840* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 70. Among 4,265 runaways in the South Carolina and Georgia low country between the 1730s and 1805, Michael Mullin found 867 female slaves, or 20 percent. 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), 289–91. In his analysis of advertisements in eighteenth-century Virginia and South Carolina, Lathan Windley discovered variations before and after

the American Revolution, but his 19.4 percent of female runaways (715 of 3,685) is very similar to the RSDB. Calculated from Lathan Algerna Windley, *A Profile of Runaway Slaves in Virginia and South Carolina from 1730 Through 1787* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 159–60.

4. Records of the General Assembly, Petition of William Fairy to the South Carolina Senate, 1 November 1808, #37, SCDAH. Jack was later tried for assaulting a white man and executed. Records of the General Assembly, Petition of William Villard to the South Carolina Senate, 23 November 1813, #107, SCDAH. The incident occurred in 1812. Farmers who came to Villard's rescue captured Sampson. He was later executed. Villard received $300 compensation for confronting Sampson, who was described as having a "desperate and atrocious character."

5. Jeffrey R. Young, "Ideology and Death on a Savannah River Rice Plantation, 1833–1867: Paternalism amidst 'a Good Supply of Disease and Pain,' " *Journal of Southern History* 59 (November 1993), 681.

6. Parker, *Running for Freedom*, 71; Deborah White, "Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South," *Journal of Family History* 8 (fall 1983), 251; and *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 70–76; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 649; Stanley W. Campbell, "Runaway Slaves," in *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*, ed. Randall M. Miller and John David Smith (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 650; Judith Kelleher Schafer, "New Orleans Slavery in 1850 as Seen in Advertisements," *Journal of Southern History* 47 (February 1981), 43–44.

7. Records for Letty can be found in *Nashville Whig*, 6, 13 December 1814; for Nancy in *New Orleans Bee*, 23 September 1828. The advertisement ran through 12 November 1828. Information on Sawney in Records of the General Assembly, Petition of Samuel Linton, Sr., to the South Carolina General Assembly, 1817, #136, SCDAH; on Delph in Records of the General Assembly, Petition of Joseph Wardlaw to the South Carolina House of Representatives, 21 March 1817, #105, SCDAH. Wardlaw sought permission to bring Delph into the state following the passage of a law prohibiting the importation of slaves for sale and speculation. Discussion of Angeline in *Richmond Enquirer*, 5 August 1836, cited by Herbert Gutman in *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 264. See also Robert Bremner, ed., *Childhood and Youth In America: A Documentary History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 1:378.

8. For advertisements concerning black youngsters, see *Tennessee Republican Banner* [Nashville], 13 March 1838, 27 December 1839; *Alexandria Gazette, Commercial and Political*, 30 March 1815, in *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801–1820*, ed. Daniel Meaders (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 230; *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 April 1816, in Meaders, ed., *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia*, 292; also see Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 120. Alice is described in Baltimore City Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of John Ven Ness Philip to the Orphans Court of Baltimore City, 5 September 1860, reel M-11,026, SC, MSA; Affidavit of Henrietta Johnson, 4 September 1860, with ibid. Catherine and Henry in *New Orleans Bee*, 16 March 1831; *New Orleans Bee*, 3 July 1833, with the latter notice running continuously through 30 September 1833. Water Scott in *New Orleans Bee*, 8 April 1841; Elias in *Charleston Mercury*, 15 December 1828.

9. *New Orleans Bee*, 12 August 1830; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 29 December 1823; *Charleston Mercury*, 9 August 1828; notice running through 6 September 1828; *Charleston Mercury*, 7 June 1832; *Richmond Enquirer*, 14 May 1850; *Charleston Mercury*, 21 August 1832; *Charleston Mercury*, 11 December 1832.

10. *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 September 1804, 10 October 1804, 13, 15, 20 December 1804, 22 February 1805, 19 April 1805, 3 May 1805, 4 June 1805, 28 January 1806, 4, 11, 13, 15, 25, February 1806, 8 April 1806. Descriptions of the less black in *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 February 1808; of the very black in *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 May 1807; *New Orleans Picayune*, 4 February 1838, 30 June 1838, 14 July 1838, 7, 16, 19 June 1839, 3 July 1839, 10, 11, 31 August 1839, 3 October 1839, 5, 11, 13 December 1839, 2 January 1840, 13 March 1840; of Abel and Abram in *Charleston Mercury*, 11 January 1855.

11. For the census breakdown of blacks and mulattoes in 1850 in the United States, see Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 24–33; also see Edward Byron Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States: Including a Study of the Role of Mixed-Blood Races Throughout the World* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1918).

12. Description of Coleman in *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 22, 24, 25, 26 February 1840; of Bonaparte in *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 June 1851; of Guy in *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 22 August 1842; of John in *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 25 May 1839; *Richmond Enquirer*, 26 March 1805, 12 December 1805, 7, 14 January 1806; *Tennessee Gazette*, 31 March 1802; *Nashville Whig*, 27 April 1814, 3, 11 May 1814; *New Orleans Picayune*, 7 April 1839; *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 February 1855. In his travels in the South, Frederick Law Olmsted said he read about one hundred advertisements for runaways who were "so white they might be mistaken for white persons." Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), 640–41. Discussion of Mabin in *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 February 1833, cited in William G. Proctor, Jr., "Slavery in Southwest Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 49 (March 1965), 6.

13. South Carolina descriptions in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 4 April 1822, 25 October 1822, 26 November 1823, 29 December 1823, 27 January 1824, 30 September 1824, 18, 28 April 1825, 3 May 1825; *Charleston Mercury*, 1 July 1828, 20 February 1830, 17 July 1830, 14 January 1831, 27 May 1831. Virginia ones in *Richmond Enquirer*, 28 January 1806; *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 February 1808; *Richmond Enquirer*, 23 November 1852, 14 January 1853; *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 September 1804, 10 October 1804, 13, 15, 20 December 1804, 22 February 1805, 19 April 1805, 3 May 1805, 4 June 1805, 28 January 1806, 4, 11, 13, 15, 25 February 1806, 8 April 1806; *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 February 1806, 11 March 1806; *Richmond Enquirer*, 27 May 1806; *Richmond Enquirer*, 26 July 1808; *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 February 1852; *Richmond Enquirer*, 11 February 1853; *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 July 1849; *Richmond Enquirer*, 10 August 1849.

14. *New Orleans Bee*, 16, 18 October 1834, 14, 29 November 1834, 10 February 1835, 7 March 1835, 11, 14 May 1835, 8, 20, 23 June 1835, 1 July 1835, 21 August 1835, 6, 12 January 1836, 12 March 1836. Use of "griff" in *New Orleans Picayune*, 4 February 1838, 30 June 1838, 14 July 1838, 7, 16, 19 June 1839, 3 July 1839, 10, 11, 31 August 1839, 3 October 1839, 5, 11, 13 December 1839, 2 January 1840, 13 March 1840; *New Orleans Bee*, 8 April 1841; quote about Joe in *New Orleans Bee*, 19 March 1835.

15. Slave owners sometimes used general terms to describe the height of runaways: short, medium size, tall; when these are combined with specific estimates, height categories include the following:

Estimated Heights Among Runaways: Early Period

	Number of Females	Percent in Category	Number of Males	Percent in Category
Short	21	53	71	20
Average	13	32	136	39
Tall	6	15	142	41
Total	40	100	349	100

Estimated Heights Among Runaways: Late Period

	Number of Females	Percent in Category	Number of Males	Percent in Category
Short	77	51	153	22
Average	58	38	275	39
Tall	17	11	275	39
Total	152	100	703	100

In 1857, an Edisto Island, South Carolina, planter described his slave Joe as "short—say five feet six inches." *Charleston Mercury*, 19 September 1857, 1, 6, 8, 10 October 1857. Also see the 27 September 1856 edition for a comment on height. A Virginia master described his six-foot runaway as a man of "remarkable" height. *Richmond Enquirer*, 20 July 1852.

16. Quote of "very remarkable lumps" in *Virginia Herald*, 8 January [1805], with Legislative Petitions, Petition of Mary Bussell to the Virginia General Assembly, 14 December 1812, Stafford County, Oversize, VSA; "white swelling" in *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 May 1807; *Tennessee Gazette* [Nashville], 12, 19, 26 May 1802, 9, 16 June 1802; quote about deformed foot in *Nashville Whig*, 27 December 1814, 4, 10, 17 January 1815; *Nashville Whig*, 12 December 1815; "web on one of his eyes" in *New Orleans Bee*, 17 November 1834; "lame in the left knee" in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 4 April 1822; "one-half of her right foot" in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 2 June 1825; quote about diseased left thigh in *Charleston Mercury*, 29 May 1830; *New Orleans Picayune*, 17 July 1840, 1 August 1840.

17. *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 June 1807; *Nashville Whig*, 27 April 1814, 3 11 May 1814; *Nashville Whig*, 22 November 1814, 6 December 1814; *New Orleans Bee*, 28 November 1832; *New Orleans Bee*, 14 November 1834; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 29 December 1823; *Louisiana Journal* [St. Francisville], 26 November 1826, in *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, ed. Ulrich B. Phillips (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark, 1910), 2:88.

18. *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 January 1857; quotes about William in *New Orleans Tribune*, 7 June 1839.

19. *Richmond Enquirer*, 30 December 1807; *Georgia Express* [Athens], 17 December 1808, in Phillips, ed., *A Documentary History*, 2:92–93; *Nashville Whig*, 8, 15 August 1815.

New Orleans Bee, 21 October 1833; *New Orleans Bee*, 2 May 1835; *New Orleans Bee*, 11 November 1835. See also *New Orleans Bee*, 11–29 February 1828, 1 March 1828, 1–30 April 1828, 1–24 May 1828, 24 June 1831, 28 November

1832, 1 December 1832, 7 January 1833, 28 August 1833, 4 September 1833, 29 January 1834, 22 April 1834, 13 May 1834, 5–20 June 1834, 14 November 1834, 3–31 December 1834, 3–15 January 1835, 2 May 1835, 8 June 1835, 11 November 1835.

21. Records of the District Court, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, William H. Strong vs. Clement Rachal, 12 November 1836, #1,474, Parish Court House, Natchitoches, Louisiana.

22. *New Orleans Bee*, 21 October 1830; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 114; *Richmond Enquirer*, 26 March 1805, 12 December 1805; *Nashville Whig*, 4, 11, 25 January 1814, 28 June 1814; *New Orleans Bee*, 1 May 1841, 24 March 1841.

23. *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 4 October 1824, 10 November 1825; *Charleston Mercury*, 14 September 1829. Description of Celia in *Nashville Whig*, 27 April 1814, 3, 11 May 1814; Solomon in *Nashville Whig*, 15 August 1815, 5 September 1815; quote of "negro cloth round jacket" in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 27 January 1824; "large stock of Clothing" in *Charleston Mercury*, 14 January 1831. "Myal probably took them" in *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 7 April 1838.

24. *Virginia Herald*, 8 January [1805], with Legislative Petitions, Petition of Mary Bussell to the Virginia General Assembly, 14 December 1812, Stafford County, Oversize, VSA; *Nashville Whig*, 8, 15 August, 1815; *Charleston Mercury*, 11 October 1830; *New Orleans Bee*, 14 May 1835; *New Orleans Picayune*, 30 April 1839; *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 August 1805; *Richmond Enquirer*, 12 September 1806.

25. *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 December 1804; *New Orleans Bee*, 25 May 1832; *New Orleans Bee*, 30 August 1832; *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 October 1804; *Charleston Mercury*, 14 January 1828.

26. Mention of large wardrobe in *New Orleans Bee*, 13 December 1832; *New Orleans Picayune*, 28 August 1839; *Charleston Mercury*, 27 September 1832; *New Orleans Picayune*, 5 December 1839; *Charleston Mercury*, 28 November 1827. For the dress of slave women in New Orleans, see *New Orleans Bee*, 22 April 1834, 21 January 1841. Quotes about what others took in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 3 May 1825; *New Orleans Picayune*, 5 December 1839; *New Orleans Bee*, 30 August 1832; of New Orleans man in *New Orleans Bee*, 8 October 1834. The notice ran continuously through 9 December 1834.

27. *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 October 1804; *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 December 1804, 13 August 1805; *Nashville Whig*, 15 August 1815, 5 September 1815; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 24 December 1822; description of Cyrus in *Charleston Mercury*, 18 March 1828; quote about Johns Island slave in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 24 December 1822. She ran away "about the middle of November" and the notice appeared through 17 May 1823.

28. *Charleston Mercury*, 5 December 1829; *New Orleans Picayune*, 28 April 1837. The notice ran continuously through 28 August 1837. The $500 reward was almost certainly a misprint.

29. For a comparison with the pre-Revolutionary generation of runaways, see Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Southern History* 61 (February 1995), 66. In the mid-eighteenth century, a number of male slaves boasted "large bushy" heads of hair, hair worn "remarkable high," or "a large quantity of long wool"; female slaves also had "long black Hair," remarkably long hair, bushy heads of hair. Descriptions of male hair in *Richmond Enquirer*, 22 November 1805, 19 May 1807, 18 May 1807, 10 June 1807. In the early period, among 695 slaves advertised,

advertised, 18 women and 79 men were similarly described.

30. *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 December 1804; *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 21 August 1839; *Charleston Mercury*, 1 July 1828; *Charleston Mercury*, 29 August 1828; descriptions of other runaways in *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 March 1808; *Charleston Mercury*, 3 October 1831, 25 July 1832; *Richmond Enquirer*, 29 September 1854, 13 October 1854; *Tennessee Gazette*, 31 May 1806; *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 27 February 1840, 31 July 1851; *New Orleans Bee*, 29 March 1831, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 April 1831, 27 May 1831, 9 August 1831, 19 July 1832, 23–30 March 1833, 1–13 April 1833; New *Orleans Picayune*, 7 June 1839; *Charleston Mercury*, 17 September 1832. Quote of "very smart and well calculated" in *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 October 1854.

31. *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 October 1806; *Charleston Mercury*, 14 June 1826.

32. Notices for slow speakers in *Richmond Enquirer*, 23 December 1853. Quotes cited in *New Orleans Bee*, 25 April 1834, 19 March 1835; *New Orleans Picayune*, 2 August 1838. See also *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 20 October 1824; *Charleston Mercury*, 12 April 1832, 7 May 1832, 29 June 1832, 27 October 1832; *New Orleans Bee*, 25 April 1834, 19 March 1835, 15 July 1835; *New Orleans Picayune*, 2 August 1838; 30 July 1838. Quotes about Luck in *New Orleans Bee*, 30 September 1833; the "Savannah dialect" is mentioned in *New Orleans Bee*, 17 February 1836; the "accent of a negress" is noted in *New Orleans Picayune*, 7 April 1839; the Virginia "brogue" is found in *Richmond Enquirer*, 31 May 1853.

33. Description of Celestine in *New Orleans Bee*, 11 February 1828, 9 April 1828; also see *New Orleans Bee*, 11 January 1831, 10, 19, 28, 29 March 1831. Descriptions of multilingual slave in *New Orleans Bee*, 21 October 1828; with the advertisement running until 12 November 1828; of American slaves in *New Orleans Bee*, 11 January 1831, 10, 19, 28, 29 March 1831; of Hons in *Staunton Eagle*, 19 November 1807, transcribed by J. Susanne Simmons in appendix 4, "They Too Were Here: African-Americans in Augusta County and Staunton, Virginia, 1745–1865," (master's thesis, James Madison University, 1994), 109.

34. *Tennessee Gazette*, 20 July 1803; *Tennessee Gazette*, 24, 31 August 1803, 7, 14, 21 September 1803; *Nashville Whig*, 2, 9 August 1814; *Nashville Whig*, 27 December 1814, 4, 10, 17 January 1815; *New Orleans Bee*, 28 August 1830; *New Orleans Bee*, 28 April 1834; *New Orleans Bee*, 11 June 1834; *New Orleans Bee*, 16 October 1834; *New Orleans Picayune*, 15 May 1839, 28 May 1840; *Richmond Enquirer*, 8 September 1854.

35. A few owners also described their runaways as having "rather dull countenance," "a broad dull face," "a downcast, stupid look." *Richmond Enquirer*, 22 February 1805; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 4 April 1822; *Charleston Mercury*, 29 May 1830.

Maryland law required owners of term slaves to obtain court permission to sell them out of the state. The attitudes of owners toward rebellious slaves are therefore revealed in some detail. See Frederick County Court (Petitions), Petition of Henry Kemp to the County Court, 8 March 1836, reel 11,024, SC, MSA; Howard County Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of A. L. Mackey to the Orphans Court, 1854, reel M-11,024, SC, MSA; Howard County Register of Wills (Petitions), Petition of George Richardson to the Orphans Court, 7 August 1855, reel M-11,024, SC; Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1840–51, 274–78, Petition of James H. Watkins to the Orphans Court, 19 December 1848, reel #CR 63,127-2, MSA; Anne Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 122–23, Petition of Charles R. Steward to the Orphans Court, 24 October 1854, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA.

Quotes about "utterly disobedient" slave in Anne Arundel County Register Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 458–60, Petition of James S. Wilson to t Orphans Court, 16 April 1858, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA; about Eliza in Anne Arunc County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1851–60, 122–23, Petition of Charl R. Steward to the Orphans Court, 24 October 1854, reel #CR 63,128-1, MSA.

36. The "violent and determined temper" quote is found in Baltimore Coun Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders), Petition of Richard Hutchens to the Orpha Court, 22 June 1853, reel M-11,020, SC, MSA. Also see in Baltimore County Regist of Wills (Petitions and Orders), reel M-11,020, SC, MSA: James M. Brannon vs. Uria Young, 15, April 1856; George Harryman vs. Negro Abraham, 12 July 1859; Joh Timanus vs. Cosmore Robinson, 1 June 1861; Petition of John Timanus to the Or phans Court, 12 November 1861; Order of the Court, 20 November 1861, with ibid reel M-11,020, SC, MSA. Quote about slave's "disposition to do harm" in Ann Arundel County Register of Wills (Petitions and Orders) 1840–51, 161–63, Petitio of Rezin Hammond to the Orphans Court, 8 September 1846, reel #CR 63,127-2 MSA.

37. Records of the Equity Court, Richland District, South Carolina, Mary Cobb vs. Ann Reynolds, 13 January 1819, microfilm reel #153, SCDAH.

38. Records of the District Court, San Augustine County, Texas, Charles W. Brady vs. Tempe Price, 16 October 1856, Case #1,132, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin University, Nacogdoches, Texas; Testimony of Gilbert B. McIver, 13 September 1856. The testimony about the earlier incident was allowed in a case involving another overseer, Charles W. Brady, who killed Miles and then sued the slave owner for back salary.

39. Frederick County Court (Petitions), Petition of John Wood to the County Court, 31 October 1838, reel M-11,024, SC, MSA. Wood received permission to sell Peter's unexpired term "to any person within or without this State," but the court required that Peter be furnished with a copy of his manumission deed. Order of the Court, October Term 1838, with ibid.

40. Discussion of spectacular escapes in Richard J. M. Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers: Biographical Essays in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 87–90; Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), 49–50. For slaves on trains, see Jenny Bourne Wahl, "The Bondsman's Burden: An Economic Analysis of the Jurisprudence of Slaves and Common Carriers," *Journal of Economic History* 53 (September 1993), 511–15.

41. Excluding the thirty runaways in the early period who were either stolen or absconded from Amelia Island, East Florida, and advertised in the *Nashville Whig*, 7 December 1813, the proportion of runaways in the category of four or more slaves would narrow between the two periods. Nonetheless, 17 percent in the early period and 5 percent in the later period were in this category.

42. As previously noted, according to one estimate, 6 percent of rural slaves and 31 percent of urban slaves were on hire in 1860. In addition, about three-fourths of adult slaves were field hands, and by the 1850s in the deep South, with the intense labor shortage, increasing numbers of skilled slaves were pressed into field labor. Thus, the 15 percent skilled runaways was probably slightly higher than the percentage of skilled slaves in the general population. About 5 percent of slaves were probably literate or semi-literate. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 105, 110, 142.

43. Legislative Petitions, Petition of Nathaniel Wilkinson to the Virginia General Assembly, 7 December 1795, Henrico County, VSA. Descriptions of slaves with fake passes in *New Orleans Picayune*, 20 August 1839; *New Orleans Picayune*, 5 December 1839; *Charleston Mercury*, 8 November 1827.

44. Quotes about appearance of slaves with fake passes in *Charleston Mercury*, 12 September 1828; *Richmond Enquirer*, 5 September 1806. Eve absconded on 15 October 1805. Forging papers for slaves was a serious offense, but it was rarely prosecuted. In the first thirty-eight years of the nineteenth century, in the entire state of Virginia, only one person went to the penitentiary for furnishing a slave with false papers. Philip J. Schwarz, *Twice Condemned, Slaves and the Criminal Laws of Virginia, 1705–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 302–4.

Other quotes in *Nashville Whig*, 27 April 1814, 3, 11 May 1814; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 26 June 1822.

45. Quotes about literate slaves in *Richmond Enquirer*, 24 May 1805; *Richmond Enquirer*, 12 August 1853, with the notice running continuously through 2 December 1853; *Charleston Mercury*, 27 February 1830; *Richmond Enquirer*, 22 February 1805.

46. *Richmond Enquirer*, 27 August 1850. Levi absconded on 29 June 1850; the notice ran through 18 October 1850.

47. For roughly comparable evidence from the Chesapeake Bay region and the Carolina low country during the eighteenth century, see 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), 289–91.

48. The male stonecutter named June, who spoke "tolerable English," for example, was described only as "a native of Africa." *Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political*, 23 October 1804, in Meaders, ed., *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia*, 41. Quotes about Nuncanna in *Nashville Whig*, 29 November 1815, 12, 19 December 1815, 9, 16, 23 January 1816, 7, 27 February 1816, 5, 12 March 1816, 4, 25 June 1816, 2 July 1816. There were twenty-eight slaves in the RSDB for the early period who were not born in the United States. Their origins included various islands in the Caribbean, South America (one was cited as Portuguese), and not known. Because of their small number and diverse origins, they were excluded. Descriptions of other Africans in *New Orleans Bee*, 12 August 1830; *New Orleans Bee*, 25 April 1834; *New Orleans Bee*, 17 March 1835.

49. Quotes about Rosalia in *New Orleans Bee*, 21 July 1834. Identification of Africans in *New Orleans Bee*, 16 April 1835; *New Orleans Bee*, 7 January 1836, Antoine ran away on the 20 November 1835 and the notice continued until 14 January 1836; *Charleston Mercury*, 6 June 1827.

50. Descriptions by height in *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 3 December 1824; *Charleston Mercury*, 7 June 1832; *Richmond Enquirer*, 14 May 1850.

Chapter 10

1. Daily Journal, 1854–1855, Morville Plantation, Concordia Parish Louisiana, Surget Family Papers, MDAH.

2. William K. Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 68, 70; James O. Breeden, *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 291–98.

3. Quote of "courage to drive Negroes" in John R. Casey to John D. Dunn, 13 July 1859, John D. Dunn Papers, Manuscript Division, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. On the eve of the Civil War, for example, there were about 46,000 "planters" in the South, but only about 38,000 overseers. Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 10.

4. Quotes on trusting slaves in Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 164–66; John Merriman to Francis D. Richardson, 11 November 1840, Weeks (David and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.

5. Records of the Parish Court, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, Sixth District Court, A. L. Dixon vs. D. P. Cain, 4 March 1858, #1,523, Parish Court House, Port Allen, Louisiana. Dixon, the overseer, who was fired, sued Cain, the planter, for his wages and the use of his slaves. Despite the evidence, the plaintiff was awarded $850. Description of managers being tested in Thomas Butler to Ann Butler, 22 July 1842, Butler (Thomas and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU. Quote about Irish overseer in Moses Liddell to John R. Liddell, 21 July 1841, Liddell (Moses, John R., and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.

6. William Jacobs to Mary Weeks, 29 November 1837, Weeks (David and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.

7. John Merriman to A. F. Conrad, 30 August 1839, Weeks (David and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU; L. Hewett to J. D. Murrell, 27 August 1848, 17 September 1848, Murrell (John D.) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU; John Betson Traylor Diary, 11, 21 March 1834, Typescript, ADAH.

8. Hyman and Isum in Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 90–91; Records of the General Assembly, Petition of Major Brown to the South Carolina Senate, 2 December 1800, #166, SCDAH; Statement, William Fishburne et al., ca. 1800, with ibid.

9. For the time delay before advertising runaways in one Louisiana Parish, see Declaration of George de Passau to the Judge of Iberville Parish Court, Louisiana, 7 March 1810, Natchez Trace Slaves and Slavery Collection, folder on Fugitive Slaves, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; Declaration of Nicholas Toffier to the Judge of Iberville Parish Court, 7 April 1810, and Declaration of Jacques de Villiers to the Judge of the Iberville Parish Court, 13 September 1810, with ibid. Data on advertisers computed from RSDB. Information in *Tennessee Republican Banner*, 1 January 1838.

10. *New Orleans Bee*, 11 June 1832, 12–29 June 1832, 2–26 July 1832, 29 March 1833, 8, 10 April 1833, 4 July 1834, 19 June 1834, 12, 14, 15 July 1834; *New Orleans Picayune*, 30 June 1838, 27 May 1840; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 19 June 1824, 21 August 1824; *Richmond Enquirer*, 2 April 1850; *Charleston Mercury and Morning Advertiser*, 12 January 1825; Samuel Edwards to R. W. Long, 30 December 1857, Natchez Trace Slaves and Slavery Collection, Oversize Box 2,325/v48, folder 1, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; *Richmond Enquirer*, 13 January 1857.

"I am very sorry" quote in William Jacobs to Mary Weeks, 29 November 1837, Weeks (David and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.

11. Malcolm Bell, Jr., *Major Butler's Legacy: Five Generations of a Slaveholding Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 219; Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 174–76.

12. Roswell King to Pierce Butler, 26 May 1816, quoted in Bell, *Major Butler's Legacy*, 219.

13. For the difficulties overseers had with slave violence and runaways, see Records of the Parish Court, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, Third District Court, Samuel Cowgill vs. Charles Stewart, 11 October 1826, #369, Parish Court House, St. Francisville, Louisiana; Rachel O'Connor to Mary C. Weeks, 26 December 1834, Weeks (David and Family) Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, LSU; Records of the Chancery Court, Giles County, Tennessee, Case Files, Jane B. Smith vs. Elizabeth E. Smith et al., 25 January 1860, Case #1,741, reel 193, frames 2,705–8, 2,698–2,700, 2,689–93, TSLA; Testimony of Archibald J. Strickland, 15 March 1860, with