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## **“Looking For Angola”: An Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Search for a Nineteenth Century Florida Maroon Community and its Caribbean Connections**

by Rosalyn Howard

### **Introduction**

The “Looking for Angola” project (LFA) commenced on December 12, 2004 when shovels broke ground on the south side of the Manatee River at the point where it meets the Braden River. Based upon historical research, this area is believed to be the former location of Angola. Historian John Lee Williams referred to it as “Negro Point,”<sup>1</sup> but in a land claim document filed by two Cuban fishermen it was labeled “Angola.”<sup>2</sup> The groundbreaking marked the realization of Project Director Vickie Oldham’s wish to relate the story of early African American settlers in the Tampa Bay-Sarasota area of Florida. While conducting a documentary project about Sarasota in 2003, Oldham

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1. John Lee Williams, *The Territory of Florida* (New York: A.T. Goodrich, 1837; reprinted Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), 300.
2. Jose Maria Caldez and Joaquin Caldez land grant applications, Spanish Land Grants (Unconfirmed Grants, 1828), film file 2.1, (microfilm available at John German Public Library Special Collections Department, Tampa, at Coleman Library microfilm room, Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, and Tampa Public Library.

was surprised to learn that the general public's perception was that African Americans had not resided in that area until the post-Civil War era. She knew, however, that historian Canter Brown, Jr's publications placed them there much earlier. Oldham had read Brown's seminal research on this topic, which documented the existence of a "maroon" community called Angola (Sarrazota) in that region from 1812 to 1821.<sup>3</sup>

The etymology of the term "maroon" is the Spanish word *cimarrón*, referring originally to cattle escaping to the hills, running away from their captors.<sup>4</sup> The term's meaning evolved to reference people demonstrating resistance to their enslavement by escaping captivity. *Marronage*, a French derivative of *cimarrón*, can be viewed as the flight to freedom, or the act of becoming a maroon; its characteristics varied from *grand marronage*, long-term or permanent escape to inhospitable locales where escaped slaves established independent or co-dependent communities with outsiders, to *petit marronage*, short-term slave escapes, typically with the eventual intention of a voluntary return to captivity. There were various rationales for both types, ranging on a continuum from the desire of slaves to regain their freedom to their desire for temporary reunion with family members who had been sold to other plantations.

Florida became a haven for freedom seekers from the plantations of the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama in the late seventeenth century; essentially, it became the southern route of the Underground Railroad. An edict from the King of Spain in 1693 officially proffered an invitation for slaves from the United States to live in freedom in Florida, with the caveats that they adopt Catholicism and enlist in the defense of Spanish settlements against the territorial infringements committed by Americans. United States encroachment on Florida worried Spanish officials. U.S. settlers to the north wanted to seize the land and, thereby, eliminate it as a haven for fugitive Africans. Another American goal was the forced removal of the native peoples and Spaniards who had provided sanctuary for the escaped

3. Canter Brown, Jr., *African Americans on the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa: Tampa Bay History Center, 1997); Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1991); Canter Brown, Jr., "The Sarrazota, or Runaway Negro Plantations: Tampa Bay's First Black Community 1812-1821," *Tampa Bay History* (1990): 12.

4. Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979).



slaves. The action of the freedom seekers who accepted the King's invitation was archetypal *grand marronage*. Some of them eventually sought refuge at Angola. According to historian Canter Brown, Jr., Angola was a "free-black community [extant from 1812 to 1821]... in southwest Florida that had served to keep alive colonial Florida's status as a refuge of freedom in the aftermath of Fort Mose's closure and the Negro Fort's destruction...[Angola also] existed as a focus for diplomatic and economic activities within the broader Atlantic world,"<sup>5</sup> its residents engaging in enterprise with their British and Spanish allies, as well as Cuban fishermen. Angola's success as a place of freedom and international commerce made it the target of General Andrew Jackson who had been named provisional governor of Florida after its annexation by the United States; he wanted it destroyed, with all of the blacks, free or not, captured and enslaved. Jackson sought but was denied permission by the Secretary of War to raid the community and destroy it. Following that rebuff he recruited his Lower Creek (Coweta) Indian allies to accomplish the task for him.<sup>6</sup> After the destruction of Angola in 1821, some of the surviving maroons escaped to Andros Island in the Bahamas where they joined others who previously fled Florida after its annexation by the United States.

### The Project: Multidisciplinary Team Work

A journalist and filmmaker, Oldham was eager to explore this obscured part of Florida's history in depth. To help bring her dream to fruition, she assembled a multidisciplinary team of scholars to launch the LFA project: Canter Brown, Jr., a historian; Uzi Baram and Terrance Weik, historical archaeologists; Rosalyn Howard, a cultural anthropologist; Bill Burger, a contract archaeologist; and Louis Robinson, a public school administrator. A few years later, a nautical archaeologist, Coz Cozzi, joined the team. The team established several goals for the research project. The first goal is to physically locate the nineteenth century Florida maroon community and to document and analyze the lives of its residents through the interpretation of material culture. Until it is

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5. Canter Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola: Free Blacks, Red Stick Creeks, and International Intrigue in Spanish Southwest Florida, 1812-1821" in *Go Sound the Trumpet: Selections in Florida's African American History*, ed., David H. Jackson and Canter Brown, Jr. (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2005), 6, 10.
  6. Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 11.

located, the team will not be able to gain an accurate perspective on the nature of this community, whether it was utilized primarily as a place of refuge for those who had lost their homes and been forced off the land in locations across Florida or whether it was a resistant community, using the weapons acquired from their British and Spanish allies to actively engage in warfare against the Americans and their native allies.<sup>7</sup> Based upon the historical documentation, it appears that the former scenario is most plausible; the occupants of Angola were simply trying to subsist by farming and fishing, but strategically defended themselves when required. The physical location of Angola was part of this defensive strategy. A more passive, agrarian-focused existence may explain why so many Angolans were overcome and captured by General Andrew Jackson's native allies who attacked and destroyed their community in 1821.

A second goal of the project is to collect data that will confirm the connection, which is strongly suggested in the historical record, between Angola and the Bahamian maroon community of Red Bays on Andros Island. By conducting surface archaeological exploration and identifying material culture samples at the historic Red Bays site in the Bahamas, supplemented by the ethnographic and ethnohistorical data previously collected,<sup>8</sup> the team anticipates the ability to provide a more comprehensive perspective of this original maroon settlement. When funding and governmental permission are obtained, the project team plans to use geophysical and remote sensing techniques to facilitate locating structures and activity areas within historic Red Bays. Although overgrown by brush, some house foundations remain evident in the area that has been described in the oral history as the location where their homes were constructed. In the area purported to be the cemetery of the original settlers, gamalamee trees (noted for placement at burial sites even in the historically Bahamian-occupied area of Coconut Grove, Florida) were observed by LFA team member Baram to be situated in a specific pattern, confirming the oral historical accounts of present-

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7. Both limited grant funding for excavation and the extensive amount of housing and commercial development that has occurred in the vicinity of the anticipated location of historic Angola have hindered the project's progress.

8. Rosalyn Howard, "The Promised Is'land: Reconstructing History and Identity Among the Black Seminoles of Andros Island, Bahamas" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1999); Rosalyn Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).



day descendants. These preliminary findings at historic Red Bays differ in part from findings at most maroon communities, which used primarily organic materials, constructed lightweight structures, and left faint physical imprints. Our study has the potential to suggest the types of data patterns that are likely from populations with both ephemeral material signatures, anticipated to be the case in Florida, and overt material signatures, such as those in historic Red Bays.<sup>9</sup>

The third project goal is to answer the question: Can substantial connections between Angola and Red Bays be confirmed based on the project findings? The answer to this question requires that we locate material culture samples from both locations. If that can be accomplished, a comparative query would permit the LFA team to create a case study that tracks the ethnogenesis and material record of a specific population as it moved between two locations over time. Many past studies of ethnogenesis have lacked this observational resolution, examining instead broad regional cultural processes among various groups or examining ethnogenesis at one location.<sup>10</sup>

A fourth and equally important goal is to educate the public about the rich heritage of Africans and their descendants in Florida and to allow them to participate in the research process. This can be viewed as a twenty-first century act of 'resistance' to the acceptance of a Florida historical record that is incomplete, filled with silences and obscurity. To this end, LFA has sponsored several "Archaeology Fest" days as well as other opportunities for public participation in related projects, and created curricula for use by Florida school children that adhere to all of the state's educational standards.

The symbiosis of history, cultural anthropology, and archaeology holds promise for revealing the complex interrelationships that these early African and African American settlers established with the Seminole Indians, as well as with Spanish, British, and American

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9. Uzi Baram, email message to Rosalyn Howard and Terrance Weik, September 28, 2011.

10. Terrance Weik, email message to Rosalyn Howard and Uzi Baram, September 28, 2011.

11. Kathleen Deagan and Darcie MacMahon, *Fort Mose: Colonial America's Black Fortress of Freedom* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995); Kathleen Deagan and Jane Landers, "Fort Mose: Earliest Free African-American Town in the United States" in *I, Too Am America: Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, ed. Theresa Singleton (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999); Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (1990): 9-30.

12. Mark E. Mack and Michael L. Blakey, "The New York African Burial Ground Project: Past Biases, Current Dilemmas, and Future Research Opportunities,"

colonists. Comparable projects include Fort Mose in St. Augustine, Florida<sup>11</sup>, the African Burial Ground in New York City<sup>12</sup>, New Philadelphia in Illinois,<sup>13</sup> Palmares in Brazil<sup>14</sup>, the Great Dismal Swamp that spans the borders of Virginia and North Carolina,<sup>15</sup> and Pilaklikaha (aka Abraham's Old Town), in Bushnell, Florida. Excavations at Pilaklikaha currently represent the most extensive of all investigations of material culture conducted at other known Black Seminole towns or settlements, which include Boggy Island in Florida, Fort Clarke in Texas, and Nacimiento de los Negros in Mexico.<sup>16</sup>

### African American Archaeology

The "Looking for Angola" project can be situated within African American archaeology, a field of study that has its roots in plantation or slave-site archaeology, but which has evolved into the study of maroon sites, a space where Angola is clearly positioned.<sup>17</sup>

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- Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 1 (2004):10-17; Michael L. Blakey, "Bioarchaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas: Its Origins and Scope," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30, no. 1 (2001): 387-422.
13. Paul Shackel, "New Philadelphia Archaeology Project," Archaeology Report, Center for Heritage Resource Studies. (College Park: University of Maryland, 2006. <http://heritage.umd.edu/CHRSWeb/New%20Philadelphia/2006report/2006reportmenu.htm>) (accessed July 6, 2013). Subsequent Archaeology Reports for this project were published in 2008, 2009 and 2010.
  14. C.E. Orser, Jr., "The Archaeology of the African Diaspora," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 63-82; Pedro P.A. Funari, "The Archaeology of Palmares and Its Contributions to the Understanding of the History of African-American Culture," *Historical Archaeology in Latin America* 7 (1995): 1-41; Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Raymond Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil" in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 170-190.
  15. Daniel O. Sayers, "Cultural Heritage and Social History in a Swamp? The Effort to Bring to Light the Diasporic History of the Great Dismal Swamp, North Carolina and Virginia," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, 2012.
  16. Terrance Weik, "The Role of Ethnogenesis and Organization in the Development of African-Native American Settlements: An African Seminole Model," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 13 (2009): 208.
  17. Theresa Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 119-140; Weik, "The Role of Ethnogenesis and Organization in the Development of African-Native American Settlements," 206-238; Weik, "The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity, and Transformation in the African Diaspora" *Society for Historical Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (1997): 81-92; Kevin A. Yelvington, "Foreword," in *True-Born Maroons*, ed. Kenneth Bilby (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), xi.



In 1968, Charles Fairbanks originated plantation archaeology in a sociopolitical context of ethnic pride and vindicationist proclivity. Fairbanks began excavating the slave quarters at Kingsley Plantation located in northeastern Florida, near Jacksonville. Since then, significant data from plantation archaeology have been gleaned from excavated material culture, viewed as text,<sup>18</sup> about: enslaved peoples' origins; quotidian plantation life; personal possessions; social hierarchy within the enslaved community, as well as between the enslaved and the enslavers; housing; architecture, food ways; spiritual beliefs, practices and symbolism; resistance strategies; and transculturation.<sup>19</sup> In many ways, these data were used to support research for African cultural retentions, or Africanisms, evident in the material remains. Singleton offers a cautionary note about limiting the analysis of material culture to the degrees of cultural assimilation or acculturation of Africans and their descendants to European or Native American cultures. As she states, "the factors that produce cultural identities varied through time and space [therefore] the archaeological evidence of cultural identities will also be variable."<sup>20</sup> The analysis should reflect the dynamic nature of cultural contact. In the specific case of Black Seminole maroons, the analysis must consider the relatively short-term existence of most of their settlements in comparison to maroon sites in Brazil, Jamaica and Suriname,<sup>21</sup> and their well-established interactions with European and Seminole cultures that included the constant trade or confiscation of various commodities.

The functional analysis of material culture was an early approach to examining the signs of Africanisms at plantation sites. Evidence of Africanisms included: design and space concepts; types of construction materials used to build houses; types of pottery; food ways; and presence of root cellars.<sup>22</sup> These analyses, however, did not interrogate evidence of resistance to domination and were focused on elite-dominated power relationships.<sup>23</sup>

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18. Patricia Samford, "The Archaeology of African-American Slavery and Material Culture," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (1996): 87-114.

19. Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America," 123. See also, Antoinette T. Jackson, "African Communities in Southeast Coastal Plantation Spaces in America." (PhD diss. University of Florida, 2004).

20. Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America," 134.

21. Weik, "The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas," 82.

22. Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America," 123-125, 130.

23. Weik, "The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas," 83.



Among some historical archaeologists, this functionalist approach evolved into a more contextual interpretive methodology when, from the late 1970s to the 1990s, a merger of anthropological and social concerns caused them to refocus on the maroon sites, which had been excluded from the traditional canon of archaeology. Maroon site archaeology has revealed that these communities were not operating in isolation; their interactions with outsiders included raids on "colonial settlements and plantations for commodities and new recruits ... [and they] traded crops and forest products with pirates and European traders in exchange for weapons or tools."<sup>24</sup> Historian Kenneth Porter's extensive research illuminated the significant amount of autonomy that Black Seminole maroons enjoyed, primarily living in separate communities located within a few miles of the Seminole village to whose native chief they were allied and to whom they were obligated to provide a portion of their harvest.<sup>25</sup> A multidisciplinary methodology such as the LFA project employs, combining research team members' expertise in history and cultural anthropology with the material culture focus of historical and nautical archaeology should yield a more holistic perspective on the lives of enslaved peoples who resided in this maroon community.

The exploration of maroon sites poses significant challenges. Some challenges are physical; for example, these sites were typically located in isolated, inhospitable environs such as swamps and mountains that may still be quite inaccessible and were not conducive to preservation due to the prevalent use of organic material that left little or no physical imprint. Other challenges are interpretive, such as the difficulty of separating the material culture of resistance from the material culture reflecting the syncretism of the diverse cultural influences extant in these communities. An aspect of the interpretive challenge is how to distinguish the original utilitarian function of material culture from the ways that African Americans may have adapted its use. Theresa Ferguson, a scholar whose research has significantly expanded the discipline of African American Archaeology, calls this a process of creolization; the new cultural form or practice is a consequence of cultures

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24. Ibid., 82.

25. Kenneth Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996). Porter clarifies in other publications that there were also Seminole villages that included Black Seminoles. See Footnote 54.

coming into sustained contact. Employing a linguistic analogy, Ferguson suggests that the material culture can be viewed as “the lexicon of culture while the ways [these things] were made, used, and perceived are part of the grammar,”<sup>26</sup> which remained African. Another significant aspect of maroon site archaeology is its “historical supplemental” function that, according to Weik:

should be pursued only as an incidental outcome of this type of archaeological research, not as a goal. The goals should be the creation of better interpretation and the enhancement of theories in which archaeology can play a role in helping to reconstruct the past.<sup>27</sup>

Maroon site exploration presents fertile research opportunities for an interdisciplinary team of scholars. There is potential to unmask religious and spiritual practices, sociopolitical and socioeconomic issues, power relationships within the community, and the nature of relationships with outsiders such as plantation owners and non-elite whites.<sup>28</sup> The archaeology of slave resistance and rebellion, or maroon site investigations, may significantly aid in interpreting the experience of African peoples and their descendants in the New World. Orser, Jr. and Funari suggest that these studies

evolved as part of the larger project to understand the African diasporic experience. [The studies] benefited from two principal influences that originated outside the discipline: detailed research on the historical and social elements of slave uprisings by historians and anthropologists and the growing realization by some archaeologists that many of the developing civil rights movements around the world were anchored in traditions of resistance that often had long-standing historical roots.<sup>29</sup>

Angola may have been a community of resistance, dominated by overt warfare. We know that its residents had previously

26. Cited in Singleton, “The Archaeology of Slavery in North America,” 133; See also, Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

27. Weik, “The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas,” 85.

28. Orser, Jr., “The Archaeology of the African Diaspora,” 69.

29. Charles E. Orser, Jr. and Pedro P.A. Funari, “Archaeology of Slave Resistance and Rebellion,” *World Archaeology* 33, no.1 (2001): 62.



demonstrated their resistance to recapture and re-enslavement by engaging the enemy as formidable warriors during many skirmishes and battles before arriving at Angola. They consisted of diverse refugees, some settling there as a result of defeats during the Patriot War<sup>30</sup> and the War of 1812,<sup>31</sup> the destruction of Seminole and Black Seminole towns,<sup>32</sup> the destruction of Negro Fort,<sup>33</sup> being “captured” (‘liberated’ in raids of Florida plantations), or being freedom-seekers who had escaped from southern U.S. plantations. On the other hand, this community may have been primarily a place of refuge to which people, weary of being constantly displaced, settled into a subsistence economy dominated by agriculture and fishing. This community stretched from Tampa Bay to areas near the confluence of the Manatee and Braden Rivers and along the west coast of peninsular Florida, including parts of Sarasota. When the LFA team finds the physical location of Angola, and collects and analyzes the material culture discovered there, questions about what type of community Angola represented and the lifestyles of its inhabitants finally will be explored.

### Diversity of Perspective

There are important questions and perspectives to be entertained in the process of “Looking for Angola.” Singleton references the importance of making a project such as ours inclusive of African American scholarly and community participation. She suggests:

The two frameworks—dominance and resistance, and creolization—hold considerable promise for the interpretation of the archaeological record, but both need further refinements in their application to specific studies. Even these more robust approaches to the research cannot correct the specialty’s major drawback—the lack

30. Brown, Jr., *Florida’s Peace River Frontier*, 6-9; Brown Jr., “Tales of Angola,” 191.

31. Brown, Jr., *Florida’s Peace River Frontier*, 7; Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 11, 15; Rivers, *Slavery in Florida*, 190.

32. Brown, Jr., *Florida’s Peace River Frontier*, 8,10; Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 16-18; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Seminoles, from Removal to Emancipation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 7-8.

33. Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 17-18; Joe Knetsch, *Florida’s Seminole Wars 1817-1858* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 20-22; Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Seminoles*, 7.

of African American perspectives. The fact that too few of the archaeologists engaged in this research are African American is only part of the problem. A far more serious problem is that African Americans are rarely involved in this research in any substantive way. Most discussions consider blacks as only consumers of this research rather than as part of the research process. Input from African Americans should also be considered in generating questions to be investigated and in the interpretation of results.<sup>34</sup>

The LFA project was designed with these issues in mind. The six member team includes three African Americans: the Project Director, the cultural anthropologist, and one of the two historical archaeologists. Two other African Americans—one a former public school administrator, and the second, a representative of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) chapter in Sarasota—are members of the LFA project's Advisory Board. Their inclusion as integral contributors to the investigation provides, as Singleton states, vital, new voices and perspectives regarding the focus and process of the investigation and in the interpretation of the data collected. The legacy of resistance and perseverance is one that resonates among many African Americans and other scholars of color in confronting the challenges of academe today.<sup>35</sup>

Public education and community involvement have been important components since the project's inception. The LFA "kick-off" event in 2003 featured a panel discussion by the project team

34. Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America," 135.

35. Maria Franklin and Larry McKee, "African Diaspora Archaeologies: Present Insights and expanding Discourses," *Historical Archaeology*, Transcending Boundaries, Transforming the Discipline: African Diaspora Archaeologies in the New Millennium, 38, no.1 (2004): 1-9; Terrence W. Epperson, "Critical Race Theory and the Archaeology of the African Diaspora," *Historical Archaeology* 38, no 1 (2004): 101-108. See also Paul R. Mullins, who states (on page 104): "Speaking from a distinctive social and intellectual position fabricated by systematic racist marginalization, diasporan scholars have taken aim on many normative assumptions...That diasporan scholarship often has been ignored because it is considered politically biased, based on uneven research, or moored in its own essentialist assumptions about Africa and diasporan peoples." Paul R. Mullins, "Excavating America's Metaphor; Race, Diaspora, and Vindicationist Archaeologies," *Society for Historical Archaeology* 42, no. 2 (2008): 104-122.



at the New College of Florida, with approximately 200 community residents attending. Media representatives from regional newspapers and radio stations reported on the event and interviewed the team of scholars. The opening event was followed by a series of lectures at libraries, churches, historical societies, and museums. A significant number of African American community members in the Tampa-Sarasota region enthusiastically attended these lectures and provided useful research leads. Since then, other LFA-related events and activities have included the creation of a website (<http://www.lookingforangola.org>); scholarly panel presentations at book fairs and conferences; and additional radio and television interviews. In 2005, project director Oldham, with input from LFA-affiliated scholars, produced the documentary film *Looking for Angola: An Incredible Story of Courage, Enterprise, Determination and Survival* for use as an additional tool for public outreach.

### Angola—Historical Background

Historian Canter Brown, Jr. is a key member of the research team. It was his seminal research, in fact, that called attention to this historically obscured Florida maroon community. In his 1990 publication, “The Sarrazota or Runaway Negro Plantations,” Brown provided extensive documentation of the community’s existence. He later discovered the name “Angola” in a land claim document submitted by two Cuban fishermen, Jose Maria and Joaquin Caldez, who had lived in that area for many years.<sup>36</sup> After Spain ceded Florida to the United States in 1821, ownership of land had to be proven by filing a petition in the form of a dossier with the Board of Land Commissioners. The Caldez dossier was rejected for undocumented reasons. However, examples of the reasons for rejection of petitions included: not filing within the prescribed time; suspicion of fraud; specific conditions of occupancy and land cultivation were not met; or documentation was incomplete.<sup>37</sup>

36. Jose Maria Caldez and Joaquin Caldez land grant applications, Spanish Land Grants (Unconfirmed Grants, 1828), film file 2.1. (microfilm available at John German Public Library Special Collections Department, Tampa, at Coleman Library microfilm room. Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, and Tampa Public Library).

37. WPA History of the Spanish Land Grants. Reasons for Non-Confirmation. Florida Memory. Florida Department of State. Division of Library and Information Services. <http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/spanishlandgrants/wpa.php?page=8>. (accessed July 6, 2013).

According to historical archaeologist Uzi Baram, “the Caldez 1828 land claim used “Angola” to label land on the banks of the Manatee River. In the land claims, Jose Maria Caldez asserted he settled 640 ac. on the north side of the Manatee River in 1814, and Joaquin Caldez declared he settled the south side of the river in 1812. These claims were not accepted ... [and] the Caldez family moved its fishing enterprise to Charlotte Harbor.”<sup>38</sup>

The first residents of Angola are likely to have been refugees from the War of 1812 in which many Blacks served under the supervision of British Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicolls, as well as refugees from the 1812 Patriot War.<sup>39</sup> Many fled into the area after the Alachua Prairie villages of Seminole leaders Payne and Bowlegs were destroyed by U.S. militiamen and the Coweta Indians, who were enemies of the Seminoles. Seminole chief King Payne and his nephew Billy Bowlegs provided refuge for Black freedom seekers, many of whom became so closely allied to the Seminoles that they were referred to as Black Seminoles, although the majority of them were solely African, not the progeny of African and Seminole unions. The strong alliance between the Seminoles and the runaways was clear, as evidenced by the following comments of Jean A. Penieres, Sub-agent for Florida Indian Affairs, who remarked to a Congressional committee that:

[i]t will be difficult... to form a prudent determination with respect to the ‘maroon negroes’ who live among the Indians on the other side of the little mountains of Latchiouc [Alachua]. They fear being again made slaves, under the American government; and will omit nothing to increase or keep alive mistrust among the Indians, whom they, in fact, govern. If it should become necessary to use force with them, it is to be feared that the Indians would take their part. It will, however, be necessary to

38. Uzi Baram, “Cosmopolitan Meanings of Old Spanish Fields: Historical Archaeology of a Maroon Community in Southwest Florida,” *Historical Archaeology*, 46 no.1 (2012):116.

39. See Brown, Jr., “Tales of Angola,” 8; Brown, Jr., “The Sarrazota or Runaway Negro Plantations,” 6; Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 15. One of the primary settlements of the Florida Black Seminoles established on Andros Island is named Nicholls Town, possibly in tribute to Colonel Nicholls, their ally.



remove from the Floridas [East and West], this group of freebooters, among whom runaway negroes will always find a refuge.<sup>40</sup>

Payne's Town was an important venue for freedom seekers. Payne not only provided a haven for them, but also refused to relinquish them to slave catchers and U.S government officials who demanded they be surrendered. Seminoles and Black Seminoles occupied Payne's Town from approximately 1790 until 1813 when U.S forces attacked, destroying 386 dwellings as well as the community's large store of food reserves.<sup>41</sup> Payne died from his battle injuries and his nephew, Billy Bowlegs, succeeded him as leader. Black Seminole survivors fled southwest to Pilaklikaha<sup>42</sup> and to Angola.<sup>43</sup>

In an 1813 report Benjamin Hawkins, an Indian Agent for the U.S. government in the region, reported the presence of African Americans in the area believed to have been Angola: "the negroes [are] now separated at a distance from the Indians on the Hammocks or the Hammock not far from Tampa Bay."<sup>44</sup> According to Brown, Jr., the Seminoles and Black Seminoles indeed had separated after fleeing the destruction of their homes on the Alachua prairie:

the Seminoles headed for winter hunting towns along the Peace River's headwaters in modern Polk County. The black refugees hurried themselves to the Manatee River, [a place that] offered an easily defensible position near fertile farm land and not far from rich hunting grounds, [and which] gave the black warriors and their families easy access to the Caribbean and the broader Atlantic World.<sup>45</sup>

40. Joshua R. Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida or The crimes Committed by Our Government against the maroons, Who Flew From south Carolina and other Slave States, Seeking Protection Under Spanish Laws* (Columbus, OH: Follett, Foster and Company, 1858), 70-71.

41. Jeff Guinn, *Our Land Before We Die: The Proud Story of the Seminole Negro* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 2002), 34.

42. Brent R. Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee Indians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 24.

43. Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 7.

44. Hawkins, quoted in Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 7.

45. Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 7.

A second influx of people arrived at Angola in 1815.<sup>46</sup> It may have been the community referred to (but not specifically named) in documents as the place from which a surreptitious plot was launched by British military officers and filibusters—General Gregor Macgregor, Captain George Woodbine, and Lieutenant Robert Chrystie Ambrister. These men assembled approximately eighty African Americans, some of whom had been previously recruited to fight on the British side in the War of 1812, allied Indians, and decommissioned officers from Nassau, Bahamas with the express intention of leading them in a battle to regain control of Spanish East Florida for Britain. They were joined by Scottish trader and former British officer Alexander Arbuthnot, who sympathized with the plight of the Seminoles, especially Bowlegs.<sup>47</sup> Paradoxical collaborations of the maroons and Europeans occurred dependent upon the circumstances; though often enemies, they were “sometimes allies in war and trade.”<sup>48</sup> The British plot was thwarted, however, when U.S. General Andrew Jackson captured and killed Ambrister and Arbuthnot.<sup>49</sup> Jackson wrote on May 5, 1818,

that the two men had been ‘tried...by a special court of selected officers; legally convicted as excitors of this savage and negro war; legally condemned, and most justly punished’...The Scottish trader [Ambrister] was hanged on his own schooner’s masthead. A few minutes later, a firing squad executed Ambrister.<sup>50</sup>

Angola’s population increased again following the 1816 destruction of Negro Fort on the Apalachicola River<sup>51</sup> and the First Seminole War Battle of the Suwannee in 1818. After the initial relocation from Alachua, the newly appointed Seminole King, Billy Bowlegs, and his allies moved west to the Suwannee River to establish a new village, Bowlegs’ Town. A large number of allied Blacks resided in and around Bowlegs’ Town, farming the fertile soils along the

46. *Ibid.*, 8.

47. Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 18.

48. Weik, “The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas,” 86.

49. Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 23; Brown, Jr., “Tales of Angola,” 9; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 235.

50. Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 23-24.

51. *Ibid.*, 18.



banks of the Suwannee River.<sup>52</sup> In 1818, Bowleg's Town was also attacked and burned by Jackson's troops in his persistent quest to rid Florida of all Indians and their black allies. Many of those survivors fled to Angola. As reported by Captain James Gadsden, "The bay of Tampa is the last rallying spot of the disaffected negroes and Indians ... the negroes and Indians driven from Micosukey and Suwaney towns have directed their march to that quarter."<sup>53</sup> This statement supports the contention that Angola apparently had become a final place of refuge for many who had been forced to flee from their homes in other parts of Florida.

Enraged by the successful resistance that Black Seminoles had achieved against his troops during numerous encounters throughout Florida, Jackson, appointed U.S. provisional governor of Florida by President Monroe in early 1821, requested permission from Secretary of War John C. Calhoun to seize and enslave the blacks in Angola. Although Calhoun denied his request, Jackson's Lower Creek allies, the Coweta, led a war party into Florida, likely with Jackson's knowledge and assent. William Weatherford, Jackson's Red Stick Creek ally, and Charles Miller, whom Jackson commissioned as a U.S. Army Brigadier General, launched a surprise attack on the town in 1821.<sup>54</sup> Jackson achieved his goal of destroying Angola, while, ostensibly, not disobeying an order. The invaders reportedly took 250 to 300 surviving residents as prisoners, although only fifty-nine names of the captives appeared on a list prepared for the Secretary of War (see Exhibits B and C).

More than 250 persons were reported to have escaped the destruction. The attack and its aftermath were described in the Charleston (South Carolina) *City Gazette*:

...the terror thus spread along the Western Coast of East Florida, broke all the establishments of both blacks and Indians, who fled in great consternation. The blacks [who

52. Historian Kenneth Porter reported that Howard Sharp stated that: "Negroes were accepted into the [Billy Bowlegs] tribe. One of Billy Bowlegs' wives was a Negress. . . . Most of his followers were of negro blood... Bowlegs' band included at least one Negro—Ben Bruno, the interpreter, adviser, confidant, and special favorite of King Billy... a fine, intelligent-looking negro. . . . and exercises almost unbounded influence over his master." Kenneth Porter, "Billy Bowlegs (Holata Micco) in the Seminole Wars, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (January 1967): 238.

53. Quoted in Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 8.

54. *Ibid.*, 11.

survived the attack and escaped] principally, thought they could not save their lives but by abandoning the country; therefore they, by small parties and in their Indian canoes, doubled Cape Sable and arrived at Key Taviniere, which is the general place of rendezvous for all the English wreckers [those who profited from recovery of shipwreck property], from Nassau, Providence; an agreement was soon entered into between them, and about 250 of these negroes were by the wreckers carried to Nassau and clandestinely landed. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October last, about 40 more were at Key Taviniere, ready to take their departure for Nassau; these were the stragglers who had found it difficult to make their escape, and had remained concealed in the forests.<sup>55</sup>

Explorer Peter Steven Chazotte reported that in August 1821:

...We have found a great many Indians from the Bay of Tampa... I have [had] a talk with them... they were driven away by McKintosh—together with the black men, to the number of 110—whom the English Wreckers have transported to Nassau Providence and Several Indian Chiefs are now there to see what the British Government is willing to do for them....<sup>56</sup>

Another report, published in the Boston *Patriot and Daily Mercantile Advertiser* on August 20, 1822, read:

The Indians and negroes have been lately so connected with events in Florida, that a few observations, so far as they have been concerned, may perhaps be not unnecessary. The latter wars made by the Indians upon the United States having compelled the government to coercive measures, ending in the total defeat of Creek, Choctaws, Alabama and other hostile nations, many of the chiefs, most prominent in their depredations, fled away, and traversing the Seminole nation, settled themselves about Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor and their waters. Tempted by the smoothness of the summer ocean, they ventured along the coast as far as Cape Sable, where they became acquainted

55. This article was reprinted in the *Philadelphia National Gazette and Literary Register* on December 3, 1821. Quoted in Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 14.

56. Quoted in Brown, Jr., "The Sarrazota, or Runaway Negro Plantations," 15.



with the Bahama wreckers, who employed them to hunt on the adjacent keys and on the Cape, in return for bread stuffs and trifling presents. The game beginning to grow scarce the wreckers carried a few of them through the reef to the woods immediately west of Cape Florida...Numbers of them have, at different times since, been carried off by the Bahama wreckers to Nassau; but the British authorities having invariably refused to allow them to be landed, they have been smuggled into remoter islands, and at this period large numbers of them are to be found on St. Andrew's [Andros] Island and the Biminis.

Many of those who escaped the devastation of Angola made their way to the Florida Keys where they were transported to the islands of the Bahamas in fishermen's boats, dugout canoes, wreckers and, perhaps, aboard a ship controlled by their long-time ally Colonel Edward Nicolls.<sup>57</sup> British officials in Nassau had twice rejected their pleas for assistance in Florida or asylum in the Bahamas.<sup>58</sup> The majority of the refugees subsequently decided to seek sanctuary in an isolated area of the large and sparsely populated Andros Island, located approximately 150 miles southeast of Cape Florida. Cape Florida was the major vantage point in south Florida from which the Angola and other refugees made their escape.

In the early years of the nineteenth century when fugitive slaves were told to follow the *North Star* to freedom in the northern states and Canada, runaways in Florida and even from Alabama were already secretly sailing from Cape Florida to the British Bahamas where freedom was in the wind...With their Indian Allies, black Seminoles united to fight for liberty, or to escape. Those determined not to be removed [west to Indian territory] or killed did not take the northern exit but stealthily moved southward down the long peninsula to Key Biscayne. There they rendezvoused with Bahamian captains, bartering on the beaches to establish the cost of passage on this perilous journey across the Gulf Stream.<sup>59</sup>

57. Brown, Jr., "Tales of Angola," 12.

58. Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*, 30-32.

59. Joan G. Blank, *Key Biscayne: A History of Miami's Tropical Island and the Cape Florida Lighthouse* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1996), 42-43. Escapes were also successful from the Florida Keys, in particular, Key Taveniere.

Before a lighthouse was constructed at Cape Florida in 1825,<sup>60</sup> more than two hundred persons reportedly made the journey over a twenty year period across the Gulf Stream to freedom in the Bahamas.<sup>61</sup> In February 2005, Cape Florida (presently part of Key Biscayne National Park) was designated as an historic site by the National Park Service and became a site on their Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program.

### The Final Flight to Freedom

Andros Island, referred to in the *Patriot and Daily Mercantile Advertiser* as "St. Andrews," became home to the majority of the freedom seekers. Descendants report, and archival documentation confirms, that in 1821 they established a community that they named 'Red Bays' on the isolated northwestern coast of Andros.<sup>62</sup> That western side of the island contains no large deposits of sand that form the beautiful beaches typically found on Bahamian islands. In fact, mud borders most of the coastline. The location was probably strategically chosen due its isolation and the shallow waters bordering it that would preclude large ships from Florida landing to recapture them. The initial Red Bays community was finally abandoned in the 1920s due to the severe devastation of lives and property by a series of deadly hurricanes. The surviving original settlers were scattered throughout many parts of Andros Island, including Lewis coppitt where the majority of descendants reside today.<sup>63</sup> Lewis coppitt was named for the Black Seminole settler Sam Lewis (spelled 'Louis' in the 1828 Bethell letter) who purchased a large acreage of land there.<sup>64</sup> Located approximately three miles south of the historic Red Bays, Lewis coppitt was also an isolated area on the western coast, but was safer due to its higher

60. *Ibid.*, 29.

61. John M. Goggin, "The Seminole Negroes of Andros Island, Bahamas," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 24 (1946): 201-206.

62. Rev. Bertram A. Newton, the community's previous pastor and school teacher, speculated that the origin of the name is the red sunset reflecting on the small amount of sand bordering the land. Interview with Newton for the documentary film "Looking for Angola: An Incredible Story of Courage, Enterprise, Determination and Survival," Vickie Oldham, producer, 2005.

63. "Coppitt" is Bahamian vernacular for the term 'coppice,' defined as a densely wooded area.

64. Personal Interview with descendant Benjamin Lewis by the author, 1996. Sam Lewis was his great-grandfather. See Exhibit D, parts 1 and 2.



elevation. Until 1968 the only way to reach the community was via boat or a several mile trek through dense coppitts. In the 1970s, Lewis coppitt was renamed "Red Bays" to honor the memory of their ancestors. Red Bays residents' oral history boasts of the tenacity and courage of their ancestors who crossed the dangerous Gulfstream in search of freedom.

The author resided in the present-day Red Bays community for one year (1996-1997), conducting oral history interviews with elders there as well as in several other Andros Island settlements to which descendants had relocated. This research, published in 2002 as *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*, is the first ethnography written about the Bahamian Black Seminoles. Subsequent yearly research visits to the community have generated additional ethnographic data that will be useful in our interpretive analysis.

Connections between Angola and Red Bays are the basis for the author's participation in the LFA project research team. Evidence of a relationship between the communities currently focuses on two men who were captured at Angola in 1821, but who subsequently escaped. Their names, Peter McQueen and Sipsa [Scipio] Bowleg appear in the 1822 letter from Creek Indian Agent Crowell that lists the names and "former owners" of the Angola residents captured after the 1821 attack.<sup>65</sup> According to the letter, these two men "ran away." Their names also appear seven years later in the 1828 letter written by the British Customs officer, Winer Bethell.<sup>66</sup>

The oral tradition of the Bahamian Black Seminole descendants conveys that their ancestors crossed the Gulfstream from Florida to Andros Island seeking sanctuary, but the descendants' accounts contained no details of their ancestors' lives while in Florida.

Upon their arrival to Andros Island, the freedom seekers remained relatively isolated, but did interact with men from all parts of the Bahamas who worked harvesting sponges near Red Bays in

65. Jno. Crowell, Agent for Indian Affairs, to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824" (Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta) January 22, 1822. Peter McQueen is number 36 and Sipsa [Scipio] Bowleg is number 53 on the list. <http://lookingforangola.org/graphics/files/CrowelltoCalhoun22Jan1822.txt> (accessed July 6, 2013). See Exhibit C, part 2.

66. Winer Bethell, Searcher of Customs Nassau to Controller of Customs London, "London Duplicate Despatches," October 30, 1828, Appendix 10, in *A Guide to Selected Sources for the History of the Seminole Settlements at Red Bays, Andros 1817-1980*, ed. David E. Wood (Nassau, Bahamas: Dept. of Archives, 1980), 8-9; See also, Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*, 52. See Exhibit D, parts 1 and 2.

an area called "the Mud."<sup>67</sup> Red Bays residents apparently had gone undetected by the British authorities in Nassau for seven years when Customs Officer Winer Bethell encountered them in 1828. On two occasions Bethell seized and brought to Nassau a total of 132 Black Seminoles from Andros Island. His October 30, 1828 letter listed the names of "97 Foreign Negro Slaves." The surnames of many present-day Bahamian Black Seminole descendants appear on that list: "Bowlegs," "Russell," "Newton," "Lewis (Louis)," "Miller," and "McQueen" are among these.<sup>68</sup> Bethell mentions that the people he seized had been living on Andros Island for seven years, i.e. since 1821, "peacefully and quietly, and have supported themselves upon fish, conchs and crabs which are to be met in abundance and upon Indian corn, plantains, yams, potatoes and peas which they have raised."<sup>69</sup> U.S. forces destroyed Angola in 1821 and its survivors made their way to the wreckers and dugout canoes for the trip across the Gulfstream to the Bahamas.

Two of the names listed in Crowell's and Bethell's letters, Peter McQueen and Scipio Bowlegs, have special significance to the LFA project and may add an important new chapter to the oral tradition of the Bahamian Black Seminole descendants. It is probable that the "Prince McQueen" and "Sipsa [Scipio] Bowleg" named in the Crowell letter and the "Prince McQueen" and "Sipsa [Scipio] Bowleg" named in the Bethell letter are the same persons.<sup>70</sup> More research, however, is required before these conclusions can be confirmed.

### Project Findings

Phase I shovel testing was initiated at Pine Island in 2005, a 70-acres parcel of conservation land owned by the State of Florida. The research team projected that the material culture would be spread out in a wide area because the settlement pattern of an

67. The sponging industry was a significant part of the Bahamian economy for centuries.

68. Lewis Grant, Governor to Lord Bathurst "Governor's office Secretary of State Papers 1828, October 30, 1828, (Appendix 10), in *A Guide to Selected Sources for the History of the Seminole Settlements at Red Bays, Andros 1817-1980* (Nassau, Bahamas: Dept. of Archives, 1980), 8-10. See also, Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*, 52.

69. *Ibid.*, 8, Appendix 9.

70. A section of the historic Red Bays settlement is still known today as "McQueen Hill."



agricultural community logically would have consisted of dispersed housing somewhat distant from the fields. The team anticipated that the recovered material culture would consist of a mixture of European trade items and indigenous-crafted artifacts, such as colonoware, that were produced from the local clay.

A total of 209 shovel tests were conducted along parallel transects at the primary site on Pine Island. An additional 172 shovel tests were performed on private parcels of land that were suggested by their owners as possibly containing material culture remains from Angola. At the ground breaking in December 2004, everyone was cautiously optimistic that we would find significant material evidence of this maroon community. After completing his excavations, however, archaeologist William Burger noted that "the archaeological investigations of this phase of the project failed to recover any material evidence of the presence of a fugitive black settlement. However, the present, relatively limited project is seen as only the preliminary step toward locating such potential evidence."<sup>71</sup> To date, the items located during the archaeological surveys in Bradenton, Florida, are limited. The New College of Florida Public Archaeology Lab, opened in September 2010 and directed by historical archaeologist and LFA team member Uzi Baram, provides a well-equipped facility for analyzing and interpreting the archaeological materials. According to Baram,

It is in the interpretation of artifacts that the collaboration offers its greatest potential. So far, the items located in the archaeological surveys in Bradenton, Florida, are British-produced ceramic sherds and mass-produced bottle glass fragments. By themselves, they do not seem related to self-emancipated Africans. Studies of Black Seminole ethnogenesis, and a preliminary examination of the Red Bays landscape, however, point to the use of British-made items by the early 19th century maroons. These populations were never isolated from global trade items, even when they were seeking refuge in places like the mangroves and hammocks of the Manatee River region, or the mangroves and coppices of Andros Island. The interpretation of

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71. William Burger, "Looking for Angola," Preliminary Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment Survey. Performed under State of Florida Division of Historical Resources, State Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid. Grant No. S0556 (2005): 51.

the artifacts will benefit from the experiences of the participant scholars in terms of comparisons of Angolan material culture to the material culture of the descendant community in Red Bays, the theoretical understanding of the relationship of material culture to cultural traditions, and evidence of living styles and subsistence strategies.<sup>72</sup>

Beginning in 2008, the LFA project entered two new research arenas. First, an underwater archaeological exploration was undertaken at the anticipated site of the Angola community. Angola team member Cozzi, a nautical archeologist, deployed an Overhauser-Effect magnetometer and high-frequency side-scan sonar, tied to a differential global positioning system, while a HyPack software package logged the data gathered along a two mile stretch of both the Braden and Manatee Rivers. This phase of the project anticipated locating material culture that could later be examined for its connection to Angola. Dark sections of soil indicating post holes for a dock were apparent, but no artifacts from the relevant historical period were discovered in the silt-filled waters. The team is seeking additional funds to broaden this important aspect of the project.

Second, community involvement in the project was expanded to include children and teachers from the Manatee and Sarasota county schools in Florida as well as those in Red Bays Primary School (rededicated in 2012 by the Bahamian Prime Minister as the “Rev. Bertram A. Newton Primary School”). This collaboration was made possible through grants from Comcast, the History Channel and the Herald Tribune’s Newspapers in Education (NIE) program. These organizations sponsored teacher workshops led by the LFA scholars and produced newspaper tabloids that aided teachers in expanding their curricula about regional history and permitted students to participate in sifting through and identifying material culture finds. These tabloids are publically accessible at the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* “In Education, Looking for Angola” site at the following website address: [http://sarasotaheraldtribune.fl.newsmemory.com/ee/sarasotaheraldtribune/ssindex\\_nie\\_angola.php](http://sarasotaheraldtribune.fl.newsmemory.com/ee/sarasotaheraldtribune/ssindex_nie_angola.php). (accessed July 6, 2013). Ultimately, the project aims to find a permanent space in all of Florida public schools’ curricula.

72. Uzi Baram, Personal email correspondence. September, 2010.



The LFA team anticipates that creative community outreach efforts to residents, teachers, and school children will continue to yield new perspectives and interpretations of the collected data and archival information. A children's competition for a visual or poetic interpretation of Angola was conducted in 2012; the winner was a young woman who wrote an outstanding poem entitled "Leading the Way," which described the tenacity and courage of the freedom seekers and the importance of telling the story of Angola. An Archaeology Fest, organized by team member Baram in March 2013, featured his students' research efforts to locate the Cuban ranchos near the region where Angola is believed to have been situated; this may yield valuable evidence about the Angola maroons who traded deer skins, vegetable and fruits with the rancheros.<sup>73</sup> During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Cuban fishermen would spend the months of September through March in their ranchos or villages "fishing the water and trading with Seminoles and free blacks in the interior. Such relationships and industry flourished under Spanish rule, but were challenged during the British period (1763–1783), unraveled when the United States (beginning in 1821) took the peninsula, and ended with the Second Seminole War (1835–1842)."<sup>74</sup>

The LFA project team continuously pursues additional funding sources in order to persist in locating this nineteenth century Florida maroon community. The historical documents clearly indicate that this community existed in the Tampa-Sarasota Bay area. This area, however, is broadly defined in historical maps and parts of the present-day area are highly developed, which makes the task formidable. One of Baram's recent research projects, "Mapping the Manatee," documented the changing representations of the Oyster (now Manatee) River in southern Tampa Bay. The Manatee was historically known as the Oyster River while the Little Manatee was known as the Manatee River. The data obtained from this study will provide supplemental information regarding the location of Angola. Regarding the mapping project, Baram states that:

73. J. Nielsen. "ArchaeologyFestExploresthePast." *SarasotaHeraldTribune*, March 13, 2013. <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20130313/ARTICLE/130319857?p=1&tc=pg>. (accessed March 20, 2013).

74. Uzi Baram, "Cosmopolitan Meanings of Old Spanish Fields," 101.

Maps are social constructions even if we consider them scientific tools. Over the centuries, conventions and geographic information has changed. In looking for Angola on the Manatee River, the collection of maps focused on southern Tampa Bay will help us organize the changing perceptions of the region and hopefully provide clues to the community's location<sup>75</sup>

The team will continue "Looking for Angola" and anticipates that this will be a long term project that may take many years to come to fruition. It is a worthy endeavor, however, as it is one of only three Black Seminole Towns or maroon communities to be excavated in Florida.<sup>76</sup> The project director and team of scholars remain hopeful that additional land and underwater archaeological research will eventually yield artifacts that add to our current database of information about this nineteenth century maroon community.

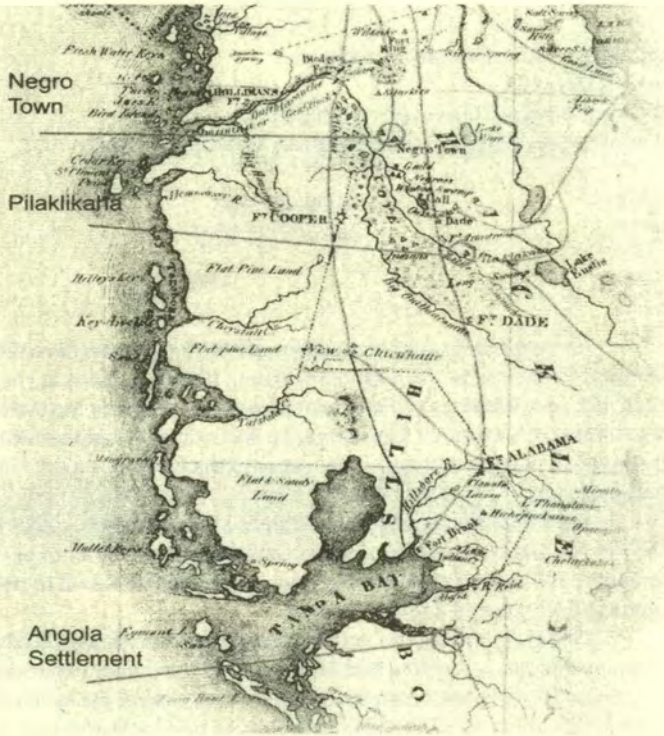
The "Looking for Angola" project holds significance for all Americans, not only Floridians; the knowledge we glean about this maroon community and its connections to the circum-Caribbean should assume a respected space in American anthropological and historical records. When material artifacts that can be attributed to Angola are located and analyzed, the results will provide invaluable insights about the complexly intertwined lives of Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans in colonial settings. What we discover in dialogic encounters and research intersections causes us to gain new perspectives on the issues of culture, ethnogenesis, history, maroon communities, and material culture. This multidisciplinary collaboration will ensure robust anthropological interpretations and engaged public discussions about the research process and the story of the freedom seekers' Underground Railroad path from the southeastern U.S. plantations, to southwest Florida and, finally, to the Bahamas. The archaeological survey and excavations, in particular, gain significance and provide nuances of interpretation through the active solicitation of the voices, insights, and participation of descendant and local communities.

75. Uzi Baram, "Mapping the Manatee River," Unpublished report (2011).

76. Weik, "The Role of Ethnogenesis and Organization in the Development of African-Native American Settlements," 208. The other two locations are Pilaklikaha (Abraham's Town) and Boggy Island.



Exhibit A



Map of Tampa/Sarasota Bay Area, depicting three Black Seminole Towns, including Angola.

Public Use Document

Exhibit B

Letter: Jno. Crowell to John C. Calhoun  
January 22, 1822  
Source: T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824"  
(Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta)

Creek Agency  
Jany. 22nd, 1822

Sir,

Agreeable with your instructions of 29th Sept. I now have the honor herewith to enclose to you a list of the names of such persons as I have been able to ascertain, to whom negroes were delivered by the Indian detachment, on its march from Florida to Fort Mitchell, together with the number, delivered to each. The names of the negroes are not known to my informant.

Soon after the arrival of the negroes at Fort Mitchell, I advertised them in the Alabama, Georgia, Florida Gazettes and a number of persons attended, and twenty nine negroes were proven and delivered to persons residing in Florida and due to an Indian.

I herewith enclose for your information, a descriptive roll of the fifty nine negroes brought to Fort Mitchell, with a statement annexed, of the disposition made of them, together with a copy of the evidence, upon which, thirty one have been delivered, to persons authorized, to receive them, which I trust will be satisfactory.

You will perceive that nineteen have been delivered to James Darby as attorney for several persons; from whom be produced regularly authenticated powers of attorney, which are now in my possession; not deeming it necessary I have sent copies of them.

I am not in possession of any other information [sic], respecting the owners of the negroes, remaining on hand, than is contained in the descriptive roll, herewith enclosed.

The Chiefs have requested me to state in reply to your remarks of 29th Sept. on the subject of the expedition to Florida, that they regret it should have given the least dissatisfaction to the Government. They state that the object of the expedition, was not for the purpose as you supposed of plundering the Seminole Indians, but for the sole purpose of recovering negroes that has become the property of this nation by the late treaty at the Indian Springs; if the expedition was fitted [sic] out, at an improper time they hope their apology will be found in their total ignorance of their peculiar state of affairs in Florida. Special orders were given to Col. Miller not to interrupt the person or the property of any Indian or white man & he declares that he did not take from the



possession of either red or white person a single negro except one from a vessel belonging to the celebrated Nichols [Nicolls], lying at anchor in Tampy [sic] Bay. The negroes he took, were found \_\_\_\_? and acknowledged by the inhabitants of the country to be runaways.

From the best information I have been able to procure in relation, to the expedition, I am induced to believe, that the statement in the general correct.

I will here take occasion to observe that the Gentlemen from Florida, who proved & carried off twenty nine negroes, so far from being dissatisfied was highly gratified with the expedition, stating that the owners of the negroes, had given up all hope of recovering them, as their situation, rendered it impracticable for any but an Indian \_\_\_\_\_? to operate successfully; and that the Seminole Indians were absolutely under the control of the negroes; and if the Government required it, they would cheerfully forward certificates of their entire approbation of the expedition, and good conduct of the detachment while in Florida.

I have the honor to be  
Your obt. Humble servant

Jno. Crowell  
Agt. for I.A.

Honble. Jno. C. Calhoun  
Secretary of War  
Washington City

Description of the negroes brought into the Creek nation by a detachment of Indian Warriors under the command of Col. Wm. Miller a half breed Indian (viz)

No.	Names	Description Age Ft. Ins. Colour	Former owner, State or Territory in which, he or she resided
1.	Hector Senr.	55 5 8 Blk	Perpall St. Augustine
2.	John	55 5 8 "	do do
3.	Hector Jun.	18 5 10 "	do do
4.	Patty	40 5 5 "	do do
5.	Offa	children "	do do
6.	Queen	"" "	do do
7.	Saret or Cuirá	"" "	do do
8.	Tyrah	22 5 2 "	do do
9.	Child	- - - "	do do
10.	Hannah	24 5 4 "	do do
11.	two		
12.	children	- - - "	do do
13.	Jeffrey	36 5 10 "	Robert Gilbert do
14.	Frederick	27 5 7 "	do do
15.	Bob	21 5 7 "	do do
16.	Megg	30 5 2 "	Wm. Harvey St. Johns
17.	Nancy	40 5 2 "	John Loften do
18.	three		
19.	children	- - - "	do do
20.			
21.	Betty	45 5 5 "	John Addison St. Augustine
22.	Abner	25 5 6 Blk	John Addison St. Augustine
23.	Nancy	25 5 _ "	do do
24.	Dianna	13 4 10 "	do do
25.	Lewis	23 5 10 "	do do
26.	Mary	25 5 2 "	do do
27.	Flora	10 _ _ "	do do
28.	Hannah	7 _ _ "	do do
29.	Hannah Sr.	46 5 4 "	do do
30.	George	65 5 4 "	do do
31.	Cato	27 5 8 "	Don Santo do
32.	Caty	28 5 4 "	Fatio do
33.	John	25 5 7 "	Stepenosd do [Stepenosa]
34.	Hector	50 5 7 "	do do
35.	Rosa	27 5 4 "	Don Lewis Pensacola
36.	Prince	35 5 10 "	Peter McQueen
37.	Jim	40 5 7 "	Richard Augustine County, the Estate of Genl. Washington
38.	John	39 5 10 Yellow	Palisur St. Augustine
39.	John	29 5 11 Blk.	Sarlarna do [Solano]



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40. Charles	35 5 10 "	Arradonda Havannah [Arredondo]
41. Capt. Bush	45 5 6 "	Hem Choha, Indian
42. Phillis	40 5 6 "	Chaldais Tampa Bay
43. Child	- - - "	do do
44. Mary	30 5 6 "	Christopher Augustine
45. Toba	50 5 4 "	Spanish deserter
46. Augustina	25 5 6 "	Affrican owner unknown
47. Manuel	36 5 10 "	Spanish deserter
48. Daranon Cabason	30 5 6 "	do do St. Marks
49. Peter	21 5 10 "	do do do
50. Valentine	25 5 6 "	do do do
51. William	22 5 7 "	do do do
52. Charles	36 5 7 "	Wm. Johnston W. Providence
53. Sipsa	30 5 9 "	Bow Legs, an Indian
54. Cyrus	27 5 8 "	do do
55. Nancy	28 - - "	Folemma Indian
56. two		
57. children	- - - "	do do
58. Ned	50 5 6 "	Saffaschee Barnard
59. Charles	22 5 7 "	Kingsly St. Augustine

The following is a statement of the disposition made of the negroes, on the annexed list,

Delivered to James Darby, Atty. per Rect.	19
" " Frances R. Sanchez, per Rect.	10
" " Saffaschee Bernard, an Indian	1
	<hr/>
	30
Escaped since my last return	10
In the possession of George Lovett & Wm. Kennard, Indians, for safe keeping	10
In the possession of Oak-fuske-Ohola & others, for safe keeping	9
	<hr/>
	29

The above is a correct statement of the situation of the annexed described negroes.

Jno. Crowell  
Agt. for I.A.

Creek Agency  
Jany. 22nd, 1802

Source: T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824" (Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta)

**Exhibit C, Part 1**

Letter: Jno. Crowell to J.C. Calhoun

July 24, 1823

Source: T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824"

(Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta)

Creek Agency

July 24th, 1823

Sir,

Your letter of the 24th Apl. has been received in which you state that no report of my proceedings in relation to the negroes, brought from Florida by the detachment of Creek Warriors had been received at your department, in pursuance of instructions contained in yours of the 8th Novr. 1821 & 25th April 1822. In reply to which I have to state, that on the 22nd Jany, 1822 I enclosed to you a descriptive list of the negroes with a statement annexed shewing how they had been disposed of, together with a copy of the receipts & affidavits, taken by me for those delivered to their owners or attorneys.

I enclose herewith another copy of the list of negroes, with a remark opposite to the name of each negro, which will shew you the exact situation of the whole number, that came to my view. I also enclose a copy of the receipts of James Darby and Francis R. Sanchez for those delivered to them, together with copies of several affidavits, in support of their claims to the negroes.

In referring to my former report I find I there stated that ten negroes had run away; which seems to have been a mistake, their being but nine missing since their arrival, which left on hand at that time twenty negroes instead of nineteen, which have been disposed of in the following manner, viz: one delivered to Francis Sanchez as pr. rct., three to Folemma, an Indian, one to Kinnard, an Indian, two dead, four set at liberty as free men and nine on hand in the possession of the Indians, agreeable to your directions – I did not take any Rct. from the Indians for those delivered to them as their property, if you require it I will have them forwarded.

I have the honor to be  
Your obt. Humble sevt.

Jno. Crowell  
Agent for I.A.

Hoble. Jno. C. Calhoun  
Secretary of War  
Washington City



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The following is a correct statement of the disposition made of negroes on the enclosed descriptive list, viz:

Delivered to James Darby, as per Rct.	19	
Delivered to Francis R. Sanchez, as per Rect.	11	
Slaffaschee Barnard & no Rect. taken	1	
Kanard & no Rect. taken		1
Folemma, an Indian & no Rect. taken	3	
Set at liberty as free men	4	
Run away since their arrival	9	
Dead	2	
On hand & in possession of the Indians	9	
	<hr/>	
	59	

I certify that the above is a correct statement of the disposition made of the negroes brought into the Creek nation by a detachment of Creek troops from Florida.

Jno. Crowell  
Agent for I.A.

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Descriptive list of the negroes brought into the Creek Nation by a detachment of Indian Warriors under the command of Col. William Miller, a half breed Indian & the disposition made of them:

To view the list appended to this letter, please see:

"Description of the Negroes brought into the Creek nation by a detachment of Indian Warriors under the command of Col. Wm. Miller a half breed Indian (Viz)"

(List 3) online at the website Creek Indian Researcher. Address:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~texlance/negroes/listofnegroes3.htm>

Source: T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824" (Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta)
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Exhibit C, Part 2

[M27], roll 4, frames 388-89]

" Descriptive List of the Negroes brought into the Creek nation by a detachment of Indian Warriors under the command of Col. Wm. Miller a half breed Indian (Viz) "

No.	Names	Description				Former owner, state or territory in which, he or she resided	Remarks
		Age	Feet	Inches	Colour		
1	Hector, Senr.	55	5	8	Blk	[G. W.] Perpaul, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
2	John	55	5	9	Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
3	Hector, Jur.	18	5	10	Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Ran away soon after his arrival
4	Patty	40	5	5	Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
5-7	Offa, Queen, Sarah [children of Patty]				Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
8	Tyrah	22	5	2	Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Ran away
9	child [of Tyrah]				Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Ran away
10	Hannah	24	5	4	Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Ran away
11 & 12	two children [of Hannah]				Blk	Perpaul, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
13	Jeffrey	36	5	10	Blk	Robert Gilbert, St. Augustine	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
14	Frederick	27	5	7	Blk	Robert Gilbert, St. Augustine	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
15	Bob	21	5	7	Blk	Robert Gilbert, St. Augustine	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
16	Magg	30	5	2	Blk	Wm Harvey, St. Johns [River]	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
17	Nancy	40	5	2	Blk	John Lofton, St. Johns	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
18-20	three children [of Nancy]				Blk	dead, now the property of Hartley	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
21	Billy	45	5	5	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
22	Abner	25	5	6	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
23	Nancy	25	5		Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Ran away
24	Dianna	13	4	10	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Ran away



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25	Lewis	23	5	10	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
26	Mary	25	5	2	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
27	Flora	10			Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
28	Hannah	7			Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
29	Hannah, senr.	46	5	4	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
30	George	65	5	10	Blk	John Addison, St. Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
31	Cato	27	5	8	Blk	Don Santo, Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
32	Caty	28	5	4	Blk	Fatio, do	on hand
33	John	25	5	7	Blk	Stephenosa, St. Augustine	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
34	Hector	50	5	7	Blk	Stephenosa, St. Augustine	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
35	Rosa	27	5	4	Blk	Don Lewis, Pensacola	on hand
36	Prince	35	5	10	Blk	Peter McQueen	Ran away
37	Jim	40	5	7	Blk	Richards, Augustine, formerly the property of Genl. Washington	on hand
38	John	39	5	10	Yellow	[Frances] Pallisier, Augustine	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
39	John	29	5	11	Blk	Salana, do	Delivered to James Darley as per receipt rendered
40	Charley	35	5	10	Blk	Anadonda, Havannah	Delivered to Francis R Sanchez as per receipt rendered
41	Capt. Bush	45	5	6	Blk	Hen cho hee, Indian	on hand
42	Phillis	40	5	6	Blk	Capt. Chaldios, Tampa Bay	on hand
43	child				Blk	Capt. Chaldais, Tampa Bay	on hand
44	Mary	30	5	6	Blk	Christopher, Augustine.	on hand
45	Toba	50	5	4	Blk	Spanish deserter	Delivered to William Kanard, an Indian, & no receipt taken
46	Augustina	25	5	6	Blk	African, owner unknown	dead
47	Manuel	36	5	10	Blk	Spanish deserter	dead
48	Dasana Cabasa	30	5	6	Blk	Spanish deserter fr. St. Marks	Set at liberty as a free man
49	Peter	21	5	10	Blk	Spanish deserter fr. St. Marks	Set at liberty as a free man
50	Valentine	25	5	6	Blk	Spanish deserter fr. St. Marks	Set at liberty as a free man
51	William	22	5	7	Blk	Spanish deserter fr. St. Marks	Set at liberty as a free man
52	Charles	36	5	7	Blk	Wm. Johnson, New Providence	on hand

53	Sipsa	30	5	7	Blk	Bow Legs [an Indian]	Ran away
54	Cyrus	27	5	8	Blk	Bow Legs [an Indian]	on hand
55	Nancy	28			Blk	Folemme, an Indian	Delivered to Folemme, an Indian & no receipt taken
56, 57	2 children [of Nancy]				Blk	Folemme, an Indian	Delivered to Folemme, an Indian & no receipt taken
58	Ned	50	5	6	Blk	Slaffooche Barnard, an Indian	Delivered to Slaffooche Barnard & no receipt taken
59	Charles	22	5	7	Blk	Kingsley, St. Augustine	Ran away

[Note. St. Augustine is on the northeast coast of Florida. St. John's River runs 10 miles east of St. Augustine. Havana and St. Marks are about 15 and 20 miles north and south, respectively, of Tallahassee, Florida. Francis R. Sanchez resided at St. John's.]

Source: T.J. Petty, "Creek Letters 1820-1824" (Transcription, Georgia Dept. of Archives & History, Atlanta)



**Exhibit D, Part 1:**

Source: Bahamas National Archives, Nassau.

First page of a letter from British Customs officer Bethell regarding the seizure of people from Red Bays.

*Custom House Nassau  
30 October 1820*

*Gentlemen*

*With reference to the  
Latter Clause of my Letter to you  
dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 1820, I beg to inform  
you that I have thought it my duty  
to make seizure of 97 Foreign Negro  
Slaves, which have been illegally  
brought here from a Foreign Colony,  
and whose names are herewith attached*

*The nature of these people  
importation into this Colony was  
as follows; several of our small vessels  
being on the Coast of Florida, a*

*4 Cont.  
Customs  
Nassau.*

*part*

Exhibit D, Part 2: Source Bahamas National Archives, Nassau

List of names of the individual people seized at Red Bays. Note the names with highlighted by stars next to then names of Prince McQueen and Scipio Bowlegs. Their names also appear on the list in EXHIBIT C, Part 2.

*Names of the Slaves*

<i>Stephen Williams</i>	<i>Moses</i>
<i>Peter Collins</i>	<i>Ben Abraham</i>
<i>Affy</i>	<i>Molly</i>
<i>Aram</i>	<i>Simon</i>
<i>Sam Louis</i>	<i>Phoebe</i>
<i>Mary Paul</i>	<i>Lurcia</i>
<i>Nancy Miller</i>	<i>Sackwigo</i>
<i>Elias Miller</i>	<i>Affy Steben</i>
<i>Ann Wiley</i>	<i>Prince McQueen</i> ★
<i>Nancy Wiley</i>	<i>Anna + 3 children</i>
<i>Abraham Tucker</i>	<i>Kammal</i>
<i>Brown Henderson</i>	<i>Sirry + 3 children</i>
<i>Stephen Henderson</i>	<i>George Thomas</i>
<i>Richard Henderson</i>	<i>Seatilda + son</i>
<i>John Mote</i>	<i>George David</i>
<i>Isaac Henderson</i>	<i>Bella</i>
<i>Isaac Lamb</i>	<i>Henry Henderson</i>
<i>Robert Mitchell</i>	<i>John Henson</i>
<i>Sam Wetherford</i>	<i>Charles Roberts</i>
<i>Nancy Wetherford</i>	<i>Sue Henderson</i>
<i>Frank</i>	<i>Sirry Henderson</i>
<i>Ben Henderson</i>	<i>Scipio</i> ★
<i>Sally and 3 children</i>	<i>Sunny Bowlegs</i>
<i>Jerusa</i>	<i>Phoebe Bowlegs</i>