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THE INVISIBLE INFLUENCE: HOW WOMEN AND ENSLAVED PEOPLE SHAPED
COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
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Accepted by:
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Abstract

Colonial American studies often focus on the movements, actions and influences of white males and while their actions are significant to understanding the past, it leads to a one-sided view of history. In the colony of South Carolina, women and people of color were important figures that influenced society and made a lasting impact for future generations. Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas Pinckney both became female planters in the absence of male figures in their life and thrived in their roles. Drayton and Lucas-Pinckney were legitimate agents of colonization and slavery. Quash/John Williams, who was a former slave of Eliza Lucas, showed that enslaved people affected society economically through their agricultural knowledge and skilled labors. His life also showed that enslaved people affected the laws and customs of colonial society through their resistance and rebellion. These two women and one man, as individuals, influenced society and contributed to the evolution of an emerging colonial power that made South Carolina the wealthiest colony in mainland British America. Their stories are unique and an intimate look into their lives reveal that women, enslaved and free Black people played a significant role in colonial society.

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Introduction

“I have the business of three plantations to transact, which requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine, but least you should imagine it too burdensome to a girl at my early time of life, give me leave to assure you I think myself happy that I can be useful to so good a father...”¹

In 1740, seventeen-year-old South Carolina colonist Eliza Lucas (1722-1793) wrote these words to her friend in England. Lucas had been left in charge of her Father’s three plantations in the Lowcountry of South Carolina while he went to fight for the British in the West Indies. George Lucas left knowing that his daughter was capable of taking over his property and maintaining it in his absence. It may seem outlandish to hear that an eighteenth-century father would allow his 17-year-old daughter to run his three plantations but leaving women in charge of businesses was not out of the norm. Granted, most of the time the female in charge was a wife or widow, but in this instance, the daughter was left to oversee the affairs of her father. The young Eliza Lucas not only maintained her father’s property, but through her experimentations with indigo production, she helped to create a new cash crop for South Carolina. Her time as an unmarried planter shows that unlikely people influenced colonial society and engaged in the public sphere of the perceived “male” world. Lucas’s story and others like hers need to be told to create a complex view of the past and restore agency to the forgotten.

¹ *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: Digital Edition*, ed. Constance B. Schulz, https://rotunda-upress-virginia-edu.libproxy.clemson.edu/PinckneyHorry/?_gl=1*12ahtw4*_ga*NDgwMDIyNDM1LjE2NDk0MjI5MzE.*_ga_89MNNJWMNQ*MTY0OTk1NTIxMy4yLjEuMTY0OTk1ODI2Ni4w Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Steer (Mrs. Richard) Boddicott, 2 May 1740 DE. (Hereinafter DE)

On the eve of the American Revolution, South Carolina was one of the most prosperous colonies in the mainland British America. Rice, indigo and slavery were the three determining factors that led to the economic well-being of this colony and made it wealthier than the Middle and New England colonies.² The land that had been inhabited by indigenous populations for centuries had been taken and settled by English adventurers and entrepreneurs that brought family units to inhabit the land and turn a profit. The colony's early years were a period of experimentation to determine what crops would flourish in the Carolina environment and what would meet the demands of the European market. Early settlers experimented with crops such as sugarcane, indigo, ginger, silk, and rice, and after years of trial and error, rice became the lead commodity. By the 1690s colonist shifted to grow rice almost exclusively because it was "the only commodity of consequence produced in South Carolina." Rice exports created generational wealth for leading families and by the 1720s South Carolina was exporting twenty million pounds of rice in a year.³ Often referred to as Carolina Gold, rice made the colony and its white inhabitants rich.

With the success of rice, the demand for labor increased; therefore, a rise in the importation of enslaved people from Africa increased. South Carolina had been initially settled by Barbadians who brought enslaved people to cultivate the land, and these settlers quickly established slave codes mirroring the Barbadian codes, which contained strict laws to keep the ever-growing enslaved Africans and Native Americans under control.⁴ South Carolina was a

² William R. Ryan, *The World of Thomas Jeremiah: Charles Town on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9. "According to one estimate, the estates of Charles Town merchants were valued at six times their Philadelphia contemporaries.", 9.

³ John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 175.

⁴ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 85.

Black majority colony by 1708, and by the 1730s the ratio of Blacks to Whites was two to one in some areas. Indeed, historian Peter Wood has argued that Sullivan’s Island, which occupies the entrance of Charleston harbor, should be viewed as the Ellis Island of Black Americans because an estimated forty percent of all enslaved people to reach British America between 1700 and 1775 arrived in South Carolina.⁵ Whites in the colony assuaged their mounting anxieties over the Black majority by passing codes that resulted in the most “rigorous deprivation of freedom to exist in institutionalized form anywhere in the English continental colonies.”⁶ Enslaved people were regulated to control their actions and their valuable labor was exploited to produce crops and goods to make the colony more wealthy.

During the 1740s rice shipping prices increased due to the war with Spain, so colonists turned to other crops to supplement their loss of income. This round of experimentation resulted in the discovery of a second cash crop, as indigo becoming an “excellent college commodity with rice”.⁷ Thereafter, rice, indigo and slavery made South Carolina one of the most prosperous colonies in British America. However, white men were not the only ones who contributed to the expansion of wealth in these forms. In contrast to Virginia, where single male settlers were the norm, in South Carolina family units--including women and children-- settled the early colony and shaped South Carolina society. Due to high death rates among men, some women found themselves placed in charge of vast fortunes and plantations that had belonged to their late husbands or fathers. The *South Carolina Gazette*, land sales, deeds, and chancery courts all contain evidence that widows routinely conducted business in the public sphere. For example,

⁵ Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), xiv.

⁶ Jordan, 85.

⁷ David L. Coon, “Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South Carolina.” *The Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 1 (1976): 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2205661>. 61. McCusker and Menard, 186.

Ann Drayton (1680-1742), the subject of Chapter 1, was a widow planter who oversaw her late husband's five rice plantations and doubled his land holdings during her widowhood of almost two decades. She continued to buy land and cultivate rice, grow her cattle herd, and rent excess properties to turn a quick profit. Drayton's widowhood proved that women had a sense for business and that men saw her as a legitimate planter by conducting business with her and building their professional relationships. She is often overshadowed by the males of the Drayton family, and if she is mentioned at all in historians' work, she is a mere footnote. However, her life reveals the possibilities of widow planters during colonial South Carolina.

Likewise, Eliza Lucas, though an unmarried female, she took over her father's property. Lucas conducted her most famous contribution in successfully cultivating indigo during the crop experimentations of the 1740s.⁸ During her time as a planter, she gave orders to the overseers, managed enslaved people's movements and daily routines, and with her love for botany and her tendencies for "schemes" she helped revolutionize indigo for South Carolina.

It was socially acceptable for Drayton and Lucas to take over the family affairs because they acted for the benefit of their family. Like male planters, these women were interested in creating wealth down the generations, and colonial society would have been comfortable with their dynastic ambitions. Lucas and women like her fell into the position of authority when there was no one else to take up the role. For example, Lucas's father had been called back to the West Indies to fight the Spanish in the War of Jenkins Ear. Her mother was too ill to take on the demands of running three plantations and George, the oldest Lucas son around 14 years of age at the time, had been attending school in England since mid-1738.⁹ Therefore, Eliza Lucas was the

⁸ Eliza Lucas Pinckney did this while she was an unmarried single female, so I will refer to her in this time by her maiden name of Lucas.

⁹ Lorri Glover, *Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Independent Woman in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 33.

only possible solution to fill the gap between her father and her youngest brother. Similarly, when Ann Drayton was widowed none of her four children had reached adulthood; therefore she was the only one who could preside over the plantations until her eldest son reached maturity. Society was not saying that women should be placed in positions of power; rather, it was acceptable for women to fill the gap between a father and his sons, who would eventually manage family properties. Drayton and Lucas both proved that they were more than capable to oversee properties, crop production, manage enslaved people and make an impact in South Carolina's public sphere. However, these women were not trying to change society's rules and bolster female independence. Rather, they were acting for the benefits of their families and not their own glory. Drayton and Lucas were part of rather than rebels against patriarchal society, and they worked for the future generations of their male counterparts. They were simply remaining in their feminine sphere while simultaneously operating successfully in a man's world.¹⁰

The enslaved people that worked on the Drayton and Lucas plantations and other Lowcountry plantations were crucial to the success of rice and indigo. Their previous knowledge of growing various crops made them influential to the process and overall success of the crops. Without their contributions the Drayton, Lucas, and countless other families would not have known the wealth that they did. The many enslaved people on Lowcountry colonial plantations are often overshadowed by the later antebellum descendants, but they can be brought into the forefront and studied with records left behind. This is the case with an enslaved carpenter Quash, who belonged to the Lucas family and worked closely with his temporary owner, Eliza Lucas, on the indigo project. He remained connected to Lucas when he was passed on to her in her

¹⁰ Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 2-3.

marriage contract to Charles Pinckney. Quash grew up working on a rice plantation and was trained to become a carpenter in order to advance his value and usefulness. He was ordered to use his skills to create vats that were crucial in the indigo processing and his contributions helped produce a superior dye than his white counterparts had before him. Therefore, he was directly connected to the two cash crops of South Carolina, rice and indigo, and other enslaved people took part in this process to influence and shape the society of South Carolina.

Quash's life also reveals significant trends in American slavery, including slave resistance through his attempt to self-emancipate himself by running away, Christianizing enslaved people, manumission, and a life in freedom. His life reveals that enslaved people were legally conscious of the laws being passed by their white owners and that enslaved people were able to influence and manipulate laws. Quash's work on the indigo scheme was only the beginning of the colorful life that he would live, and his life shows the possibilities of a Black man in colonial America. Although historians associate Eliza Lucas Pinckney with the development of indigo, Quash played a vital role in establishing South Carolina's second cash crop. His life, in all its complexity, deserves to be studied and commemorated alongside hers.

In this thesis, I follow the lives of Ann Drayton, Eliza Lucas, and Quash in order to present a more complex view of colonial South Carolina. I argue that Drayton and Lucas were agents of slavery and colonization, despite their gender. They produced rice and indigo and interacted with their enslaved people on an intimate day-to-day basis. Quash (later called John Williams) was an enslaved man who contributed to the economic shifts in the colony, and his life uncovers the agency that enslaved people indeed had despite their oppressed situation. These three people should not be seen as representative of their position because they each have a

unique story and set of circumstances that shaped the trajectory of their lives. All three of them had to walk a narrow line in society to push the bounds of their situation, but at the same time remain in their socially prescribed sphere. That is why the in-depth biography of each of them is significant because they will not be overgeneralized and misrepresented. Their lives can be connected to a broader historical narrative, and I will do so to situate them in their society and create a strong foundation for their identity. However, as individuals they are unique and should not be seen as representative of all the people that are in their same social category. Drayton, Lucas, and Quash could have all have had different lives if they had been dealt a different hand. Drayton could have become an impoverished widow if her husband had significant debts like many husbands did. Lucas could have been content with simply running the plantations and not give indigo experiments a thought. She could have married young to revert the responsibility to her mother or her younger siblings and think nothing more of her father's plantations. Quash could have remained in a life of slavery had he not been freed. These intimate details of their lives are significant to their overarching stories to connect with others in a historical context, but as individuals their lives are unique.

In recent decades historians have shifted the focus away from the "Great Man" narrative in history to studies of marginalized people. The inclusion of minorities and females has brought a broader scope to the discipline of history and shed light upon alternative perspectives to historical events. During the feminist movements that erupted in the mid to late 20th century, women's studies became a new field of study in history. Today, universities offer many classes in women's studies, and it is becoming a mainstream niche in history. As historian Suzannah Lipscomb shows, in the 1970s "Women's History" began by focusing on retelling the stories of

elite women. This trend resulted from easy discovery of records that listed names of elite women because of their prominent wealth. Money and property holdings left paper trails that historians could follow and publish their discoveries about marginalized females. Then in the 1980s, feminist historians started to study everyday women and the “structures that shaped their lives.” “They sought female agency and the qualities of women’s experiences that distinguished it from men’s, recuperating women as the subjects of history and considering what history might look like from a woman-centered perspective.”¹¹ In these historians’ works women had become the center focus and their “lost lives” were found.

The Women’s movement of the later twentieth century was not the first-time scholars focused on women’s lives. There were earlier works in that century that seem surprisingly modern. Julia Cherry Spruill published her book *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* in 1938, and despite its early publication, it is quite similar to current ideas and historical discourse. Spruill’s book explores the various social aspects of a colonial woman’s life from their marriage practices, pregnancy and fashion to education and the legal rights of women. Perhaps more importantly, Spruill accounts for the work lives of females and the many different roles a woman could inhabit from inn and tavern keepers to merchants, planters, and slave owners. The planter women she describes all show that they were able to act in a male’s world and transact business matters just as any man. Spruill writes of Sarah Blakeway, who was a prominent planter, that she would “advertise slaves for hire, dwelling houses to let, Indian corn for sale, and large tracts of land and slaves to be disposed of.”¹² Sarah Blakeway was only one

¹¹ Suzannah Lipscomb, “How Can We Recover the Lost Lives of Women?” in *What is History, Now?: How the past and the present speak to each other*, ed. Helen Carr and Suzannah Lipscomb (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2021), 179.

¹² Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 307.

of the female planters that Spruill writes about to support an argument that women were capable persons to be running businesses.

There have been many works that focus on women in the antebellum period and leave much to be said about the colonial women, from Elizabeth Fox Genovese's book, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (1988), to the more recent work of Stephanie Jones-Roger in *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the South* (2019). Fox-Genovese's work set the gold standard for southern female studies, for both white and Black women, by showing the dynamics of the plantation system within the household and the relationships of female mistresses and their enslaved people. She highlights the many aspects of plantation life and the social dynamics between white mistresses and Black enslaved women and also describes them in separate spheres. She argues that slave-holding and enslaved women did not share a bond of sisterhood through their gender. Rather, Fox-Genovese argues that white women depended upon the oppression of enslaved women and that enslaved women were aware of this dynamic. At the same time, she points out how much time elite white women and enslaved Black women would spend together and the complicated relationship between these two groups.

Fox-Genovese does an excellent job of showing the complexity of females, both enslaved and slave owning, but there are some arguments in her book that are problematic.¹³ For example, she argues that many females failed as mistresses and that they were ill equipped for their roles because of the lack of teaching from their mothers. This might have been the case for

¹³ Fox-Genovese describes in detail the lives of enslaved women from infancy to elderly age and brings to life their stories and their agency. She shows the rebellious side of enslaved women through stories such as one enslaved female that said about an overseer under her breath "that if he ever struck her like that, it would be the day that he or she would die" and sure enough when the overseer struck her, she whirled around and struck him on the head with her hoe and proceeding to cut his head clean off. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 317.

some mistresses, but my research into the lives of Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas Pinckney reveals that women in colonial South Carolina were capable of taking control of households and prospering financially. These women were raised in a plantation household and has witnessed their parents managing enslaved people all of their lives, and they were well prepared to take over their roles as mistresses of a household. Similarly, Fox-Genovese argues that women in the antebellum period relied heavily upon male protection and guidance and that a woman could not sufficiently run a plantation.¹⁴

Recently, Stephanie Jones Rogers has disputed this characterization of planter women, arguing that antebellum female slave owners were ruthless businesswomen who were not opposed to using violence to keep their authority intact. She notes that Southern women who grew up in a slave-holding family were raised to become true masters of their property and in this up-bringing violence was a part of their everyday life. They were not the meek and mild southern belles who would swoon at the sight of violence, but legitimate agents of slavery and the plantation system. My work builds upon Stephanie Jones Roger's arguments, and shows that women in colonial South Carolina were similarly ruthless and capable. My findings also connect with those of Cara Anzilotti, who has found that women planters in colonial South Carolina successfully crossed traditional gender barriers and prospered in their roles as planters and slave owners. She notes that society accepted their role because the women who became planter patriarchs did so to benefit their husbands and future male heirs that would one day take over. Anzilotti pulls from Gerda Lerner's work to explain "patrimonial bureaucracy" that entails the "allocation of power to subordinate members of the family or society" in order "to fill the leadership gap created by, in the case of South Carolina, a high death rate."¹⁵ This leadership gap

¹⁴ Fox-Genovese, 203.

¹⁵ Anzilotti, 2-5.

was between the male members of the family. When the father died, a mother gained control of the estate until the oldest male member of the family reached adulthood to take over. In other words, these women were seen as assuming a temporary role, not a permanent one, and this made their exercise of typically masculine authority acceptable. This was the case for Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas Pinckney, both of whom were legitimate businesswomen who expanded upon their bounds of gender traditions, while remaining in their prescribed sphere.

Historian Cynthia A. Kierner is very much like Anzilotti in her book, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (1998). She gives agency to females and how their roles were conducted in the public sphere farther than had previously been believed. Some of those acts in the public sphere were achieved by writing about political and cultural matters inside the home or making a political statement by wearing a homespun dress to a ball. She shows that many businesses and plantations were run by widows due to the high death rates in males during this time. Like Anzilotti, Kierner argues that women acted as “deputy husbands” in the absence of their male counterparts. The term “deputy husbands” was first coined by historian Laurel Ulrich in her study of women in Colonial New England. Ulrich describes deputy husbands as women who crossed gender barriers and performed tasks that were traditionally masculine. Their activities were accepted by society because these women were acting in their female responsibility to continue the work of their male counterparts.¹⁶ Although Kierner's insights are valuable, her discussion of Eliza Lucas Pinckney neglect her business acumen. Kierner mentions Pinckney but shows that she was a woman of her time by emphasizing her religiosity and her household management skills. While this is true, Kierner neglects Lucas's main role in the public sphere, which was her part in the indigo

¹⁶ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 11. Anzilotti, 164-165.

experimentations. She only mentioned Lucas's work in indigo once and only to discuss her reading habits that led to some teasing her that she would grow old before her time. I therefore build upon Kierner's work by showing that Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas Pinckney's lives attests to greater roles in the public sphere than Kierner sees.

Historian Lorri Glover argues that women were far more significant than Kierner does in her book, *Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Independent Woman in the Age of Revolution* (2020). Her book is the most recent account on Eliza Lucas Pinckney's life and in it she examines her upbringing through the end of her life. Glover synthesizes political and cultural history and shows that Lucas was a woman of great resolve. Glover argues that Lucas was an independent woman and capable of taking care of her families' plantations in her father's absence. Her book was crucial to my narrative about Eliza Lucas Pinckney and also can be applied to Ann Drayton's life because of the historical context that Glover includes.

Throughout her book, Glover includes a discussion of enslaved people whenever possible, to give a more rounded view of Lucas's story and the overall influence of enslaved people in colonial South Carolina. Like Jones-Rogers, Glover argues that Lucas's "delicate female sensibilities" did not make her soft in the care of her slaves. My research confirms this, and I apply her findings to Ann Drayton's treatment of her enslaved people. Also, Glover particularly pays attention to Lucas's enslaved carpenter Quash and for that reason I decided to dedicate a chapter on his life to highlight skilled enslaved people's roles in society.

All that Ann Drayton, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, and other planters in the Lowcountry of South Carolina were able to achieve was directly linked to the institution of slavery. Without the labor of enslaved Africans and Native populations, the fortunes and prosperity of the Drayton, Lucas, and Pinckney families would not have been attainable. The historiography of American

slavery is vast and has changed much since the twentieth-century arguments on the subject were published such as Ulrich B. Phillip's *American Negro Slavery* in 1918, Kenneth M. Stamp's *Peculiar Institution* in 1954, and Stanley M. Elkins' *Slavery* in 1959. These books are from a different age, and Drew Gilpin Faust notes that the studies in the first half of the twentieth century celebrated a racial order that is now recognized as abhorrent. Phillip characterized slavery as a benevolent "school" for uncivilized Africans and Elkin's characterized slaves as the thoughtless Sambos. These were the leading notions for slavery studies until the Civil Rights movement began to change the tide in the country's political and social environment and then bled into academia.¹⁷ However, this did not end the "good old boys" notion of slavery and it continued to infect Eugene Genovese's concept of paternalism in slavery. He argues that paternalism, a social hegemony for slave owners and enslaved people, allowed southern slave owners to feel a bond to their enslaved people and a father-child relationship was formed. While the notion of paternalism has ended in academia, unfortunately, this view still contaminates some white southern minds today.

Thankfully, there were historians that took an alternative route than Genovese. For example, Peter H. Wood's *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina, 1670-Stono Rebellion* (1974) examined the role of Black people in colonial America because he wanted to shed light on Black studies despite claims of their being lack of evidence in this early time. He was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a plethora of information that he only extended his study through the Stono Rebellion (1739) because he wanted to pay justice to this period and not overgeneralize matters.

¹⁷ Drew Gilpin Faust, "Slavery and the Past and Future of Southern Intellectual History", (speech, Keynote to the South Intellectual History Colloquium, Miami, Florida, March 2, 2023), 3.

His later chapters in the book are focused on the period of Drayton and Pinckney, so I use this information to supplement the lack of information about the people they enslaved. Wood does not make mention of paternalism or give excuses for slave owners as Genovese did. He restores agency to enslaved people and shows the complexities in colonial South Carolina's slave system. In particular, my work is influenced by his arguments about skilled enslaved people like Quash, who is the subject of Chapter 3. As Wood shows, there was a labor competition among the races and that just being white did not always get you the job. Indeed, Wood goes so far as to say that Black artisans posed a threat to whites by the Revolutionary era.

Wood also writes extensively about runaway slaves and Black resistance strategies. Running away was a common form of resistance and he dedicates an entire chapter to that topic to show that it was a personal and partial form of resistance that increased over the 18th century. I have found many runaway slave ads in the *South Carolina Gazette* and with Wood's work I build a narrative of enslaved rebellion through running away and connect it to Quash's life.

In the last decade of the 20th century, historians have continued to study the lives of enslaved people, in part to understand current race relations. Phillip D. Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (1998) and Ira Berlin's *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in America* (1998) were a part of the wave of scholars that sought to construct a new narrative in Southern history. Berlin and Morgan both emphasize the autonomy of enslaved people to harken back to Herbert Gutman's mid-1980s shift in rhetoric.¹⁸ Morgan compares the slave societies of the Chesapeake and the Lowcountry during the colonial period to "identify the independent forces that shaped both societies." He pays attention to the changes in slavery throughout time to show that it was a

¹⁸ Nell Irvin Painter, Reviews of *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, by Ira Berlin. *African American Review* 34, no. 3 (2000): 515–17.

complex and shifting practice. He has three different phases of slavery which are the frontier phase, the institution building phase, and the mature phase and notes that these phases occurred at different times and rates of progression in the two areas of study, thus adding to the overall complexity of slavery. There are three sections in his book, with the first section detailing the material context of slave life of how slaves were imported, what their everyday labor and life looked like, and levels of skilled workers on the plantations. In the second part of his book, he writes about the interactions between slaves and whites. Morgan describes all aspects of interaction from working alongside one another, to social interactions of sex, violence, and companionship. In the same section Morgan also writes of the inner thoughts and feelings of slaves and how their self-esteem was affected under slavery. He brings to life their inner thoughts and further restores agency and faces to enslaved people. However, in this section he leaves many questions unanswered, and it is quite frustrating. But a scholar can only speculate so far and thus leaves unanswered questions. And last, but not the least, he writes about slave culture, of their family structures and social practices that formed in the Lowcountry and the Chesapeake. His work is crucial to my chapter on Quash and the enslaved sections throughout the Drayton and Lucas chapters to lay the foundation and environment of enslaved life in colonial South Carolina. I will use his work to give insight to the work and hierarchy of slaves in the Lowcountry to show the complexities and nuances of enslaved people's lives.

Morgan and Wood both emphasized slave resistance, and in doing so highlighted the autonomy of enslaved people. Morgan specifically does not dedicate a single chapter to resistance but mentions it throughout the book to show that resistance was a part of the everyday landscape of slavery. More recently historian Karen Cook Bell's book *Running From Bondage: Enslaved Women and their Remarkable Flight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (2021)

focuses on gendered resistance for enslaved women to show the additional obstacles women faced in running away as a form of resistance.¹⁹ Despite these obstacles, as Bell argues, enslaved women who chose to flee, took political actions through their flights. In each chapter she focuses on an enslaved woman who chose to flee and contextualizes their flight in historical trends to reveal narratives of daring women. Even though I am not writing a specific chapter on enslaved women, I will use her format and arguments to bolster the chapter on Quash and to give background information on the enslaved women owned by the Drayton and Lucas-Pinckney families.

In Chapter One of this thesis, I provide background on South Carolina's settlement as well as the law of coverture, which shaped the lives of both Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas Pinckney. I then turn to a discussion of Ann Drayton's life. Upon her widowhood, Drayton was left in charge of four children, multiple plantations, and numerous livestock. Over the course of her widowhood, she not only managed her late husband's property but increased his holdings. She bought land, became neighbors and constructed business relationships with prominent men in society, grew her cattle herd, and transacted business deals to grow her finances. She fought over property with her family, gained the upper hand over men indebted to her, and secured wealth for her children. Drayton used her legal knowledge to secure property for her daughter Mary by placing it in a trust to shield it from her conniving husband. Drayton also exploited the

¹⁹ Gender-specific studies of slavery have been on the rise in recent years. Cook Bell's book is a testament to this, as is Thomas A. Foster's *Rethinking Rufus: Sexual Violations of Enslaved Men*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2019). This is the first book-length study of sexual violence against enslaved men, when most of the discourse has centered around female slaves and their white owners. Foster looks at the forced sexual coupling of enslaved people from the perspective of the male slave to shed light on the male's side of the situation. He also has a chapter dedicated to sexual violence of enslaved men by their white mistresses to reveal a new dimension in sexual violence in American slavery. This emphasis highlights the forgotten and complexities of slavery are at the forefront of the scholarship today and are hopefully will lead to a more well-rounded view of the lives of enslaved people.

labor of her enslaved men and women everyday of her widowhood and every ounce of wealth that she achieved was through their labor. Upon her death, she had nearly doubled the land holdings that her late husband left her and thus provided more wealth for her children to carry on for the next generations of South Carolinians. She also exhibited the power that a slave-owning mistress wielded in her will by declaring some slaves free and then taking back this gift. Nevertheless, she fulfilled her duty to her late husband and worked for the benefit of her family and had done successfully while remaining in her feminine sphere.

In Chapter Two, I focus on the life of Eliza Lucas Pinckney from her birth through her time as a planter. I can reconstruct her childhood and education far better than Ann Drayton's because of the letters left behind and research done by other historians. Her childhood on her father's sugar plantation in Antigua and her education in England laid a strong foundation that would benefit her in the role of a planter. Eliza Lucas successfully transitioned into the role of a planter from the age of seventeen until her marriage at twenty-two. She was teased by locals that she overworked herself in her plantation pursuits but found fulfillment in her efforts. Lucas still dedicated time to remain in her feminine sphere of keeping up to date with fashion trends, taking music lessons and donating to charity. While finding a balance between her feminine and masculine roles, she maintained a commanding air that showed her intelligence. Lucas developed business relations with local planters and she as well as they benefited from each other's intelligence and advice. She also maintained control over her enslaved people and enforced slave codes. In her life she had been connected to two slave revolts, one in Antigua and then the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina. Her fear of slave revolts would affect her treatment of her enslaved people, just as it did male planters of the era. Lucas monitored her enslaved people, gave them orders, and relied upon their labor to keep her father's plantations running smoothly. Always

known for having “schemes” for different agricultural pursuits, Lucas took part in successfully cultivating indigo into a cash crop. With the help of the two Cromwell brothers from Montserrat, her Huguenot neighbor Andrew Deveaux, and her enslaved people, especially the favored Quash, indigo flourished into a valuable commodity for South Carolina.

Finally, in Chapter Three, I build on the ideas of Wood, Morgan, and Cook Bell, in order to reconstruct the life of Quash, an enslaved man who belonged to Eliza Lucas Pinckney but who later built a life for himself as a free Black man. Quash’s life reveals the many ways that enslaved people contributed to the wealth of the colonies through their labor, from the “unskilled” field laborers to the highly sought-after craftsmen. He also connects to enslaved resistance through his attempt to run away in January of 1743, and I will ground his actions in the broader scope of fugitive slaves and other enslaved resistance. These acts of resistance are significant to examine because they show how enslaved people struggled to establish lives for themselves within the confines of a system that reduced them to property. These studies also show that enslaved people were legally conscious of laws whites were passing and acted to defy and change the laws. Despite his rebellious nature, Quash fell into the good graces of his owners and later other free white people in the community. Quash was baptized and later manumitted by Charles Pinckney, Eliza Lucas’s husband, and this process and his life in freedom exhibit an extraordinary life of a formerly enslaved man. He took control of his life, made a living for himself with the skills he learned in bondage, freed two of his children from slavery, and became a Black landowner in colonial South Carolina.

This Chapter supplements work in the first two chapters to restore agency of the other enslaved people who belonged to the Drayton and Pinckney families. In particular, I highlight the importance of enslaved people’s prior knowledge of cultivating rice and indigo and argue

that without their knowledge and labor the crops would not have come to fruition. The skilled agricultural knowledge of enslaved people is often left out of the category of a “skilled slave”, but I argue it should be included because this knowledge contributed to the success of South Carolina’s cash crops.

Taken together, the lives of Drayton, Lucas, and Quash show that there were a multitude of forces that combined to create a prosperous colony. Drayton and Lucas show that women were valuable assets to families in times of needs and could not only manage their families’ properties, but also benefit them. Quash demonstrated that enslaved people were crucial to plantation work that contributed to the wealth of the entire colony and also that enslaved people were forces to be reckoned with. Rice, indigo and slavery were the three economic commodities of South Carolina, and these three people were interwoven into these colonial shifts and practices. Their lives show that in a perceived “white man’s world” there were non-white males that played important roles in shaping the outcome of society. Their lives attest that individuals are significant to the general culture of society and that they each influenced and shaped the course of South Carolina as a colony. Their lasting influences are not equal to everyone in the past, but they each are remarkable because they reveal unseen and invisible layers that deserve to be highlighted.

Chapter 1: Ann Drayton

Introduction

Ann Drayton is often overshadowed by the elite males that were a part of the prominent Drayton family in the colonial period of South Carolina. The family had been in South Carolina practically since the colony began in 1670, with Thomas Drayton senior arriving in 1679 to assume the land grants from the Lords Proprietors.¹ The Drayton family was made up of strong-willed men determined to make a better life in the new world, but this same passion animated the women that married into the family. Ann Fox became the wife of Thomas Drayton sometime between 1700 and 1704, and she lived almost two decades after his death. During her widowhood, she not only maintained his property but increased his land holdings and wealth for the future generations of the Drayton family. She took over her husband's five rice plantations, ninety-one enslaved people, 1,380 head of cattle, 112 horses, and 3,027 acres with four children all under the age of eighteen and managed to flourish in Colonial South Carolina's emerging economy.² Drayton, like many other women who settled in colonial South Carolina, took up the role of a planter in widowhood and maintained her husband's property for the benefit of future generations. The women who achieved success during their widowhood overcame gender restraints by stepping into the business world, and while it might be tempting to see them as proto feminists, they were agents of slavery and colonization.

¹ Keith Thomas Krawczynski, "William Henry Drayton: South Carolina Revolutionary Patriot" (ProQuest Dissertations Publishings, 1998), 13-14.

² "Last Will and Testament of Thomas Drayton," Wills of Charleston County, Will Book 1 1722-1724, 99. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library. (Hereinafter Thomas Drayton (Father) will)

These women, like male planters of the time, exploited the labor of enslaved Africans and Native Americans to achieve wealth and success in the market. Ann Drayton ruled over enslaved men and women and used their labor to grow the wealth of her family, and this should not be celebrated. Slavery was a brutal system that has had a long-lasting impact on the United States. However, the role that Ann Drayton played in colonial South Carolina should be told and understood to add to the overarching narrative of slavery and female history.

Like the colonial women that Christine Walker follows in *Jamaica Ladies*, Ann Drayton's story reveals that women were powerful agents of slavery and colonization.³ Drayton and some of her fellow widows, successfully assumed their late husband's roles and proved that women were capable of managing business affairs and growing generational wealth. Their stories contain many interesting facets from deliciously dramatic family feuds over land and property, to brutal decisions of breaking up enslaved families and thus destroying a sense of community among enslaved people. Ann Drayton's story is only one look at a widow planter in colonial South Carolina; nonetheless, her life reveals the complexities of being a female in colonial South Carolina.

In this chapter, I use Ann Drayton's time as a widow planter to show that women were capable of running businesses and that it was not out of the norm to do so in South Carolina. I begin this chapter with a discussion of South Carolina's settlement and show how its unique environment allowed women more freedom to act in the public sphere. Unlike Virginia, South Carolina was colonized by families because incentives were given for men who brought women and children along. This changed the social dynamics of the colony, making it less restrictive for females. Next, I examine the Drayton family and their role in South Carolina's settlement. Ann

³ Christine Walker, *Jamaica Ladies: Female Slaveholders and the creation of Britain's Atlantic Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 9.

Drayton came of age in this formative period in South Carolina history, and in this section, I also discuss her biography. Drayton's parentage is quite murky and not many scholars have taken the time to determine if she actually was the daughter of Stephen Fox or if she was of the Booth family.⁴ Therefore examining her husband's family can help us understand the wealth and power Drayton assumed and maintained during her widowhood. It also connects her and the Drayton family to a larger historical narrative of the colonization of South Carolina that needs to be examined to understand the environment that she was operating in during this time.

In the next section I explore Drayton's marriage and widowhood in order to establish a foundation of what it meant to be a woman during this time. More importantly I show how women had to navigate in their world to gain power and find gaps in the social fabric to allow them to operate in the business world. Coverture -- the legal regime that conscribed a woman's identity during marriage -- was a highly restrictive legal practice that on paper seemed to give all the power to the husband, but there were ways that women overcame these restrictions through private trusts created by their parents. In Drayton's case, she was able to pass on wealth to her daughter through this creative legal means. I will then describe widowhood and how high death rates in South Carolina led to many females led households and how this created an environment for females to be seen as capable to take over the family's holdings.

In the next section I shift my attention fully to Ann Drayton and the land purchases, business deals and maneuvers she made during her widowhood to maintain her family's land. Drayton was making business deals with leading families in the community like the Cattell and Bull families, rubbing elbows with Governors and contracting advantageous marriages for her

⁴ Brittany V. Lavelle, "The Making of a Legacy: Three Generations of Drayton Family Women and Their Influences on the Landscape of the Lowcountry and Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Charleston." Thesis (Clemson: Clemson University Libraries, n.d.), 26.

children. Her business sense and knowledge for the value of a well-made marriage match contributed to her respected role in society. She is mentioned in many land sales as adjacent landowner to powerful families, and they saw her as a legitimate businesswoman.

Finally, I examine the lives of the enslaved people that the Drayton's owned to bring their narratives to light and to understand their significant role in Drayton's success. Their story is overshadowed in many of the sources I found, but by reading primary sources against the grain, it is possible to partially reconstruct their lives. I will discuss their work on rice plantations and their contribution to an international market through their skilled knowledge of rice cultivation. I also discuss the enslaved people that Drayton mentions in her will to show the fate of her slaves after her death and common trends found in wills regarding slaves. The rise of the rice industry and the growing population of enslaved people through reproduction and importation were rapidly developing alongside one another and Drayton's life can attest to this. "Carolina Gold" rice and the enslaved people who grew it transformed South Carolina from an imperial backwater to a prosperous colony, making it far wealthier than the middle and New England Colonies. The contributions of the enslaved people therefore directly affected not on South Carolina society, but also early America as a whole.

Ann Drayton represents what was possible for a widow in the newly colonized South Carolina and pushed the bounds of the perceived woman's role in history. Many people today would be surprised that women were given such power during this time, but it was a common occurrence for women to take over the roles of their fathers and husbands when the time called for it. The goal of this chapter is to push this knowledge into a mainstream thought of history and uncover the agency that females, as well as enslaved people had in the past.

South Carolina's Settlement

The English Colony of Carolina was chartered on March 24, 1663 when King Charles II granted land in Carolina to eight English noblemen. First settled in 1670 by English and Barbadian settlers, the colony took root after a series of false starts.⁵ Unlike Virginia and other mainland colonies, South Carolina colonists relied upon enslaved labor from the colony's beginning. Indeed, the colony's first constitution, the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina, guaranteed property rights in the Africans that Barbadian and English colonist used to establish their colony.

Once the English set their sights on the area that would be known as Carolina, they began issuing land grants to increase the number of settlers in the new founded colony. Crucially, these land grants indicated that family units were imperative to the colony. The Lord's Proprietors offered one hundred and fifty acres to each free man and an additional one hundred and fifty acres for every male he brought who was over the age of sixteen. For every female a man brought he would get one hundred acres and an additional one hundred acres for any boy fifteen years or younger.⁶ Thus there was an incentive for a man to bring his whole family in order to

⁵ Charles H. Lesser, *South Carolina Begins: The Records of a Proprietary colony, 1663-1721* (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1995), 2. John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 171. However, this is not the beginning of South Carolina's history; it had been inhabited by native people for centuries before any white foot stepped off a ship onto the land that would be known as Carolina. Their history and story are often forgotten and in many American public classrooms and the perceived beginning of south Carolina's history starts with an Englishman's presence in the colony. This land that English had "discovered" had been inhabited for centuries before any white person reached it shores and once the English did arrive, they began to exploit the natives for their furs and enslaving them. This is not the focus of my chapter, but Native American's presence should not be forgotten. The Spanish expedition in Carolina that arrived in 1526 is often forgotten and even more so the African slaves that were brought with them and left after their failed attempt to colonize the area. South Carolina is unique for this reason because Black people were here from the very beginning of the European presence, and they were here before any English subject set foot here. If it was possible to trace the bloodline of current Black American, all the way back to the 16th century someone could find that their ancestors were some of the first settlers of South Carolina and had intermarried with local indigenous tribes a century before the English arrived. See Wood, 3-6. This part history is often forgotten and needs to be highlighted to show Black American's longstanding history in South Carolina.

⁶ Krawczynski, 13.

receive more land. These family units that settled the colony allowed for a different dynamic than in the early days of the Virginia colony, where men highly outnumbered women. Historian Cara Anzilotti argues that because South Carolina was settled by family units, men saw their wives and daughters as vital to the establishment of the social order in the colony. Because of this understanding, some Lowcountry elite men were willing to allow their wives and sometime daughters to take over their affairs. Therefore, Ann Drayton and other women in South Carolina found themselves in positions to take over the affairs of their male counterparts when the time was appropriate. Anzilotti furthers this argument by saying that South Carolina was a place where women had more freedom than in other colonies. She argues that for the planter elite, “gender was less of a concern than either class or race in creating a social hierarchy.” Anzilotti also points out that it was not until the early 19th century that women found themselves “increasingly marginalized” in South Carolina.⁷ Historian Cynthia A. Kierner adds to this point when she argued that the genteel civic rituals in the colonial South were segregated not by gender, but by class.⁸ Indeed, both historians agree that class and race were more important than gender in the social hierarchy in colonial America, and in South Carolina, this was especially true. Thus, colonial South Carolina was somewhat of a haven for women and their movements in society because they were not as restricted as women were in the antebellum period. Anzilotti shows that for a woman to have this freedom, limited as it may have been, was a unique trait for South Carolina and set the colony apart from other British colonies and the British Isles. This is not to say that females in South Carolina were liberated from the gender constraints of their time, but to show that they were in a unique position that could allow them to push the bounds of their

⁷ Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 5.

⁸ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 43.

situations. Coverture was still very much intact, and a woman was subjected to the authority of her father, husband, and brothers over her life. However, it shows that a woman's role in colonial America was not simple, but a complex situation that needs to be assessed on an individual level.

The early Carolina colony also differed from colonies like Virginia and Massachusetts Bay because the settlers were coming from other colonies rather than directly from the British Isles. In fact, family units often came from the West Indies. Thomas Drayton, Sr. was the first of the Drayton's to come to Carolina and he followed this pattern when he left Warwickshire England in 1675 for Barbados.⁹ Drayton's stay in Barbados was only temporary because he did not buy land there and likely rented lodgings to witness the local agricultural practices to use in his future home of Carolina. Many settlers who lived in Barbados, Jamacia and Antigua eventually moved to mainland America because of harsh weather conditions and a bad bout with the failing crops on the islands. In Barbados especially, colonists noticed that most of the land had already been taken over for sugar production and there was a growing economy for imported foodstuff, draft animals, and timber products. Therefore, an exodus commenced from the West Indies to the mainland of British America.¹⁰ Thomas Drayton was a part of this movement and he along with other settlers sought permission to leave the island and set sail for Carolina. These tickets to leave the island were required before departure to make sure all debts and accounts were settled before a person left, showing that there were often times when people who would

⁹ The Drayton suffixes are rather confusing. P. F. Campbell explains that the original Drayton that came to South Carolina and the one that married Ann Drayton were not the same two men, but were two distinct generations. Here, I use the suffixes Senior and Junior to avoid confusion, but also because this is the convention that Campbell himself uses in *Some Early Barbadian History*. See P.F. Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History* (Wildey, St. Michael: Carribbean Graphics & Letchworth Ltd., 1993), 157-160.

¹⁰ Campbell, 148-157. Campbell argues against the historiography of the strong Barbadian influences in South Carolina by stating that many scholars in the past have over emphasized its influence. He does note that there was a definite influence from Barbados with two of the original Lord Proprietors being raised or having a father from the island. McCusker and Menard, 170-171.

flee the island to leave behind massive amounts of debts.¹¹ After arriving on the ship Mary in South Carolina in April of 1679, Drayton settled on the two hundred acres he applied for a year prior. For the remainder of his life Drayton engaged in subsistence's farming with his wife Elizabeth until his death around 1700. They had a son around 1680, and he would go on to achieve a much more influential life than his father.¹²

Thomas Drayton, the son, applied for one hundred and forty-six acres "of land English measure" in May of 1701, seven hundred acres in September of 1703, and two hundred and twenty-four acres in November of 1704, showing his ambition for growing generational wealth for the family.¹³ He fully embraced the motto of the Drayton family "Hac iter ad astra" and fulfilled his ambitions to become a wealthy landowner in South Carolina. The same can be said of Ann Drayton. Although she married into the family, she fully embraced her journey to the stars and the sky was the limit to what she could achieve.

Marriage and Widowhood

Ann Drayton married Thomas Drayton sometime between 1700 and 1704, and in doing so she gave up rights to any lands and money she possessed before her marriage, which became her husband's property. Under English common law, when a woman married, she was subjected to the restraints of coverture. In coverture, a married woman's property became her husband's and she could no longer have full say over the land she brought into the marriage or herself for that matter. She was tied to him and "covered" by him in the law and legally she was not a person on her own anymore.

¹¹ Campbell, 155.

¹² Krawczynski, 13-16.

¹³ Drayton Family Papers, 1721-1766, Box 13, Folder 3. (oversized) College of Charleston Special Collections.

Many historians apply excerpts from William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Lawes of England* to show what an eighteenth-century wife's position was and how society perceived women. However, Blackstone's *Commentaries* were not published until the 1760s, long after Drayton was married. Thus, this was out of the time range for them to apply to Ann Drayton's widowhood and other contemporaries of her time. Early colonial women were not as constrained as their counterparts in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but they still faced restrictions in marriage. The *Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights*, published in 1632, was more applicable to the life and time of Ann Drayton. The writer of this text describes marriage as combining of two people with an analogy of a stream and a river. A female was the little brook and in marriage to her husband, she is "incorporateth with Rhodanus, Humber, or the Thames" and she therefore "looseth her name" and "berith no sway; it possesseth nothing during coverture." It also states that "A woman as soon as she is married, is called covert; in Latine nupta, that is, "veiled"; as it were, clouded and overshadowed;" and in her recent marriage a women's new self is her husband, "her superior, her companion, her master..."¹⁴

This contemporary description of a wife in marriage shows that wives were seen as one with their husbands. Wives lost their own "stream" in marriage and everything that they owned before was now owned by their husband and under his direct control. Wives lost their own identity as solitary figures and would always be linked to the "river" they flowed into. They were covered and veiled by their husbands and were supposed to see the new woman they became as superior. Thus, when Ann Fox married Thomas Drayton, she gave up her access to her family

¹⁴ Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 340. *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights, or, The Lawes Provision for Woemen [sic]: a Methodicall Collection of Such Statutes and Customes ... as Doe Properly Concerne Women; Together with a Compendious Table* (England: Printed by the assignment of John More, Esquire, and are to be sold by John Grove, 1632), 124-125.

land in her own right and relinquished them to her husband. Magnolia Plantation, situated along the banks of the Ashley River, was where the newlywed couple settled down and lived together. These grounds are famous for the historic gardens, but the original house that the Draytons lived in did not stand the test of time. The land could have been a part of Ann's dowry if speculation is correct on this fact. However, whether or not she brought this land into the marriage, it would have ultimately been Thomas Drayton's property once they were wed.

In her so called "superior" self, Ann Drayton and other married women could not execute valid contracts, buy or sell lands, or file a lawsuit without their husband's permission. Women also lost power to "act as executors or administrators of estates and as legal guardians."¹⁵ These measures sound rather bleak and would make one question why any woman would want to get married. However, these practices had been in place for some time and were normalized in society. Granted, wives did have some rights in the fact that their husbands could not sell or convey land without their consent. This was because upon a husband's death, his widow would have dower rights to 1/3 of all real property he owned during the marriage. So, if a husband sold a piece of property, he had to have her permission, but this does not consider the use of coercion and abuse to get her permission.¹⁶ In any case, once a female married, she was no longer in charge of her life and property unless the property had been placed in a trust by parents who were looking out for the best interests of their daughters. Establishing a trust meant, as a practical matter, that upon their marriage the land would be out of reach of the husband and the wife could do as she pleased with the land. It would not fall to the frequent gambling debts and drinking

¹⁵ Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 14.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-16, 141.

habits of ornery husbands.¹⁷ Ann Drayton would call upon this legal loophole in the future when she arranged property in a trust for her daughter in order to protect it from her husband and safeguard the estate for the benefit of any grandchildren.

Under coverture, then, marriage was somewhat of a sacrificial death of a woman's rights. However, coverture ended with widowhood. The vows of "till death do us" part often rang true in colonial America and especially in South Carolina because of the high death rates among colonists. Yellow fever, smallpox, and typhus were a few of the many ways that men met their untimely death and left their wives to go on without them. Also, men married at later ages than females, thus leading to many wives outliving their husbands. The Lowcountry was populated with many women who were widowed in their early thirties and forties and never remarried.¹⁸ The death of a spouse should be perceived with sorrow and sadness, but ironically for some women it led to a life of independence and freedom that they had never encountered before. After being restricted for years during a marriage, some women could find themselves in possession of a large fortune and power that was theirs to wield as they liked. For example, Sarah Offley of Virginia was married twice and widowed two times, to Adam Thorogood in 1640, Captain John Gookin in 1643, and Francis Yeardley. Captain Gookin's father had been one of Virginia's greatest planters, and Francis Yeardley was the son of Sir George Yeardley,

¹⁷ Salmon also argues that South Carolina, along with New York, Maryland and Virginia expanded upon property rights for women because they were settled by entrepreneurs and adventurers. They set up legal court systems that closely followed English courts and expanded upon separate estates for women. However, the New England colonies, which were settled by religious people, were more restrictive over women's property rights and access to separate estates. *Ibid*, 9-10, 12. For establishing trusts to keep out of hands of husbands, see Walker, 175.

¹⁸ Anzilotti, 24-27. Anzilotti does not explain why disease killed more men than women. Perhaps it was because women were most likely confined to the home and not out and about in society as much as men were. Kierner accounts for the possibility by writing that because men married later in life and there was a short life expectancy, it made husbands dying first more likely. So, the widows were left to take on the estates and businesses of their husbands for the time remaining. For more info on high death rates also see Kierner, 11. See also Lorri Glover, *Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Independent Woman in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 147-148.

Virginia's former governor, and show that Sarah knew the value of an advantageous marriage. While most people were living in poverty she acquired property from all three husbands, managed additional property in a trust for her children and possessed expensive jewelry. Sarah Offley and others like her were indeed a "merry widow" with their amounted wealth and power that could be found at the timely death of a husband.¹⁹

While Ann Drayton thrived in her role as a widow planter, she did not receive vast amounts of land as in Offley's case. When Thomas Drayton died sometime between 1717 and 1724, he left the land to his two eldest sons Thomas and Stephen Fox, who were to receive one thousand pounds. His daughter, Mary, had her choice of one enslaved Black woman. Drayton bequeathed property on his Stono lands and additional enslaved people to his youngest son, John, who later built the now famous Drayton Hall. He left Ann a measly five hundred pounds in lieu of and in full satisfaction of her thirds and dower. Thomas Drayton did not fall into the category of a doting husband who left his widow land and fortune. Instead, he gave the majority of his possessions to his children. Thomas Drayton did make Ann his sole executer of the will unless she died or remarried after his death, when it would be passed to his close friends, Captain Christopher Wilkins, Captain Johnathan Drake William Wilkins, and William Cattell. Ann Drayton later made business deals with the latter, while Thomas married Cattell's daughter to show the strong ties between the two families. With all of her children under the age of eighteen and none over twenty-one, when it was legal to take over their inheritance, Drayton found herself in charge of maintaining a large fortune and business. Thomas Drayton's five rice plantations required a firm hand and good direction to be run successfully. The enslaved people that worked

¹⁹ Kierner, 12.

her family's land would answer to her now and she would be the authority figure until Thomas Drayton, her eldest son, reached maturity.

It was not unusual in South Carolina for widows to take over the business of their deceased husbands. However, these women had to conform to the traditional gender roles of the day so they would not be seen as overstepping their bounds. In doing so widows sometimes had to “cloak” themselves in “conventional images of feminine debility and dependence” so society would not condemn their behavior in business. For example, Elizabeth Timothy of Charleston, who was the successful publisher of the *South Carolina Gazette*, operated the newspaper as a widow. Upon her husband's death, Timothy described herself in the paper as a “poor afflicted widow with six small children and another hourly expected.”²⁰ Elizabeth Timothy was playing on her weakness as a widow with children to bolster her business and allow for her to remain in the role of publisher. As Inge Dornan has shown, Timothy continued to publish the *Gazette* “as usual” and appealed to society by presenting herself as a weak and dependent widow instead of a headstrong female pursuing an independent publishing career. Dornan also notes that Timothy appealed to the public because she knew that to support her children and herself with the *Gazette*, she would have to have the approval of the public.²¹

Widows also operated business without social consequences because they were often caretakers for minor children who would eventually assume their responsibilities. For example, Timothy operated the *Gazette* until her son, Peter, reached adulthood, and Drayton acted in a similar role when she took charge of her husband's property. Widows in charge of their late

²⁰ Kierner, 20.

²¹ Inge Dornan “Masterful Women: Colonial Women Slaveholders in the Urban Low Country.” (*Journal of American Studies* 39 (2005): 383–402. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27557690>, 388.

husbands' businesses were filling in the gap between the fathers and sons of the family.²² The *SC Gazette* was run Peter Timothy and then eventually by his widow after his death in 1782. So, the cycle began again, showing that widow-run businesses were not a foreign phenomenon in the colonial south.²³ Thus, Drayton taking control of her late husband's business affairs was socially acceptable because she was the only one able to take up the role until her eldest child reached maturity.

Widow Planter

Ann Drayton was widowed upon her husband's death, sometime between 1718 and 1724, and she remained unmarried until her death in 1742. Drayton began her business affairs very soon into her widowhood, and there is even evidence that she acted as a *feme sole* trader before she reached widowhood. A "feme sole" trader was a married female that had permission from her husband to transact deals and run taverns, plantations, and become merchants. *Feme Sole* traders had precedent in English law and were recognized by a statute in eighteenth-century South Carolina. South Carolina passed a statute in 1712 that made *feme sole* traders liable for all debts they accrued in their business deals because in the past women would argue that coverture made their husbands liable for all of their debts. This statute and the presence of women in the business world legitimized the role of *feme sole* traders and shows that women were able to act beyond the household and enter the public sphere of trade and commerce as independent people.²⁴

It is not clear when Thomas Drayton died. He wrote his will in 1714, revised it in 1716, and then it was finally proved in 1724. However, there is evidence that Ann Drayton transacted

²² Anzilotti, 4. She describes this phenomenon as patrimonial bureaucracy, or the allocation of power to subordinate members of the family in order to fill the leadership gap created by the high death rate in South Carolina.

²³ Kierner, 20-22.

²⁴ Kierner, 23. Salmon, 46-47.

business before 1724. As early as 1718 she changed the cattle marks of her husband's old model to her own.²⁵ This could indicate that he was deceased in 1718 and from this date and onward Drayton was acting as his widow. There were ways that married women conducted business as *feme sole* traders, and Drayton could have possibly conducted business in this capacity.

From the beginning of her widowhood, Ann Drayton saw the importance of land and

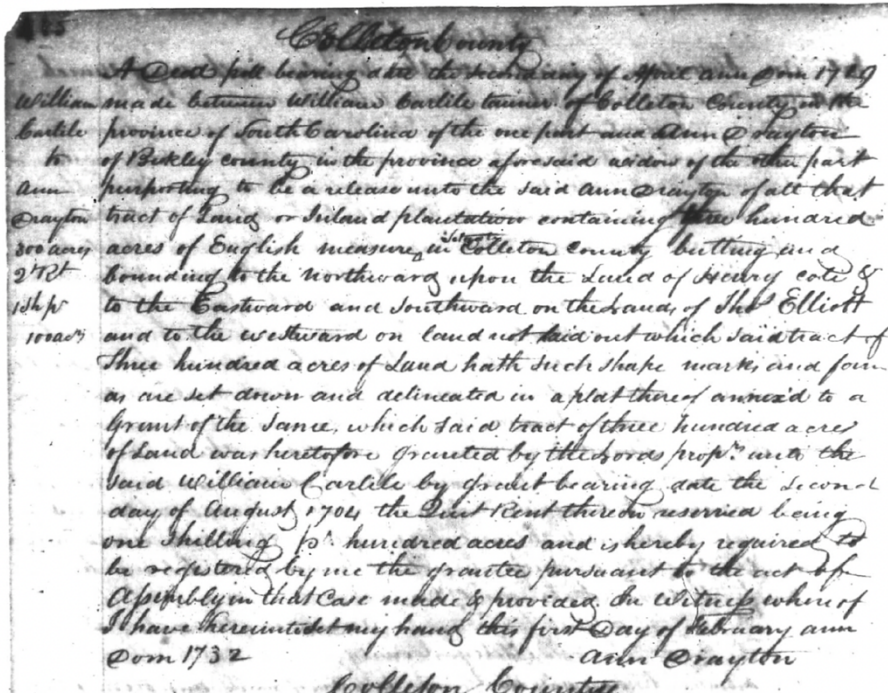


Figure 1 Drayton's Land Purchase Memorial For 300 Acres In Colleton County, Summarizing A Deed Of Release Dated Apr. 2, 1719 From William Carlile. Date: 1732

purchased various tracts of land to grow the wealth of her family. In April of 1719 there are three records that document land purchases from William Carlile, a tanner

by trade and probably from a planter family given the sizeable tracts of land he sold to Drayton.

Drayton bought three plots of Carlile land located in Colleton County, for three hundred, one hundred, and six hundred acres.²⁶

²⁵ Thomas Drayton (Father) will, 101-102. "Livestock mark books, 1695-1737," Propriety Series of the Misc. Records, Vol.1709-1725, Microfilm roll ST 0751, 530. South Carolina Department of Archive and History (SCDAH), Columbia, SC. Lavelle, 27.

These land sales were not recorded until February of 1732, but they reference an original sale date of April of 1719.²⁷ It is unclear how Drayton was able to afford these purchases because her yearly income from her late husband was only five hundred pounds.²⁸ Drayton may have saved money to purchase the land. More likely, she would have bought the land on credit and possibly mortgaged the property with lands and slaves, a common practice in this period.

This land deal began her relationship with powerful men in the area, including Henry Cole and Thomas Elliott, whose property bordered her new three-hundred-acre plot.²⁹ Indeed, Thomas Elliott would later go on to be an executor of her will and benefited greatly from his friendship with Drayton. In her will, written over twenty years after this initial land purchase, she bequeathed Elliott two thousand five hundred pounds current money and enslaved people, including Riner and her five children, Hagar and her two children, two young men named Hercules and Prince, and two sawyers named Executer and Simon. Drayton gave Elliott rights to the “increase” of all the enslaved people, meaning the children that they produced after the writing of her will. She also gave him the labor of her enslaved carpenter Kitt for four years after her death.³⁰ Business ties could run strong in colonial America, but Drayton took it a step further when she bequeathed Thomas Elliott money and enslaved people, who were far more valuable than mere money. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, skilled slaves like the sawyers and the

²⁷ Memorials of the 17th and 18th Century S.C. Land Titles, Vol 1., Microfilm S11100, 485-486. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library.

²⁸ McCusker and Menard, 60-62. Colonists in the south were wealthier than colonists from New England and even the Middle colonies. This gap was relatively large between the average net worth of colonist by region. The net worth per free white person in British America in the New England Colonies was the lowest at 33 pounds sterling. Then there were the middle colonies at 55 pounds sterling and then the Upper and Lower South being at 132 pounds sterling. This shows the wealth gap between the colonies and how the southern colonists were better off than their fellow British Colonists.

²⁹ Memorials of the 17th and 18th Century S.C. Land Titles, Vol 1., Microfilm S111001, 485. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library.

³⁰ “Last Will and testament of Ann Drayton” Wills of Charleston County, vol. 005, 1740-1747, 103-109. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library., 103. (Hereinafter Ann Drayton Will)

carpenter that Drayton left to Elliott were highly valuable laborers, and Elliott could hire them out to other people to turn a fast profit.

The fact that Drayton gave Elliott a large sum of money as well as valuable enslaved laborers prompts the question of whether their relationship went beyond the bounds of business. To build up this close relationship Drayton also made Elliott one of the executors to her will, along with her three children. Most people left a family member or spouse as an executor of the will. Ann Drayton's late husband made her the executor of his will, her son Stephen made her and his siblings his executors, and Thomas Drayton made his wife, brother John, and sons his executors.³¹ For Drayton to make Thomas Elliott one of her executors supports a conclusion that she had a personal relationship with him. Although there is not any written evidence of a romantic relationship between Drayton and Elliott, the will speaks for itself. Drayton was conducting business as a "deputy husband" to the late Thomas Drayton, but she was still a woman and could have become attached to Elliott in her time as a widow. This connection could have been romantic, but also of a business nature showing that Drayton saw the importance of social and business connections to make a successful career in the business world.³²

Drayton's purchase of the six hundred acres of Carlile land made her neighbors with John Cattell, who belonged to one of the oldest families in the region. The Cattell family were one of the first families that settled in Carolina, and from the beginning they looked to turn a profit. It

³¹ Thomas Drayton (Father) Will, 101. "Last Will and Testament of Stephen Fox Drayton," Wills of Charleston County, vol. 3, 1732-1737, 192-195. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Library, 194. (Hereinafter Stephen Fox Drayton Will) "Last Will and testament of Thomas Drayton" Wills of Charleston County, vol 9, 1760-1767, 76-81. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, 78-80.

³² It is difficult to trace Thomas Elliott's history in extant records. He is listed in the index of the Charleston County wills. There are two possibilities: one is a Thomas Elliott, but his will was recorded in 1738, before Drayton died, so Ann Drayton would not have made him her executor in 1741. The other Thomas Elliott listed is Thomas Law Elliott. He passed in 1756 and his will was recorded in 1757. Both of these men list a wife in their will that is not Ann Drayton. So, his relationship with Ann Drayton remains a mystery. Was he a distant cousin, a lover, or perhaps both? Very interesting, nonetheless.

was said that they would sell goods to newcomers to make a profit off of them and show their sense for business from the beginning of the settlement.³³ Drayton's business interactions with the Cattells further set her up for success in the community because of their old ties to the colony. She became neighbors and created strong business ties with prominent land holders in the community and further stabilized her standing in society. Social connections were significant, and during the eighteenth century men saw women as a chief source of civility and moral virtue for society. More importantly, Lowcountry elites relied more on their daughters than sons to ensure family respectability.³⁴ This shows that society depended upon the females of the family to maintain the family's reputation. Drayton possibly could have used this feminine role to conduct business deals and showed that "women decided who was welcomed and who was held at arm's length."³⁵ If a person in society was to be held at arm's length or were not received by one of these elite women, others would follow suit. This kind of influence shows that women could affect the social makeup of their environment and surely Drayton used these influences to transact business deals with other Lowcountry elite.

A few years after Drayton purchased the Carlile land, a letter from John Sheppard shows that Drayton had created a network of confidants and friends that she could rely on for advice. John Sheppard wrote to her in October of 1721 of the local market for salt and beans, giving price details and suggestions on the best time to sale her leather and other goods.³⁶ This letter indicates that men saw her as a woman of intelligence and that her work ethic brought her into the business fold of the community. Sheppard was giving her advice and confiding his thoughts with

³³ McCusker and Menard, 171.

³⁴ Kierner, 61. Glover, 49.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "John Sheppard to Ann Drayton," Drayton Family Papers, 1721-1766, Box 2, folder 1. Special Collections, College of Charleston.

her, to which she probably replied and continued the conversation. This back-and-forth correspondence with men in the community helped Drayton to establish a role for her in the business market. She corresponded with local men about the market just as any other planter would have done. With this correspondence and the purchase of the Carlile land in 1719, Drayton revealed her desire to increase the family's property and better the lives of herself and her children. She was acting as any planter would and was increasing her land and property value while selling goods at market for the best profit. The fact that William Carlile and John Sheppard had a professional relationship with Drayton indicates that she was seen as a legitimate businesswoman from the outset of her widowhood.

Drayton continued to purchase property and grow the land acreage of her family during her widowhood. In the 1720s she started out small by purchasing tracts of land around two hundred and three hundred acres of land in mainly Colleton County and would later branch out to other surrounding counties.

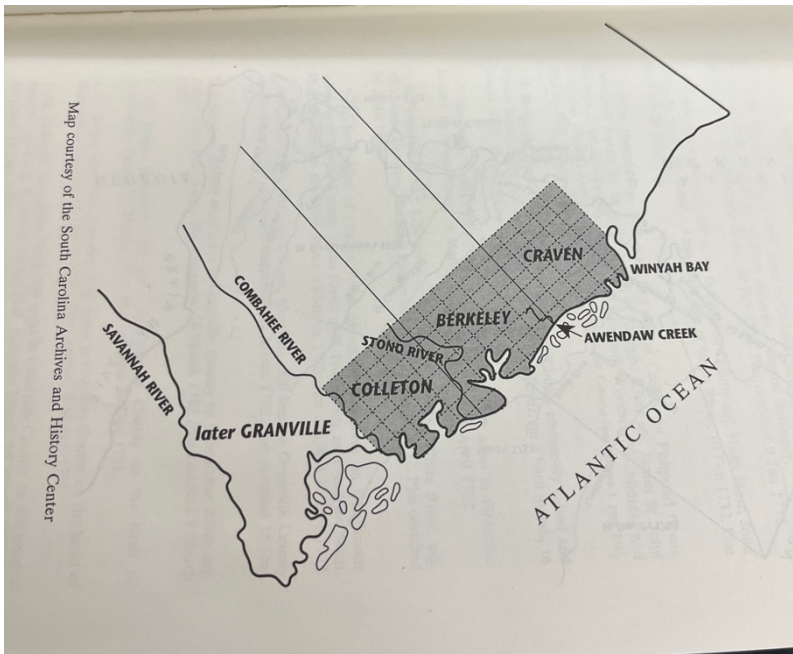


Figure 2 South Carolina's Royal Grants vol. 1: Grant Books 1 through 9 1732-1761 by Brent H. Holcomb pg xi

In 1725, Drayton purchased 450 acres in Butlertown, that was a few miles away from her home at Magnolia. Then four years later she purchased two hundred and sixty acres from John Cattell in March of 1729.³⁷ This land was to the west of her home at Magnolia and further grew her home grounds and expanded the wealth of her family. This land was bought for herself and in part for her son Stephen, whom she must have doted upon. As a result of this land purchase, Drayton not only maintained the home grounds that her husband left to the family but expanded the family's holdings. These small purchases show that Drayton was diligently tending to the plantation affairs, raising children, and surviving the unstable climate of South Carolina. She was forward thinking and testing her business capabilities by buying small plots of land. One must walk before they can run and Drayton was making calculated decisions to buy these properties and succeeding in maintaining the new properties that she acquired herself, not through her husband's efforts.

The 1730s was a decade in which Drayton thrived as a widow planter, which is evident through her many land purchases and advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*. Her success during this time period was particularly remarkable because during the 1740s most of the American colonies were economically stagnant. The land purchases that are left on record show that Drayton became more confident and aggressive in her business role during a time when most others were only maintaining their wealth.³⁸ For example, she purchased four thousand acres in Granville County in early spring of 1732. This land was adjacent to land owned by her son Thomas Drayton and also prominent men in the area including Edmund Bellinger and Isaac

³⁷ Lavelle, 29-30. Memorials of the 17th and 18th Century S.C. Land Titles, Vol 1., Microfilm S111001, 484. South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library.

³⁸ McCusker and Menard, 60. They describe the two growth spurts during Colonial America being from initial settlement to the creation of farms. This was followed by a stagnation period between initial settlement and the 1740s. The second growth spurt was from the 1740s through the Revolution. The last burst of economic prosperity was brought on from a growing demand for American products and a widening domestic market.

Girardeau.³⁹ This tract of land is much larger than the mere two hundred and sixty acres she bought from John Cattell in 1729 and shows that Drayton was acting now as an aggressive landowner and wanting to grow a landed empire for the future of the Drayton family. This land could be put to use for rice cultivation and running her stock in the off season to graze the pasture. This was a common practice in South Carolina and was influenced by African traditions of grazing cattle in rice fields. As we have seen previously, Drayton had changed her cattle marks in 1718 to show that she was running cattle that were distinct from her husband's old brand and to make a name for herself in the community.⁴⁰

In March and April of 1732, Drayton also purchased one hundred and twenty acres in Berkley County, a tract that was adjacent to the land owned by her second son Stephen.⁴¹ This land was on the Stono Marsh on the north branch of the Stono river and would be close to the site of the Stono Rebellion, which took place seven years after she bought them. This land purchase is the last one on record for colonial land sales, but it is possible that Drayton could have bought more throughout the 1730s.⁴² In her time as a widow, Drayton bought five thousand eight hundred and thirty acres of land and doubled the land that her husband had left to his children. She bought these lands because she saw the value in having land to grow the financial strength and stability of her family. She transacted these deals when the time was right and the

³⁹ "Colonial Land Grants" vol. 1, Microfilm S213019, 34. South Carolina Reading Room. Charleston County Public Library. Brent H. Holcomb, *South Carolina's Royal Grants Volume 1: Grant Books 1 through 9, 1732-1761* (Columbia, South Carolina: SCMAR, 2006), 3.

⁴⁰ Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 85. "Livestock mark books, 1695-1737," Propriety Series of the Misc. Records, Vol.1709-1725, Microfilm roll ST 0751, p. 530. South Carolina Department of Archive and History (SCDAH), Columbia, SC. Lavelle, 27.

⁴¹ "Colonial Land Grants" vol. 1, Microfilm S213019, 34. South Carolina Reading Room. Charleston County Public Library.

⁴² Lavelle, 32. In Lavelle's thesis she records that Drayton bought 10,000 acres in Colleton County, but I was unable to find these records and she does not give clear citing of where she got this information. This leads me to wonder whether there were more land sales that I have not found.

money was flowing from the exploitation of enslaved Africans and Native Americans, which I will discuss later.

Ann Drayton was not only a successful land purchaser, but used the *South Carolina Gazette* to advertise property for rent and to call upon debts from people in the community. Indeed, she proved to be savvy at using local print culture to improve her economic standing. For example, in February of 1733 she advertised a tract of four hundred acres to be let for anytime not exceeding seven years. She noted that the land included use of a large new barn and a convenient out house on the said property, and that it could be rented in parcels or as a whole.⁴³ Renting this property would have contributed to her wealth by giving her a dependable income without requiring her to put the land into production. Drayton later advertised in June of 1737 of a large dwelling house to be let in which she was then residing and the sale of two lots in Ashley-Ferry-Town.⁴⁴ This advertisement can be read in two ways. On the one hand, Drayton may have let the property because she needed cash for expenses. Alternatively, she may have simply decided to move to a new location and let her current lodgings. Either way, Drayton was using the *Gazette* to advertise her properties just like her male contemporaries did. She had moved into the Charleston house once Thomas Drayton the younger came of age and married in 1730. Ann Drayton had had the means to buy a Charleston home and live there on her own accord. She did not have to rely on handouts from her son but could rely on her own measure.

Ann Drayton did not let contemporary gender norms keep her from calling upon her debts and make known her presence in the business world. The *Gazette* contains several

⁴³ The *South-Carolina Gazette* (Thomas Whitmarsh, Lewis Timothy, Elizabeth Timothy, Peter Timothy, at Charlestown), 1732-1775. <https://www-accessible-com.libproxy.clemson.edu/accessible/docButton?AABeanName=toc3&AAWhat=builtPageCorpusToc&AANextPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp&AAErrorPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp#b0> February 3, 1733. (Hereinafter *SCG*)

⁴⁴ *SCG*, June 18, 1737.

advertisements throughout the 1730s in which Drayton called in her debts. She requested any person who was indebted to her by any “bills and bonds whatsoever” “to pay off or be renewed by the same,” and if they did not do so within her time frame given “they would be sued”.⁴⁵ This was a common practice, and the *Gazette* contains numerous similar advertisements that colonists purchased, regardless of gender, to call in their debts to have their accounts settled. Men did not hold back their intentions when it came to their female counterparts because of their perceived weaker sex. For example, on Christmas day in 1740 William Abson posted that an enslaved woman named Dinah “now in Possession of Mrs. *Elizabeth Moore*, Widow in *Charlestown*, is not the Property of the said *Elizabeth Moore*” but was his property. He also included that if anyone hired or purchased Dinah, they would lose this sale and the money they paid to hire her.⁴⁶ This candid advertisement did not hold back from accosting the widow Moore and did not pity her for her status or gender. In the public sphere, women and widows alike were dealt with just as any other man in business matters. Ann Drayton was a part of this environment and she and other widows like her would be held accountable for their actions. They, too, made advertisements calling in debts, selling their enslaved people, and alerting the public to a wide variety of business matters.

The *Gazette* advertisement was not the only instance in which Drayton interacted with her debtors. Records indicate that Drayton held power over multiple people through debts; some even surrendered property of their slaves to her in order to secure their debts, which was a common practice in plantation America. For example, Johnathan Fitch owed Drayton five hundred pounds that he had secured with a penal bond for one thousand pounds. This meant that if Fitch failed to pay Drayton the five hundred pounds, then she could sue him for one thousand

⁴⁵ *SCG*, Feb.15,1735, April 10, 1736, December 1, 1739.

⁴⁶ *SCG*, Dec. 25, 1740.

pounds. Whatever the reason, Fitch gave Drayton the use of his five slaves to have until he paid the remainder of his debt. If he failed to pay, he would forfeit them. Fitch was not alone in needing a helping hand and Drayton loaned money to others in the community. On May 30, 1721 a Richard Bedon gave Drayton four slaves to secure a debt of three hundred and fifty two pounds and ten shillings. If he did not give her the sum of money by the first of January the following year, then the enslaved people would remain with Drayton.

Drayton also loaned money to women in the community and held them accountable for their debts just as if they were men. On February 20, 1722 when Susanna Fitch, another widow, gave Drayton four enslaved women to secure the debt of two hundred and seventy-five pounds. Drayton was a wealthy widow, while Fitch had fallen on hard times to have to take out a loan. These two women show the financial spectrum of widows in colonial America and how one story does not fit all.⁴⁷ It also shows that Drayton did not pay much attention to gender when it came to money matters, just like other South Carolinians. Special treatment was not given to the widow because of her sex or status as a widow and shows how women were held accountable just as their male counterparts in business deals.

Taken together, Ann Drayton's outstanding loans total to one thousand one hundred and twenty-seven pounds and ten shillings.⁴⁸ For Ann Drayton to be able to lend out this amount of money and be comfortable in her daily life shows that she was a wealthy widow indeed. It also creates a distinction between Drayton as financially stable and her debtors as irresponsible and living beyond their means. These three people chose to borrow money from her, thus solidifying

⁴⁸ Records of the Register Mesne Conveyance (RMC), Deed Book B, 7-10, 142. (Hereinafter RMC) This Susanna Fitch was intermarried to the Fitch family and was a widow when she borrowed money from Drayton. She was not married to the previously mentioned Johnathan Fitch but was married to his sibling or cousin.

her power and reputation in society for having ample money and a sense for business. Johnathan Fitch and Bedon could have come to Drayton for charity because of the perceived notion in society that women were to be charitable and always lend a helping hand. However, with them giving her the use of their slaves shows that Drayton had begun to put pressure on them to repay her. Drayton was financially stable and would not have been lending these large sums of money if she did not feel secure in her finances. She expected these debtors to repay her in full. She was the head of the family, and it was up to her to keep things intact for the future of her children.

These mortgages were common, and they often obscure the lives of the enslaved people who were the subject to the business dealings of creditors and debtors in South Carolina. For example, Johnathan Fitch secured his debt with four enslaved men named July, Caesar, Squash, Quashoe, and Guy Jo. The four slaves Bedon gave Drayton were a Native American man named Caesar and three Black women named Astee, Anna, and Judah. Susanna Fitch gave four females named Peg, Pricilla, Judith, and Bellah. How the enslaved people were specifically chosen to be given to Drayton is not specified. Perhaps the owners chose enslaved people they were willing to part with if they were not able to pay back their debts, or perhaps they were more valuable to please Drayton into forgiving the failure to pay back the debts owed. More likely their total value would have satisfied the debt. The ways in which enslaved people were chosen remains unanswered, but not the fact that debtors fought to maintain their valuable human property. They would go to great lengths to avoid their creditors and prolong the possibility of losing their enslaved people.⁴⁹ Enslaved people were more valuable than land itself and could create financial security for anyone. This highlights the duality of a slave status by showing that enslaved people were the most valuable financial asset, as well as laborers.

⁴⁹ Lee B. Wilson, *Bonds of Empire: The English origin of Slave Law in South Carolina and British Plantation America, 1660-1783* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 75.

While Drayton was transacting business deals, maintaining five rice plantations and giving orders to overseers and enslaved people, she was also raising four children. By the early 1730s, Thomas, the eldest son, and Mary, the only daughter, had reached maturity. Stephen and John, the youngest two sons, were probably in their mid to late teens and had a few years before their twenty-first birthdays. Thomas and Mary Drayton had reached marriage age and thus their mother began the search for suitable matches for her offspring. Marriages were socially and economically important for elite planters, and a prospective couple could not enter a union without a family's blessing. Glover and Spruill note that both sides of the family had to approve of the marriage match, not just the female's parents.⁵⁰ Thus, it brought two sides a potential match together to arrange a marriage that would be beneficial and acceptable to both sides. Parents and elder family members had ways of taking control in match making and some threatened to disinherit their children if they married an unfavored match. Glover notes that one uncle advised his nephew to break off the engagement to a woman because he did not approve of the match. The uncle threatened that if the engagement was not broken then he would withdraw his financial support of the young man.⁵¹ Spruill showed that fathers would go so far as to write in their will to deprive children of their inheritance should they marry against their parent's wishes. This tactic was used by Thomas Drayton, who tried to control Mary's matrimonial fate beyond the grave. In his will he bequeathed her a sum of one thousand pounds and an enslaved woman under the condition that she married a man that Ann Drayton approved of. If Drayton did not approve of the match, then Mary would not be given the money or the enslaved woman.⁵² These tactics were used to keep children in line and to deter them from ruining the family's

⁵⁰ Spruill, 143.

⁵¹ Glover, 65.

⁵² Thomas Drayton (Father) will, 99.

social standing. The fact that Thomas Drayton was leaving Mary's marriage approval to Ann shows that he saw her as capable of managing the marriage deals of his children. As previously mentioned, marriage matches were extremely important in colonial society and for the late Thomas Drayton to leave the approval to his wife and not one of his sons or a trusted man in society, shows his confidence in her. Perhaps Ann Drayton used similar tactics in her negotiations with her children to get them to marry well.

Mary Drayton ultimately married a man named Richard Fuller, who must have received the family's blessing because she did receive the thousand pounds and Judith the enslaved female that was promised by her father.⁵³ However, by the mid 1730s the family seems to have changed their opinion of Fuller. Mary was still included in the wills of her family, which shows that she was not completely cut off from her family's blessing. However, her husband was not held in high regard by the Drayton family. Indeed, Mary's younger brother, Stephen, left her one thousand pounds only if her husband "shall not have any pretensions or claim to any said part of the said one thousand pounds."⁵⁴ Stephen loved his sister and wanted her to have financial independence from her husband. Ann also sought to safeguard Mary's property from her husband. For example, in her will she gave Mary the two plots of land she bought from William Cattell, along with the clothes and linen of the household, a silver waiter and teapot and six silver spoons, furniture, six cows, six calves, two mares, and two horses. All of these possessions would go into a trust for her daughter so Richard Fuller "shall have nothing at all to do with any part of it." To put property in a trust for a daughter was a common practice that allowed parents to shield land and money from a son-in-law who might happen to be financially irresponsible.⁵⁵

⁵³ RMC, Deed Book E, 86.

⁵⁴ Stephen Fox Drayton Will, 193.

⁵⁵ Ann Drayton Will, 1-2.

This shows that Ann Drayton was legally savvy enough that she knew to keep Mary's inheritance in a separate trust so Richard could have no part of it. This was one-way women could get around the bounds of coverture and have a semblance of authority in their marriage.

Despite Mary Drayton's failure to marry an upstanding man in the community, the eldest son, Thomas, made a good match in 1730 when he married Elizabeth Bull, the daughter of South Carolina's Royal Lieutenant Governor William Bull.⁵⁶ Marrying into the governor's family elevated the status of the Drayton family, and his mother could relax and know that her work for Thomas had paid off. Ann Drayton had probably played a hand in the match making as was a normal role for the mothers of society and was able to find a match for her son that would qualify as "marrying up" in society. When Thomas Drayton married, he inherited the lands his father left him that had been maintained and improved upon by his mother. Like many advantageous marriages, this match led to other positive marriages for the remaining Drayton siblings. Stephen died before he was married, but John would go on to marry four times, each time elevating his status in society. His first wife was Sarah Cattell, the daughter and niece of William and John Cattell, one of Ann Drayton's business associates. On the marriage market her children fared well, and these connections were probably fostered by Drayton herself through her business deals and social standing. She was able to make advantageous matches for her children on her own and could rest assured that she improved the family's fortunes through these alliances.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Henry DeSaussure Bull, *The Family of Stephen Bull of Kinghurst Hall, County Warwick, England and Ashley Hall, South Carolina : 1600-1960* (Georgetown, S. C: Winyah Press, 1961), 38. Digitized by Internet Archive in 2018. https://archive.org/stream/familyofstephenb00bull/familyofstephenb00bull_djvu.txt

⁵⁷ Lavelle, 37.

With her children relatively settled in good marriages, Ann Drayton might have settled into a quiet life as a mother, grandmother, and planter. However, in the world of business she too faced drama that often times involved her children and children-in-law. Tragedy struck the family in 1734 when Stephen, the third child of the family, died before his twenty first birthday. He must have been suffering from some illness because he wrote his will at an early age. In the will he showed the love that he had for his mother by bequeathing her the land on the northern branch of the Stono river, the house standing on it, and gave her permission to clear any of the land that she saw fit. He also allowed Drayton to keep the land that she bought in his name from John Cattell, which he had not received the title for yet. The respect and close bond that he felt for his mother shows through in his will. He knew that she was a capable woman to upkeep these lands and turn a profit on them to maintain them for future generations. However, the close bond between Ann and Stephen must have made the other Drayton children feel unseen or jealous of that relationship, and Thomas took steps to take this land away from his mother. He argued that since Stephen had not reached twenty one that the lands were not his to give and that they should revert to him as the family heir.⁵⁸ This incident shows that disputes over land and property were common occurrences within colonial families, an impression that chancery court records – which are filled with family squabbles – reinforces. Luckily for Ann Drayton, when Thomas took the land from her, she was still able to live and maintain a lifestyle she was used to through her own endeavors. Thomas's actions show that business was business and no matter what sex or how personally attached you were; if someone wanted your land and could find a way to get it, they would act on these notions.

⁵⁸ Stephen Fox Drayton Will, 192-193. Lavelle, 34.

Ann Drayton also had a quarrel with her not-so-beloved son-in-law, Richard Fuller, in March of 1725. They fought over the ownership of cattle that Fuller believed to belong to his wife Mary. He claimed that Mary was given horses and cattle in her late father's will and that Ann Drayton was holding them unlawfully. Drayton and Fuller ultimately agreed that she would pay Fuller five hundred pounds in place of the livestock. For Fuller to take money over the livestock shows that he was not a savvy planter and was rather foolish. Ann Drayton was building her cattle herd while he was content with mere cash. Since the beginning of the Carolina settlement, growing corn and raising cattle generated income without high risks and mostly guaranteed to turn a profit. The grazing practices implemented by colonial South Carolinians, including allowing cattle to wander in the open marshes and savannahs, had British origins and was familiar to colonists. It was relatively cheap to raise cattle on the pasture lands, where it was said by one that an "ox is raised at almost as little expense in Carolina, as a hen in England."⁵⁹

Ann Drayton saw the value in growing her herd and had a better business sense than her son-in-law. In her dispute with Fuller she increased her herd that garnered respect from others in the community. She saw the value of acquiring livestock and gave no thought to paying five hundred pounds, which was the yearly income that her late husband left her. For her to spend that much on livestock that belonged to her daughter shows that she was financially stable and able to pay this money out of pocket and continue the upkeep of her herd and her lands. With every stride she was gaining more and more wealth and growing the value of her assets and proved that she was a contender in the economic market.

Drayton's cattle pens and other female owned properties were often referenced by men in the public sphere. In a runaway slave advertisement posted by George Mitchell in the *Gazette*, he

⁵⁹ S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 20, 47-49.

wrote that the unnamed Angola-born slave had runaway near Madam Drayton's cow pen.⁶⁰ These cattle pens were not referred to as "Old Man Drayton's" or "the late Thomas Drayton's" but were "Madame Drayton's" pens and therefore gave her ownership and power over the property. The *Gazette* reached many readers and for Ann Drayton's cow pen to be used as a frame of reference shows that many knew where her cow pens were and the fact that she – rather than the late Thomas Drayton or her eldest son -- owned them. In newspapers, legal contracts, and everyday dialogue, men referred to female-owned property, and the casual nature of these references indicates society's acceptance of female owned and operated businesses. Be it Madam Drayton's Cowpens, Madam Trott's negros, or Mrs. Russel's plantation, these women were being recognized as legitimate owners of their late husband's properties and gave them agency in society.⁶¹

While she fought through family squabbles over property and spouse hunting for her children, Ann Drayton also devoted time and attention to the enslaved people that worked her lands, and she exploited their labor for the best economic outcome. Drayton's main source of income came from the five rice plantations that Thomas Drayton had acquired in his lifetime, combined with the land that she acquired and put under cultivation. The rice industry had taken off after the turn of the eighteenth century, and rice was South Carolina's the most valuable cash crop by the 1720s, reaching six million pounds of rice being exported in this decade.⁶² Thomas Drayton had been a part of the shift towards rice production and his widow picked up where he

⁶⁰ SCG, Jan. 11, 1739.

⁶¹ Anzilotti, 128.

⁶² McCusker and Menard, 175. There was a time of experimenting with crops that would take hold in the Carolina climate from the 1670s-1690s, and rice took the lead in these efforts. Colonists were exporting 1.5 million pounds in 1710, six million in 1720 and twenty million by 1730. There was a stagnation period from 1740s-1750s, due to warfare. The rice industry expanded in the 1760s and continued to grow into the Revolutionary era.

left off.⁶³ Fortunes were made in the early years of the rice industry and continued throughout the colonial period. Historian Phillip Morgan compares Carolina's rice industry to the Chesapeake's tobacco industry to show the value that Lowcountry planters were able to obtain. He notes that the starting costs on a rice plantation were quite high--between one thousand pounds sterling in the beginning of the eighteenth century and then up to two thousand by the end of the century. A rice plantation also required a minimum of thirty enslaved people to work smoothly, and even then, that was just getting started.⁶⁴ Thomas Drayton acquired lands in the marsh area and set in motion the steps to grow his "Carolina gold". By the time he died, the labor of his ninety-one enslaved people in the rice fields might bring him a return rate in excess of twenty percent. The move to the swamps to cultivate rice was the turning point that ended the fears of failure in the colony. Charles Pinckney highlighted this fact when he wrote in 1744 that if the swamps had not been used for rice cultivation "how many fine estates would to this day have remained ungotten."⁶⁵ The Drayton family had been a part of this rise of the rice industry in South Carolina and Ann Drayton continued to cultivate rice successfully during her widowhood.

The fortunes that were being made on rice, of course, depended upon the exploitation of Black and indigenous enslaved people, and some scholars note the influences of Black knowledge into the cultivation of rice.⁶⁶ Many African slaves were valued and sought after from certain regions of African because of their extensive agricultural knowledge. Slaves taken from Angola and the Congo were coveted because of their advance knowledge, as well as female

⁶³ Krawczynski,16.

⁶⁴ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 35-39. Edelson 54-59.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁶⁶ See McCusker and Menard, 173. Indigenous enslaved people were only a slim part of the enslaved population, and many had intermingled with enslaved Africans to create what some refer to as a mestizo group. In 1708 there were 1,400 enslaved Indians, which was 15% of the current population at that time. Then after the Yamasee War, 300 enslaved Indians were exported in 1717 and then these numbers declined.

slaves from the Gambia for their knowledge of cultivating rice. There have also been studies showing indigenous knowledge of rice before English settlers came to America and these influences were applied later.⁶⁷ Enslaved people knew growing techniques and practices that were carried over from Africa including the flood plain systems, in which rain and tide water was used for field flooding. The primary mechanism that was used to control the flooding system was a hollowed log and a plug that possibly was transferred over from Africa and shows the direct influence of enslaved Africans on the success of rice in Carolina.⁶⁸ This is only one instance of Black know-how that was brought from Africa, and this was the case for other crops such as indigo, which is the focus of a later chapter. This fact highlights the agency that the often-nameless majority of enslaved people had in the early colony. White owners relied on enslaved people's skills to make a profit and grow their wealth. Economists attribute impressive productivity gains in the rice industry to changes in rice cultivation that was heavily influenced by enslaved people along with better packaging, shipping, and marketing methods. Because of these increases in productivity, rice producers were able to lower the price of rice to consumers. They were able to maintain the low price steadily in the face of increasing land and labor prices.⁶⁹ Therefore, the skilled knowledge of enslaved Black people, combined with other efforts, directly affected the colonial market for rice and influence international trade. For this reason, skilled agricultural workers, among them on Drayton's plantations, should be included in the term of a "skilled" laborer alongside carpenters, brick masons, doctors and so forth. Without the Black knowledge of agricultural practices, colonial America's economy would not have been what it was.

⁶⁷ Carney, 26.

⁶⁸ Morgan, 157.

⁶⁹ McCusker and Menard, 178.

While there are no surviving records of Drayton's day-to-day movements or the directions she gave her enslaved people, looking into the rice growing practices can help in understanding the everyday patterns of rice cultivation. Drayton would expect all enslaved hands to be at work in the fields regardless of gender. Even in Africa rice had been seen as women's work and female slaves had been bought for a higher price in South Carolina to reflect their agricultural know-how. They would often be in charge of the sowing of the seeds. Enslaved people who cultivated rice were assigned tasks rather than organized into a gang system, which required constant work throughout the day. By the middle of the eighteenth century, enslaved people on rice plantations were usually given a one hundred- and five-foot plot of land to weed and tend to and then they would be done for the day.⁷⁰ However, to reclaim swamps and turn them into effective rice growing fields, long canals and ditches had to be dug and was a massive undertaking. Morgan describes the extensive labor that enslaved rice field workers had to endure and notes that Joseph Allston, who was said to have the "best dams in So. Carolina", tasked his ditchers at six hundred cubic feet a day. Therefore, enslaved men and women "moved at least five hundred cubic yards of river swamp for every acre of rice field in order to construct banks, canals, ditches, and drains." And by the end of the eighteenth century, there were more than six million cubic feet of earth in rice banks along the east Branch of the Cooper River, which was only ten miles in length. These ditches could be anywhere between eight to twelve feet deep and planters were impressed by the work that enslaved people were able to achieve in a short time. Enslaved people themselves commented on the pace of work, including some at George Austin's Pedee plantation who "complain'd... that they had been bad work'd".⁷¹ This is putting it rather mildly, as by mid-century an average field slave was able to produce two thousand to two

⁷⁰ Morgan, 179-180.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

thousand five hundred pounds of rice within a year.⁷² These enslaved men and women were being over worked for the benefit of their white owners. Ann Drayton took over five rice plantations upon her husband's death and the land that she acquired around the Stono river and other locations would have been put to use a rice fields. Day in and day out, Hercules, Prince and others would have done the sewing, harvesting, and processing of the rice to make a profit for Madame Drayton to live a high and mighty lifestyle.

Enslaved people's lives are revealed in Ann Drayton's will, which displays the power that owners had in dictating the lives of enslaved people even after death. It also shows a spectrum of regard owners had for specific enslaved people and how this could affect the outcome of an enslaved person's life. As mentioned before, the thirteen slaves that she gifted to her executor Thomas Elliott were listed by names and given to this man that was not her husband or next of kin. She must have held him in high regard to bestow such a large fortune to him and these enslaved people had no choice, but to be handed over to him. The main thirteen slaves, Riner and her five children, Hager and her two children, Hercules and Prince, and the two sawyers Executer and Simon would be made the property of Elliott for the rest of their lives. Their offspring would belong to him. Drayton also gifted her young granddaughter Ann Booth Fuller a Black enslaved girl named Biner. English colonists in the West Indies as well as the American mainland often bequeathed individual enslaved people to daughters.⁷³ This was a way to create financial stability for their female family members, and Drayton was not different from her contemporaries in perceiving the value in this practice. It is not clear why Drayton gave Elliott

⁷² McCusker and Menard, 181.

⁷³ Walker, 57. S. Max Edelson, "Reproducing Plantation Society: Women and Land in Colonial South Carolina." *The History of the Family* 12, no. 2 (2007): 132.

many more slaves than to her own granddaughter, but she bequeathed enslaved people to the individuals she cared for and wanted to have a financially secure future.

The remainder of Drayton's enslaved people would be divided between her two sons for them and their heirs to use forever more. The half that went to Thomas Drayton would work on the Horse Savannah, and he was to have all the income they should make. If any enslaved person should survive the death of Thomas Drayton they would be passed to his son, Stephen Drayton. The remaining enslaved people who were owned by John Drayton would work on the Caw Caw Swamp land, and he was to have the total income of their labor. If any enslaved person should outlive John, then they would be given to his heir and if he had no remaining heir they would be divided equally among her grandchildren.⁷⁴ With the death of Ann Drayton, the majority of her enslaved people would be divided, broken from their community that they had built ties and bonds, and be thrust into a new situation that they had no say in. She did this in the interest of dynastic wealth building, just as her male counterparts did. Rather than showing a concern for the lives of the enslaved people she held as property, she used them to advance her family's fortunes into the future.

There were skilled slaves that Drayton mentions in her will, and they highlight the significance of skilled slaves and the dividing line of freedom and bondage that an owner possessed. Carpenter Kitt was to be in service to Thomas Elliott for four years after Drayton's death. Once he had served his term of four years with Elliott, his labor was to be equally divided between Thomas and John Drayton and their heirs forevermore.⁷⁵ Drayton knew the value of a skilled carpenter and would not allow him to be freed upon her death, so she contracted him out to Elliott and then her sons so his valued work could be exploited by them all. Enslaved

⁷⁴ Ann Drayton Will, 4-5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1, 5.

carpenters were a highly prized possession, and I will talk more of their importance in Chapter Three. Thus, Carpenter Kitt would face the remainder of his life flitting from one owner to another and not having stability and steady community ties.

An enslaved man by the name of Old Seaboy must have been in Drayton's good graces because she gave him the interest of two hundred pounds for his yearly maintenance. To put this sum into historical context, the average net worth of a free white in the colonial South was one hundred- and thirty-two-pounds sterling, showing that the interest of the two hundred pounds was a generous gift for Old Seaboy.⁷⁶ Drayton was setting aside this money for the upkeep of a valued slave and to maintain him after her death. He was to be left to Thomas Elliott senior for fifty years and if Old Seaboy paid ten shillings a year, then he could have liberty to go anywhere in the providence that he pleased.⁷⁷ For Old Seaboy to be lent out to Elliott for fifty years makes his name seem a little odd; he would not be that old if his contract was that long. In any case, Old Seaboy was probably some type of skilled slave and could have been one of the many boatmen that transported their owners and goods around the Charleston area. In fact, there was a whole subculture of "fishing negros" by the mid eighteenth century that were devoted to fishing along the Charleston coast from October through Christmas. Perhaps old Seaboy was a part of this group and used a variety of nets and practices to catch fish that may have derived directly from West Africa. Peter Wood argues that the enslaved boatmen "provided the backbone of lowland transportation system" by "moving plantation goods to market and ferrying and guiding whites

⁷⁶ McCusker and Menard, 60-62.

⁷⁷ Ann Drayton will, 5. A shilling is 1/20 an English pound, so this was a relatively low sum, but he would have to earn the money to pay for it through his excess labor. For skilled slaves paying for freedom and other things from their labor see Emily Blanck, "The Legal Emancipations of Leander and Caesar: Manumission and the Law in Revolutionary South Carolina and Massachusetts." *Slavery & Abolition* 28 (2007): 242-243.

from one landing to another”.⁷⁸ These boatmen had an unusual amount of freedom to have access to over water travel and also acquired skills to navigate the tricky waters of Charleston harbor. Perhaps for these skills Old Seaboy was given his freedom after his time served. For him to have the freedom to go anywhere he wished in the colony presents the possibilities of a favored enslaved person. If an enslaved person could get into the good graces of their owners, they could have more agency and freedom to do as they wished in their lives. There are some instances of enslaved people receiving special treatment in the form of valued clothes, and able to share personal belongings with their owners. There were statues created to deter owners to allow slaves to wear fine clothing showing that some owners gifts could cause a stir in society.⁷⁹ This is not to overshadow the suffering and cruelty that enslaved people faced but shows the wide-ranging circumstances that enslaved people faced depending on who their owners were.

The last skilled slave that Drayton directly mentions is Shoemaker Jack, and his fate was drastically altered through her actions. In the original will Drayton demanded that Shoemaker Jack was to serve Thomas Drayton for three years, John for three years, and Mary for one year. After his seven years were up, he would have liberty to go anywhere he pleased if he paid each child ten shillings. Shoemaker Jack must have been more valuable than Old Seaboy , because Jack was made to pay triple the price for his liberty.⁸⁰ Things were looking up for Shoemaker

⁷⁸ Wood, 203. Eliza Lucas also notes of an enslaved men who was drowned while transporting goods to market showing the common occurrence of enslaved men on boats. See *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: Digital Edition*, ed. Constance B. Schulz, https://rotunda-upress-virginia-edu.libproxy.clemson.edu/PinckneyHorry/?_gl=1*12ahtw4*_ga*NDgwMDIyNDM1LjE2NDk0MjI5MzE.*_ga_89MNNJWMNQ*MTY0OTk1NTIxMy4yLjEuMTY0OTk1ODI2Ni4w Eliza Lucas to George Lucas, April 23, 1741. DE

⁷⁹ Cooper Thomas, Editor; McCord, David, Editor. *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*. Columbia, S.C., Printed by A.S. Johnston; Republican Printing Co., State Printers., 396. (Hereinafter McCord, *Statutes*) This law wasn't strictly enforced and later in 1744 a law was passed to continue the use of Negro cloth because whites continued to complain that slaves were dressing above their station. This shows that some whites were letting their slaves dress in finer clothing and disregarded the law.

⁸⁰ Alternatively, Old Seaboy might just have been old and therefore worth less money.

Jack. He just had to bide his seven years and then could be a free man. The act of manumitting a slave, in which a slave owner legally sets an enslaved person free, played a role in the rise of free people of color in colonial America, and became more pronounced in the Revolutionary era because of political and social beliefs about the righteousness of slavery. Men and women alike manumitted their slaves for various reasons and her actions should not be seen as a sign of feminine weakness or sympathy for her enslaved people. For example, James Bond of Colleton County manumitted an enslaved woman named Peggy and her three children in 1753 because of the “natural love and affection which I have and bear” for them. As a male slave owner, Charles Pinckney chose to manumit Quash and further shows that manumitting enslaved people was not solely a female slave-owner characteristic.⁸¹

Ann Drayton showed that her gender did not soften her treatment of her enslaved people when she added an addendum to her will stating that “I have now altered my mind, and tis my desire that he (Shoemaker Jack) shall be in the same parcel and to be shared with the rest between my two sons.”⁸² It is impossible to know whether Drayton told Shoemaker Jack of his planned fate after her death or later, how she altered the course of his life with the stroke of a pen. He could have had no knowledge of these changing events and once the will was read, he accepted his fate that he thought was always planned for him. There is also the possibility that Drayton dangled the promise of freedom to coerce his behavior into being an obedient slave. Indeed, Christine Walker argues that slaveholders in Jamaica used the reward of freedom to subtly coerce enslaved people into a lifetime of compliant and loyal service.⁸³ This same

⁸¹ Warren Eugene Milteer, *Beyond Slavery's Shadow : Free People of Color in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021) *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/clemson/detail.action?docID=6726940>, 16-17.

⁸² Ann Drayton will, 7.

⁸³ Walker, 262.

situation can be applied to South Carolina and could be a constant struggle for enslaved people to battle with.⁸⁴ Enslaved people were often times in a state of rebellion, from small acts of resistance to outright revolts, which I will discuss at length in Chapter Three. However, if the promise of freedom was possible, then it would alter the actions of any person. If Shoemaker Jack knew of his changed fate it could have sent him spiraling into a depressed, but also rageful state that he once had his freedom and then it was once again taken back. The psychological torture of enslaved people needs further study to understand their situation more fully and see the trauma that left no physical mark but remained imprinted in their minds.

The giving and taking back of freedom by Drayton give rise to many unanswered questions, but the fact remains that she used her power as an owner to dictate the lives of her enslaved people that were forced to cater to her every need and maintained the various rice plantations, herded her cattle, worked with her horses, and transported goods to market all to keep her in a privileged lifestyle. In the management of her enslaved people and in her decisions of enslaved people's fates in her will, she was not acting differently because of her gender. Rather, she was partaking in the same practices that men engaged in to fulfill the role of a Lowcountry planter and ensure wealth for future generations.

Conclusion

Widowhood for Ann Drayton presented a life of independence, and she took steps not only to maintain the status quo of her late husband's lands and property, but aggressively bought land and transacted deals to grow the family's fortune. She made better use of her property,

⁸⁴ Anzilotti, 56-57. She writes about how South Carolina's slave mistresses were daily confronted with slave management and their relationships with their slaves were different than their male counterparts. There are records of family and friends giving advice to female slave owners to manage their slaves more effectively. Anzilotti does note that women found their own satisfactory solutions for dealing with their slaves. Afterall, most of these women grew up in slave-owning households and would have witnessed slave management since their infancy.

including enslaved people, to manipulate those around her and to increase her family's fortunes. She gave money, land, enslaved people, and personal possessions to friends, family, and possible lovers. Drayton also played into the gender role of feminine charity and set aside five hundred pounds for poor people's passage in the province. Five hundred pounds was what her late husband had given her a year and she was giving the same amount to strangers she had never met before. She also authorized three hundred pounds and interest to be given to a Jona Weadon every year for the remainder of her life. Once Weadon had passed, half of the money would be divided among her children and the other half would go to Drayton's local church. While Drayton conformed to some social rules, she also broke with them by bequeathing her youngest son a large fortune and gifted her daughter lands and property in a trust.⁸⁵ These generous gifts display the wealth that Drayton had generated over the course of her widowhood and also her willingness to use that wealth to give all of her children a firm financial footing in life. Thomas Drayton left her with five hundred pounds a year and she was able to double his land and manage his properties successfully.

Of course, this success would not have been possible without the enslaved people that she claimed as property. Drayton's fortune was directly linked to slavery and the roles of enslaved people in colonial South Carolina cannot be underrepresented. The enslaved men and women that were owned by Drayton and her future heirs were the reason that they had food on the table, fine clothing to wear, ornate houses, and excess money. Shoemaker Jack, Old Seaboy, and Carpenter Kitt were among the skilled slaves that were bound to the Drayton family and by mentioning them in her will she unintentionally preserved a snippet of their lives for posterity.

⁸⁵ Ann Drayton will, 2-5. I could not find specific information about Jona Weadon. It could have been a typo in the typing of Drayton's will when they processed all the old Charleston County wills. Whatever the case, the bequest shows that Drayton was leaving money to local people that she cared about. This was only two hundred pounds less than what Thomas Drayton left Ann and shows the wealth that she was able to bestow after her death.

Drayton did not have a daily journal that she wrote about her slaves' movements or her interactions with them, but there is no doubt that she relied on their labor every day to make her life flow smoothly. The females she owned such as Riner, Hager, and Bette would have been put to work in the rice fields for the sewing of the rice that would make the Drayton family wealthy planters. Ann Drayton became their temporary owner in her widowhood, and she was the sole authority over them in their everyday lives. They no doubt tried to rebel against their mistress and resisted her attempts to control their actions. Her enslaved people could have been given the promise of freedom to submit to obedience, which was common for females' owners to do. These Red and Black hands were forced to work in order to benefit the whites of the community and grew an economy that would not have been possible without their contributions. Without their work, there would be no Drayton fortune and Ann Drayton would have had an entirely different out turn in life if she had not owned them, their labor, and the fruits of their labor.

Ann Drayton's role as a widow planter was accepted by society because she was acting for the benefit of her family and not for her own selfish reasons. Drayton gestured at femininity, but her actions show that she inhabited the masculine role of being a successful planter and businessperson. This was typical of the many women who took over their spouses or fathers' businesses in their absence. Perhaps Drayton used her status as a widow to con people into deals they would not have made with a man and used this status to maintain her presence in the business world, just as Elizabeth Timothy did in her *Gazette* advertisement. The use of the meek and mild stereotype for women could be used as a ploy and allow women to appear to be conforming to gender roles, but also stepping out of their bounds. This strategy was helpful to widows like Drayton, showing that when women took power over their lives, their ambition made them achieve goals that changed to fabric of society.

Chapter 2: Eliza Lucas

Introduction

Like Ann Drayton, Eliza Lucas showed that a woman could not only maintain a male's property, but also increase its value and wealth. Furthermore, Lucas surpassed the prominence of Ann Drayton because of her contribution of transforming indigo into a cash crop for South Carolina. Her efforts were conducted when she oversaw her father's plantations in his absence. Eliza Lucas was able to assume the role of a planter as a single unmarried woman. She did not fall into the category of a widow planter as was the case of Ann Drayton and many other women. As discussed in the previous chapter, widowhood was the most common way a woman came in charge of a business, but Lucas was able to do so outside of these bounds. From age seventeen until her marriage at twenty-two, she successfully ran three of her father's plantations in the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

In this Chapter, I build upon the ideas of historians Lorri Glover and Cara Anzilotti, to show that Eliza Lucas demonstrates the agency of women in South Carolina through her role of a planter as a single unmarried female.¹ Lucas was a woman who successfully operated in the public sphere as a "deputy husband" or in her case a "deputy daughter."² Nonetheless, she also continued to conform to eighteenth-century social and gender norms for women. She was able to

¹ For Glover's main argument see Lorri Glover, *Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Independent Woman in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 1-9. For Anzilotti main points see Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 2-10.

² Constance B. Schulz, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: A South Carolina Revolutionary-Era Mother and Daughter" in *South Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times, Volume 2*. Marjorie Julian Spruill, Valinda W. Littlefield, and Joan Marie Johnson, eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 84.

assume her father's role as a planter in South Carolina because he was absent, her eldest brother was not old enough to manage the family's property, and her mother was too ill to do so. These circumstances meant that she was the only person who could possibly fill her father's shoes and fill them she did. She lived and operated Wappoo Plantation and oversaw Garden Hill and Waccamaw, two other Lucas plantations, by making calculated decisions and innovations. Her success is connected to her upbringing. Indeed, Lucas saw her father commanding around 200 enslaved people on his sugar plantation in Antigua and received a high-quality education in England. She exceeded her father's expectation of simply maintaining his plantations by successfully producing indigo, which ultimately became South Carolina's secondary cash crop. This crop took time, effort, and patience, but thanks to the combined efforts of Eliza Lucas, the two Cromwell brothers from Montserrat, her Huguenot neighbor Andrew Deveaux, and her enslaved people, especially the enslaved carpenter Quash, indigo became a valuable commodity for South Carolina.

In this Chapter, I will briefly describe Lucas's childhood on her father's Antiguan sugar plantation and her school years in England. Her early years are important to understand because they prepared her for her future role as a planter. Shifting focus to her life in South Carolina, I examine why Lucas was allowed to run her father's plantation in his absence while reconstructing her daily routine on Wappoo. Although I emphasize her contribution to indigo cultivation, I also examine her relationship with enslaved people in order to give them agency and understand their perspective. Enslaved people played an important role in her indigo achievements, and they need to be recognized as key contributors, not background characters in the narrative. This will connect to Chapter Three, in which I discuss the life of Quash, an enslaved carpenter who belonged to the Lucas family, in order to place Lucas's achievements in

a broader historical context. Indeed, Lucas did not achieve her success alone; rather, she relied upon the ingenuity of enslaved people like Quash to transform indigo into a valuable commodity.

Life in Antigua and Education in England

Eliza Lucas was born to a life of privilege and wealth on her family's Antiguan sugar plantation in December of 1722. George Lucas, one of the most prominent planters on the island, allowed her to stand out even among the planter elite in the Caribbean. As a child, Eliza saw the daily routine of plantation management and watched as her father commanded over 200 enslaved people and the land that they worked. The labor of these slaves supported the Lucas's lavish lifestyle. Eliza, her two younger brothers, a little sister, and her mother were dressed in the finest clothing and participated in Antigua's elite creole culture. Being born to a privileged family and seeing her father's power over all on his plantation surely instilled in Lucas a commanding air that she carried in her life. This confidence grew in her youth contributed to her success as a future planter.³

In the racially imbalanced environment of Antigua, where Black slaves outnumbered white colonists eight to one by the 1730s, Eliza Lucas' upbringing taught her the importance of maintaining a fixed racial hierarchy. White colonists' desire to reinforce their own power on the island resulted from insecurities over the Black-majority colony's demographic realities. In 1708 there were 12,943 slaves to only 2,892 colonists, and this gap grew in the upcoming decades. This demographic imbalance left whites feeling insecure and drove their need to buttress their racial dominance.⁴ Whites on the island had to keep the slaves under close supervision and

³ Glover, 9-11.

⁴ David Barry Gaspar, "To Bring their Offending Slaves to Justice': Compensation and Slave Resistance in Antigua 1669-1763." *Caribbean Quarterly* 30 (1984): 45-59.

control their actions and even their thoughts. Lorri Glover notes that violence was elemental to slaveholding and that the recorded whippings, brandings, starving and mutilation of the enslaved Black people were common occurrences on plantations.⁵ Many historians, such as Winthrop D. Jordan, have shown that Caribbean plantations were more brutal than plantations in the mainland American colonies because of their harsh punishments and particular draconian laws.

Lucas's white skin granted her privilege and authority, even as a child. She was brought into this world by Black hands and for the rest of her life, Lucas's every need was attended to by Black enslaved men and women. These early examples of alleged white superiority would be the basis for authority in Lucas's mind when she became a planter.⁶ Indeed, when she arrived in South Carolina, she would have encountered a slave society that had much in common with Antigua and Barbados. As historians have shown, that by the end of the 17th century the rice culture of South Carolina had adopted similar methods of the Caribbean to yield a colony of the most "rigorous deprivation of freedom to exist in the institutionalized form anywhere in the English continental colonies."⁷ When she arrived at Wappoo Plantation and witnessed the treatment of the slaves, Lucas likely found herself in a familiar environment to her childhood. She grew up in the violent domain of Antigua and understood that racialized violence was the normal way of things. Slaves had to be dealt with, sometimes with coercion and other times with violence, and this influenced her methods when she became a temporary master at Wappoo. Although I have not found any reference of her using harsh punishment, it would not be

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Glover, 10-11.

⁷ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 85.

surprising to find that she implemented similar punishments as seen in her childhood because of its perceived normalcy.

Lucas's time on her family's Antiguan plantation temporarily ended at age ten when her father decided to send her to England for her education. George Lucas must have seen something special in his daughter to send her to the homeland for an education. However, he was also most likely acting in an eighteenth-century mindset of what an education meant for a female. British society did not see a woman's education for the purpose of improving the female mind. Historians have offered different interpretations of the patriarchal society and gender relations that connect to the education of females in colonial America. In *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the early South, 1700-1835*, Cynthia A. Kierner shows that there was a strong mark of male influence over the lives of women, and that females were at the mercy of their fathers' and male family members' authority. Young women had to rely on their father's approval for most of their important life decisions. Two examples were their level of education and their choice of matrimony. Kierner shows that elite women's education was mostly seen for the benefit of their future husbands. Contemporary thought dictated that a female was to be educated so they would be a pleasant companion for their husbands, and elite families would educate their daughters to fulfill the social responsibilities that reinforced the existing social hierarchy. Their education was for the benefit of the men in their lives, not for independent or public leadership. Indeed, Kierner shows that colonial English families wished their daughters to be good mistresses, hostesses and, social companions and their education would be in subjects that would help them in these roles.⁸ Thus, George Lucas likely sent his daughter to England so

⁸ Cynthia A. Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 59-61.

she would be a more attractive companion on the marriage market.⁹ Eliza Lucas attended school in this environment, but she was able to gain valuable knowledge from her time in England. Lucas was instructed at a boarding school in the normal subjects that were acceptable for young ladies, like languages, literature, and art. But she was able to learn useful information while she was there like botany. Since she was quite young, Lucas had been interested in botany and was able to pursue this recreation because the subject was becoming a popular field of study in the early 18th century.¹⁰ Little did the instructors know that one day these lessons would allow her to undertake the traditionally masculine task of cultivating a cash crop in the American colonies.

During her time in England, Lucas also gained insight into transatlantic commercial trading from Richard Boddicott. Lucas stayed with Mary and Richard Boddicott, who were her father's friends, when not attending boarding school. Lucas gained a second mother and lifelong friend in Mary Boddicott, while learning business skills from Richard, who was a sugar merchant.¹¹ The lessons she learned from Mr. Boddicott would prove to be more beneficial than the ones she learned in Mrs. Pearson's boarding school because she put his lessons into use when she was operating at Wappoo. These skills of commerce and trade would help her make decisions in selling crops and how to navigate in the manly world of business.

Eliza Lucas must have had a knack for putting men at ease and making them see past her femininity to converse seriously with her. George Lucas saw her as a person with natural

⁹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰ *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: Digital Edition*, ed. Constance B. Schulz, https://rotunda-upress-virginia-edu.libproxy.clemson.edu/PinckneyHorry/?_gl=1*12ahtw4*_ga*NDgwMDIyNDM1LjE2NDk0MjI5MzE.*_ga_89MNNJWMNQ*MTY0OTk1NTIxMy4yLjEuMTY0OTk1ODI2Ni4w Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, (1746-1825), 10 September 1785 DE. (Hereinafter DE) Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 206, 217-218.

¹¹ Glover, 19.

intelligence and sent her to England to improve herself. Richard Boddicott did not dismiss her as a polite young lady but shared his valuable knowledge of trade with her. These two men and her education would continue to help her build relationships with men that valued her for her intelligence. For example, when she settled in South Carolina, her esteemed neighbor and future husband, Charles Pinckney, loaned her philosophical books and conversed with her about them. Her education and relationships with powerful men must have built confidence in Lucas and allowed for her to become a commanding young woman. This confidence proved to be beneficial in her role as a planter.

Lucas recognized that her education in England was a cherished gift, and she was grateful to George Lucas for sending her there. This sentiment followed her into her adulthood as seen in her letter to her father upon her marriage to Charles Pinckney. Mr. Lucas was unable to bestow his daughter with a dowery, but Eliza said that her education “which I esteem a more valuable fortune than any you could now have given me”.¹² Eliza Lucas’s studies in England laid a strong foundation for her future role as a planter and expanded her role in society.

Moving to Carolina

The Lucas family’s relocation to South Carolina is a story of financial hardships and near-death experiences. This story is important to note because it had long lasting effects upon Lucas’s mindset, and perhaps impacted how she acted in her role of a planter. Glover notes that as Lucas’s time in England was ending in bittersweet goodbyes, there was trouble brewing in Antigua. There had been hard times on the island, with hurricanes and flooding that ruined and devastated the sugar fields of the planters. Most planters had been in debt to begin with, and

¹² Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas May 2, 1744, DE.

these hard times only sunk them deeper into the pockets of wealthy merchants. However, there was even more danger to planter families than their ever-mounting debt. Slave resistance was always lurking under the surface and the 1730s was a decade of widespread slave unrest. Economic hardships, along with lax enforcement of slave laws, and the Black majority on the island fed colonists' fear of slave rebellion. Most often slave resistance took the form of fugitive slaves, but in the mid 1730s a plot was crafted by enslaved people to overthrow the whites in Antigua.¹³ This plot was uncovered by colonists before slaves executed it, and it was directly linked to the Lucas household. Caesar, a trusted male slave in the Lucas household, had planned to kill the family in part of the grander slave uprising in October of 1736. The leaders of the revolt, Court and Tomboy, had been entirely trusted by their owners, just as Caesar was by George Lucas. Court planned to start the revolt off by detonating gunpowder at the ball for the anniversary of King George II's coronation, where most elite families would be in attendance. The slaves that attended the ball would be warned before Court set fire to the gunpowder, so they would escape unharmed. All the while slaves across Antigua, some two thousand of whom were under Court and Tomboy's orders, would wait to hear the explosion and then rise and kill the masters that were absent from the ball.¹⁴ This widespread alliance among slaves frightened the whites of Antigua to the very bone because it showed that slaves could wear a mask in front of their owners, always hiding their true feelings and intentions.¹⁵ These slaves were dealt with swiftly by the slaveholding magistrates and were sentenced to be broken on the wheel.¹⁶ Glover

¹³ Gaspar, 54.

¹⁴ Glover, 26.

¹⁵ This shows the true cunning nature of slaves and proves that there was more to them than the Sambo persona. See Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institution and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 81-89. He makes slaves look as if they were childlike and inherently unintelligent. I am in more agreement with Kenneth Stampp that there was more to the Sambo persona and it could be used by slaves to fool their masters. See his thoughts in Kenneth Stampp, *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War* (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980), 60-75.

¹⁶ Glover, 26.

notes that there is no correspondence in the family about how they reacted to this close encounter with death, but it would have served as a powerful reminder to keep a watchful eye on their slaves. We can assume that this event would have been in the back of Eliza's mind when she became master at Wappoo. She would remember how Caesar had nearly murdered her family and this feeling of paranoia would have plagued slave owners and affected their actions in running the lives of their slaves. It would be an influence upon Eliza Lucas's action as a slave owner and for her to keep them at arm's length and always be watchful.

Because of the hard times and dangerous environment of Antigua, the Lucas family decided to uproot their lives and make a new start in South Carolina. This was a common trend among planter families in the Caribbean at the time. George Lucas inherited one plantation from his late father in 1729 and eventually moved his family to the colony in the late summer of 1739. In the next year he purchased two more plantations and mortgaged them to help advance his military career and provide for his family.¹⁷ The three plantations were named Wappoo, Garden Hill, and Waccamaw. Wappoo was the original plantation purchased by George's father, John Lucas in 1714. This plantation was in St. Andrew's Parish, on the creek of the same name, where it met with the Stono River. Wappoo Creek was probably named for the indigenous people that had lived the area long before the Lucases purchased the land.¹⁸ It was about six miles by water to Charleston, which is how most people traveled in the area.¹⁹ Garden Hill was fifteen hundred acres located on the Combahee River near Beaufort, which is southwest of Charleston. The Waccamaw plantation included three thousand acres on the Waccamaw River, and all three

¹⁷ Glover, 28. Andrea Feeser, *Red, White, and Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2013), 101. Feeser notes that he bought these other two plantations and their locations. He mortgaged them just as he had done to Wappoo and the Antigua plantation.

¹⁸ For John Lucas's purchase and the naming of Wappoo for the Native American population see Feeser, 101. For the description of the placement of Wappoo see Glover, 35.

¹⁹ Glover, 35.

plantations were dedicated to the cultivation of rice. These plantations were the fresh start that the Lucas family needed and where Eliza Lucas would thrive in her role as planter. As historians have shown, South Carolina was a place where gender could be less socially consequential than class and race.²⁰ And perhaps, this is why Eliza Lucas was able to achieve more in South Carolina than she might have elsewhere in the American colonies.

Planter Patriarch

George Lucas moved his family to South Carolina so he could prosper in a way that he could not in Antigua. However, Lucas was soon called back to Antigua to defend the British territories against Spain in late 1739. The conflict that pulled him back into the Caribbean, known as the War of Jenkins Ear, kept Lucas away from South Carolina for the remainder of his life. In his absence, seventeen-year-old Eliza Lucas found herself in charge of her father's three Lowcountry plantations because there was no one else he could depend on. Her mother was too sick to run the plantations, and George, the eldest brother, was in England going to school. Thus, in the fashion of "patrimonial bureaucracy" she took up the role of her father until his return or her brother, George was able to take over.²¹

The role that Eliza now found herself in was complicated because she was a female acting in a male role. It is important to define the parameters of this role that Eliza Lucas and women like her assumed because there were certain rules they had to follow. As we have already seen in the case of Ann Drayton, it was acceptable for a woman to assume a traditionally masculine role when it was perceived as a familial duty and not a sign of their personal ambition.

²⁰ Anzilotti, 5. Kierner, 43.

²¹ Anzilotti uses Gerda Lerner's work to explain "patrimonial bureaucracy" that entails the "allocation of power to subordinate members of the family or society" in order "to fill the leadership gap created by, in the case of South Carolina, a high death rate." Anzilotti, 4.

Lucas saw her planter role as a duty to her father and worked to make him pleased.²² As Lucas noted in a letter to Mrs. Boddicott “I have the business of three plantations to transact, which requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine, but least you should imagine it too burdensome to a girl at my early time of life, give me leave to assure you I think myself happy that I can be useful to so good a father.”²³ This letter shows that Lucas was happy to be doing this work on Wappoo for her father. She was glad that she could be useful to him, and only says that she is happy to perform the work because it benefitted him. This understanding of herself and her role pervades her correspondence, through which she communicated with her father and apprised him of the progress on Wappoo, Garden Hill and Waccamaw. She wanted to inform him of all that she was doing because he was the ultimate figure of authority, not herself. Indeed, assuming the role of planter was socially acceptable because Lucas was acting in a role to benefit her father’s prosperity. If a women showed signs of doing anything publicly for her own benefit she would likely be scorned just as Margaret Wake Tryon, wife of North Carolina Governor, was for publishing a book that was perceived by society as unsuitably masculine. Women had to walk the fine line in society and play the meek and mild female to operate in the public sphere.²⁴

Lucas took her father’s job overseeing the plantations seriously and devoted much time to her pursuits. She lived and personally oversaw the progress at Wappoo and directed William Murry on Garden Hill and Mr. Starrat at Waccamaw.²⁵ Many women in the community would

²² Historians Cara Anzilotti, Lorri Glover, and Cynthia Kierner, all contend that women who assumed these roles were acting to benefit of their male family members, whether that be their husbands, sons, or in Eliza’s case, her father.

²³ Harriot Horry Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney* (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1896), 6. Also located in Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Steer (Mrs. Richard) Boddicott, 2 May 1740 DE.

²⁴ Kierner, 60.

²⁵ Glover, 44-45.

tease Eliza about overworking herself, and close friends wanted to know why she could not visit them more often. In a letter to Mary Bartlett, a close friend and the niece of Charles and Elizabeth Pinckney, Lucas detailed her daily routine on Wappoo so Ms. Bartlett could understand what kept Lucas so engaged. She rose at five in the morning, read till seven, visited the fields to “see that the servants are at their respective business,” and then took breakfast. During the middle of the day, she would work on her studies in French and shorthand, so her practice wouldn’t be lost. She took music lessons on Mondays, visited with neighbors and close friends on Tuesdays, and Thursdays were devoted to writing for the business of the plantations and letters to friends.²⁶ Other letters reveal that she also oversaw shipments of rice and other products to town, the buying and selling of livestock, and the care and treatment of the enslaved people. Most famously, she introduced new crops like indigo to the plantation in order to keep the plantations thriving and moving with the times. Lucas’s letters reveal that she was a busy woman indeed. She could not afford to go visiting as often as other young ladies because of her duties on the plantations.

In her already tight schedule on Wappoo, Lucas found time to teach reading lessons to her younger sister Polly, as well as enslaved children.²⁷ It might seem quite scandalous for her to be teaching slaves to read, but it was perfectly legal at this time. Slaves could be taught to read, but not to write. Teaching slaves to write was outlawed in the “Negro Act of 1740” in the aftermath of the Stono Rebellion. If slaves were able to write, then they could possibly forge freed papers or write a pass so they could escape from their masters. Thus, Lucas only taught her slaves to read so they could be valuable use to her in going to market and other purposes.

²⁶ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Bartlett, [1742] DE.

²⁷ Ibid.

Another important aspect from her letter of her daily routine is the sparse mention of her slaves. Her letter only mentions “servants” or slaves twice, showing that she did not direct them throughout the day. That was not her being a lazy owner, it was typical of the time to leave most direction to the overseers for the field work. There was also a position of a driver that typically was a slave, and they would work with the overseer to make sure everything was flowing sufficiently.²⁸ The owner would check up with the overseer and driver to make sure all things were going according to their directions.

Although Lucas’s life was consumed with work on the plantations, the letter to Ms. Bartlett shows that she was also able to balance the life of a young female and a planter. Lucas, like other planter women, “crossed traditional gender barriers, but without completely leaving their socially prescribed sphere.”²⁹ Lucas continued her feminine pursuits by visiting friends, staying up to date on fashion trends and mastering music lessons. She inhabited the male role of master on a plantation while remaining in the typical role of a colonial woman. It was as if everything she did in both spheres bled into the other. For example, she would dedicate time to needle work, but instead of working on her fashionable lappets, she spent time making shrimp nets.³⁰ She also had a scheme to plant and make a profit off oak trees and that two thirds of the proceeds would be donated to charity. That the funds would be donated to charity is what brings her efforts into the feminine sphere because a colonial woman was expected to be charitable.³¹ Therefore, Lucas was acting in a male’s role in her pursuits to benefit the plantations but remained in her feminine sphere by blending the two roles together. This bolsters Anzilotti’s

²⁸ Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 101, 102.

²⁹ Anzilotti, 5.

³⁰ Ravenel, 31.

³¹ For charity proceeds see, Elise Pinckney, *The Letter book of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 1739-1762* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 38. For charitable role see, Kierner, 39.

argument that female planters were distinct from their male peers in the fact that they remained in the feminine world but operated successfully in a man's.³² It adds to the overall dynamic of a female planter and shows how they had to find balance between two spheres.

This blending of feminine and masculine pursuits is embodied in her recipe book. Lucas began accumulating recipes in her youth, and her book contains recipes for broad ranges of food, from marmalades and jellies, cakes, and puddings, to pickling and preservation practices. This was a common practice for women in colonial America as well as England. They experimented with new recipes and foods to impress their dinner guests and show off their domestic skills.³³ In plantation America, these culinary efforts were no doubt mostly done by enslaved cooks in households and then passed off for the work of the mistress. Regardless, Eliza's attention to these trends and taking part in this focus on culinary pursuits brings her into the feminine sphere for the time. What brings her recipe book into a somewhat masculine sphere is the inclusion of medicine and elixirs to help with children and perhaps her enslaved people. She has recipes to heal for the "flux", sore throat, and inward bleeding. There are mixes for a purging, which was used as an emetic, Daffy's elixir, and countless other remedies. The Daffy's elixir was a cure-all for various illnesses, and her recipe book contained Eliza's own version of the brew. However, other blends were featured in advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*.³⁴ These remedies would have been used for the family within the Lucas and later Pinckney's households and possibly for the care of their slaves. As a planter the young Lucas could have jotted down these

³² Anzilotti, 2-3.

³³ Kierner, 15-16.

³⁴ The *South-Carolina Gazette* (Thomas Whitmarsh, Lewis Timothy, Elizabeth Timothy, Peter Timothy, at Charlestown), 1732-1775. <https://www-accessible-com.libproxy.clemson.edu/accessible/docButton?AABeanName=toc3&AAWhat=builtPageCorpusToc&AANextPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp&AAErrorPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp#b0> March 12, 1771. (Hereinafter SCG)

medical remedies to help keep her own family and the family's slaves from getting sick. The practice of owners tending to slaves medically can be seen in the colonial period and into the antebellum era of slavery.³⁵ So, this possible use of medicine for her slaves brings her recipe book into the masculine scope of being a planter. Planters would medically tend to their enslaved people and Lucas was acting in her role as a planter and owner by doing so. These various examples show that Lucas was inhabiting the role of planter while retaining her feminine traits.

While Lucas was tending to operations on Wappoo in person, she directed matters at the other two plantations through correspondence with the overseers. Lucas would be considered an absentee planter for the Garden Hill and Waccamaw plantations because she did not live on the property or visit them every day. Absenteeism was more common along the rice coast of South Carolina and Georgia, which mimicked the experiences of the Caribbean colonies.³⁶ So Lucas's absence from Garden Hill and Waccamaw would not have been strange to the plantation system, but a typical occurrence for her area. Her business on Wappoo kept her employed and there was not time to travel to all three plantations in a day. As an absentee planter, she sent letters that informed the overseers of their duties. Lucas directed the men in charge of the slaves' tasks and if slaves needed to be transported from one plantation to another to comply with the work demands.³⁷ She also controlled plantation production, telling her overseers and managers what goods to ship out of the colony, and which provisions to send to her father in Antigua. For example, Lucas wrote to Mr. Murray at Garden Hill in November of 1740, to "send down a boat load of white oak staves, bacon and salted beef for the West Indies."³⁸ There is no evidence

³⁵ Faust, 77. In James Henry Hammond's case though he was not the best doctor and often times resulted in the worsening of the health of the slaves. Let's hope Eliza was a better physician than Hammond.

³⁶ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 11.

³⁷ For the movement of slaves see Eliza Lucas Pinckney to William Murray, [1742] DE.

³⁸ Ravenel, 10.

shown that Lucas had any problems with her overseers disobeying her because of her gender. She was the person in charge, and they complied with her orders just as if she were her father because he left her in a position of power.

Lucas was aware of all things that happened on the plantations, and she would communicate this with her father. She knew when things went well and when they went awry. For example, she wrote to her father of a loss of a male slave and a load of rice that had turned over in the Santilina.³⁹ There is no evidence of what consequences Lucas set for this loss of property, but one can assume there was punishment for losing valuable goods. This was only one example of the many letters to her father about the plantation business. Lucas's letters to her father show that she was aware of agricultural aspects of the plantation, the wellbeing of the slaves, and the movements of the overseers at the other two locations. She relayed these events and information to her father because he was the ultimate authority.

Lucas was also aware of the gossip in the community and from her existing letters, she seemed to pay attention when it involved rumors about slaves. For example, in April of 1741 she reported that Hugh Bryan, a local planter, had falsely prophesized of a slave revolt that would burn the city of Charleston to the ground. Eliza notes how the community was unsettled by the tales and feared what the slaves would do if they heard the news themselves. This letter shows the fear that even a rumor of a revolt could strike in a planter's heart and must have kept Lucas and others on their toes against any actions of revolt in their slaves' minds. Colonists' fears were so easily stirred up by rumors during this time in part because the Stono Rebellion had occurred only a few years before. This rebellion was the most successful slave revolt in mainland North

³⁹ Eliza Lucas to George Lucas, April 23, 1741. DE.

America and took place in September of 1739. The revolt began with a group of about twenty slaves, men and women, that met on an early Sunday morning near Wallace Creek along the Stono River, hence the name of the rebellion. The slaves overtook a nearby store, called Hutchinson's, for necessary supplies such as guns and gunpowder and then beheaded the two store owners. Over the next couple of days, the group of "self-emancipated" people grew to one hundred in numbers, plundering houses and killing whites along the way south bound for St. Augustine, Florida. Lieutenant Governor William Bull just so happened to come upon the group on his return to town and was able to hide away and send word about their whereabouts. Whites caught up with the group and a battle ensued in which most of the slaves were killed on the spot. The others that fled were hunted down by the local militia slave patrol and executed. Head were placed on mileposts that marked the route back to Charleston.⁴⁰

Lucas and her family do not mention the rebellion in their writings. They were living together at the time of the rebellion, so perhaps there was no need. However, the close proximity of Wappoo plantation to the rebellion must have unsettled the Lucas family to say the least. George and Anne Lucas had almost been killed by their own slave in Antigua just three years prior and its memory would have plagued them during the South Carolina revolt. This fear and unrest would last through the following years to come. In 1741, when Hugh Bryan's rumors were circulating, there were still families around the Stono river that would gather in groups for protection against their unruly slaves. There were some that even quit their land holdings

⁴⁰ For detailed description of the routes the slaves took, see Glover, 37-39. See also Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), 314-317.

completely and shows the continuation of fear among white and resistance among enslaved people.⁴¹

The rebellion sent shock waves throughout society, and the swift execution of the slaves was only the beginning of the effects of the event. The Common House of Assembly passed legislation to make permanent changes to society to make sure a rebellion of this scale would not be possible again. The 1740 “Negro Acts” cracked down on the liberties of enslaved people by further restricting their travel and trading opportunities. It also placed a tax on the importation of African slaves because of the belief that African born slaves, especially Angolan born, were more rebellious than American born slaves. The international market was decreased for a time and local trading took the lead.⁴² This legislation was passed under Charles Pinckney, Lucas’s future husband, and his role would have been considered by the Lucas family because of their close relationship with him. These newly enacted laws dictated the way that Lucas directed and managed her slaves on Wappoo, Garden Hill and Waccamaw plantations. Lucas notes that she taught her slaves to read, but not write, as was stipulated in the 1740 Act. Her treatment and actions would have to follow the newly passed acts to make sure a rebellion of Stono’s size could not take place again. That Lucas sought to conform her behavior to the new legislation also reveals that she was legally savvy.

⁴¹ Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina.: 1739 Sept. 12/1741 Mar. 26. South Carolina, 1741, #55, 37.

⁴² For a description and summary of the 1740 Act see Glover, 39. For an actual transcription of the act see Cooper Thomas, Editor; McCord, David, Editor. *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*. Columbia, S.C., Printed by A.S. Johnston; Republican Printing Co., State Printers., 397-416. Slave codes did mandate better treatment of slaves, such as no work on Sundays and not over working slaves within a given day. However, these were not humanitarian provisions. Rather, they show that local planters saw their harsh treatment as cause for resistance and rebellion among enslaved people.

Lucas's concerns about slave resistance can also be seen in her actions when she removed her slaves from the coast when a Spanish ship neared Charleston's harbor for fear that her slaves would be captured and freed.⁴³ Spain had long been a thorn in the side of the colonists in mainland America because of the 1693 edict in which the Spanish Crown offered freedom to all run-away slaves who converted to Catholicism. Spanish Florida became a haven for runaway slaves seeking freedom and became a trend for slaves to flee south.⁴⁴ In fact, this may have been what tempted enslaved people involved in the Stono Rebellion to flee in the direction of Florida. Thus, when Spanish ships were off the coast of South Carolina, planters typically moved their slaves inland to deter their escape or Spanish efforts to capture them. Lucas used the town's gossip to her advantage and made decisions that would protect her father's property.

All of the duties that the young Lucas had to maintain as the master of several plantations showed that it was a complicated job, but her success in cultivating indigo proves that she was a capable person. Despite the endless teasing that Lucas received from neighbors and friends about overworking herself into an old woman before her time, she diligently continued working for her father and it paid off immensely. Eliza was always up to some "scheme," as she liked to call them, by trying new innovations to help further along the plantation. Her plots must have been well known in the community, or at least to the Pinckneys, because in a letter to Mary Bartlett she wrote "Your good Uncle (Charles Pinckney) has long thought I have a fertile brain at scheming, I only confirm him in his opinion; but I own I love the vegetable world extremely."⁴⁵

⁴³ Ravenel, 61. The book version has a longer description of the Spanish and their movements than the digital edition. I don't know if this is the case because the digital edition is not complete or what. However, the Ravenel book shows that Eliza was aware of the Spanish movements and would move her slaves so they would not be captured and freed.

⁴⁴ Karen Cook Bell, *Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 29.

⁴⁵ Ravenel, 32.

Thanks to her love for botany, she had many schemes in her agricultural pursuits on Wappoo. Some of her “schemes” went awry, like her idea of sending Carolina eggs to the sugar plantations to help refine the cane sugar, but others hit the mark.⁴⁶ She soon turned her schemes in the direction of cultivating indigo as one of the many experiments that she oversaw on Wappoo. As a result of Lucas’s indigo “scheme” and other planters dedicating time to indigo’s success, it became a cash crop for South Carolina.

Before the 1740’s, indigo had never successfully been cultivated in the American colonies. Historians have shown that until the 1740s that the Spanish and French colonies were the main producers of indigo in the Atlantic trade.⁴⁷ There were efforts in South Carolina to grow indigo in the early days of the colony, but rice proved to be a more profitable crop and consumed the Lowcountry plantations. In the 1740s rice prices dropped as a result of the war with Spain because of shipping issues, so Carolina planters started to look to other crops that would maintain their income. Indigo just happened to be one of the crops that planters tested in the Carolina soil.⁴⁸ Thus, Eliza Lucas was a part of this movement to find new crops that would flourish in floundering rice economy because of the war. She acted in her role as a planter to cultivate new crops and see which ones could prosper in the climate to make a profit for her family. It is important to make this distinction because it shows that there was a combined push for new crops to be cultivated in the American colonies, and it was not Lucas’s initiative alone to grow indigo in South Carolina. Some historians have argued that because she had help from others and that it was a part of a broader movement that Lucas does not deserve the credit for her

⁴⁶ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, 3 February 1744. DE.

⁴⁷ Glover, 58. David L. Coon, “*Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South Carolina.*” *The Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 1 (1976),61.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

work. I disagree with this argument. Eliza Lucas was a part of this movement and did have help from others to produce indigo, but that does not devalue her role in introducing indigo in South Carolina. Combined efforts on the Lucas plantations produced a successful crop of indigo and was a part of the process that led to indigo becoming a valuable commodity in South Carolina.

Lucas mentioned her indigo scheme many times in her letter book and her letters show that the early years of indigo trials were difficult. She first wrote about the plan in a July 1740 letter to her father, noting that she had “taken pains to bring indigo, ginger, cotton, lucern, and cassada to perfection, and had greater hopes from the indigo-if I could have the seed earlier the next year from the West indies- than any of the rest of ye things I had tryd.”⁴⁹ This shows that she was working on cultivating other crops at the time, but from the early stages she had singled out indigo as the crop to focus on. I found some difference in the dates of this letter from the online edition and the 1896 edition of the letter book in which the former dates it July of 1740, and the latter in 1739. However, what I can tell from this letter is that she had tried in either of these two years to cultivate indigo, but that the planting time was off. The frost killed off the first pursuits and she needed new seed for planting.⁵⁰ Lucas would not let past failures come in the way of her and progress, so she tried again with more seeds that were sent from the West Indies.

Lucas received help from a local planter, Andrew Deveaux, brothers James and Patrick Cromwell from Monserrat, and of course her African and Native American slaves to successfully produce indigo and the dye from the plant.⁵¹ Deveaux was a Frenchman and supposedly had a

⁴⁹ For the letter dating it in July 1740 see, Eliza Lucas to George Lucas July 1740 DE. For the letter saying it was 1739 see, Ravenel, 7.

⁵⁰ Eliza Lucas Pinkney to George Lucas, 4, June 1741 DE. She mentions that in an earlier letter she told her father that the indigo was killed by a frost. She last mentions it in a recollection to her son Thomas. See Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, (1746-1825), 10 September 1785 DE.

⁵¹ On Wappoo there was a slave named “Indian Peter.” Indeed, Feeser notes notes the influence of Native American slaves in the production of indigo. Feeser, 108.

background in indigo cultivation. He appears a couple of times in Lucas's letters and is mentioned when he gave her advice on plantation matters. He would advise her about many things ranging from plant advice to setting cow pens.⁵² They seemed to have had neighborly regard for one another, and he helped her like he would any other planter neighbor. Deveaux and Lucas's slaves were her main collaborators in the first years of indigo production from around 1739 to 1741. Once she and her enslaved people had produced a ripened seed on the third attempt, her father hired James Nicolas Cromwell and sent him to Wappoo to help with the processing of the plant.⁵³ Cromwell, who was originally from Monserrat, was skilled in the craft of growing and processing the indigo plant into dye, so he was needed at Wappoo.

The fact that Eliza Lucas did not receive help from Cromwell until after she had a seed that ripened shows that she had only used local sources of information to help with the early stages of planting. She was fulfilling her father's duties on her own and she was able to complete this task with the help of her slaves. The entire process of indigo cultivation and turning it into dye is very complicated, but I would assume the botany lessons Lucas had learned helped immensely in the early days. Contemporary illustrations and records show the planting process in which enslaved men would hoe and till the ground, while enslaved females crouched down and dropped seeds into the soil. Enslaved people would tend to the indigo fields daily by picking grasshoppers off the plants and weed the area surrounding the plants.⁵⁴ This was basic knowledge that Lucas would have been familiar with to successfully grow any plant and it was applied to indigo. Lucas was able to apply her knowledge of botany to the early stages of

⁵² Eliza Lucas to George Lucas July 25, 1740, January 1742 DE.

⁵³ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney September 10, 1785, DE.

⁵⁴ Feeser, 80-81. Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 160.

planting indigo and it helped further the successful cultivation of indigo. Furthermore, her botany and indigo knowledge later proved to be sound when she became close with Alexander Garden, a famous Scottish physician, botanist, and planter, and advised him on how to grow indigo in South Carolina's climate. He took this information and applied it to his experiments in red dye with prickly pears.⁵⁵ The fact that Garden took her advice seriously and applied it to his own experiments proves that Lucas's botany know-how was legitimate. The fact that she, as a female in the eighteenth century, was giving a man agricultural advice speaks volumes for intelligence and resolve as a female planter. She could take on any job and would help others along the way.

Lucas's experiments with indigo did not end when James Cromwell, the elder brother, arrived at Wappoo plantation. Instead, she acted as any planter would and supervised his work to make sure the proceedings were going smoothly and so she could learn how to complete the process. She also watched him to share the knowledge to her neighbor Deveaux, so he could benefit from it as well. Thankfully Lucas was watching Nicolas Cromwell closely because she discovered that he purposefully sabotaged the processing of the dye in 1741. She figured his actions resulted from his fear that the South Carolina's indigo would rival his own country's product.⁵⁶ Seeing his deceit, Lucas fired him and turned to alternative help, which so happened to be the younger Cromwell brother that her father sent. He proved to be a more trustworthy teacher and there is no evidence in Lucas's letters that she had any trouble with him being dishonest as his older brother was.⁵⁷ Lucas wanted to see the process through and see her efforts come to fruition.

⁵⁵ Feeser, 47.

⁵⁶ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney September 10, 1785, DE.

⁵⁷ Glover, 61.

Lucas does not give credit to the enslaved people who lived on Wappoo, but they were key players in the success of indigo. Perhaps Lucas does not include their valuable contribution because she felt no need to. The slaves on Wappoo were under her command and their labor was a means to an end in her mind. To her they were a cog in the machine of the indigo operation and all her plantations' profits. In her recollections she placed her work and that of other whites above that of the enslaved workers. This omission likely did not result from callousness but rather from her belief that enslaved people were an extension of her own mastery. Lucas did write a letter to her daughter about the work of her household that shows that she relied on her slaves for everything and can give insight to the reliance she had on them in the indigo scheme. She writes that Mary-Ann "understands roasting poultry in the greatest perfection you ever saw" and that she also "makes my bed and makes my punch." Old Ebba would tend to the chickens by "fattening them to as great a nicety" and "boils the cow's victuals." While young Ebba was kept to "do the drudgery part, fetch wood, and water, and scour, and learn as much as she is capable of cooking and washing." Daphne "makes me a loaf of very nice bread", and "shall take her turn sometimes to cook that she may not forget what she learnt at Santee." Pegg "washes and milks" and Moses was "employed from breakfast until 12 o'clock without doors" gathering oysters, which he was able to do at low tide and without a boat. Thus, Eliza had formed her household where "nobody eats the bread of idleness" while she was present.⁵⁸

With no slave eating "the bread of idleness" within the household and Lucas's constant reliance upon them, it can be assumed these same practices were at work in the agricultural pursuits on the plantation. She would make sure not a soul on her property was relaxing when there was work to be done. Mistresses and masters alike were clothed, fed, pampered, and had

⁵⁸ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Harriot Horry Pinckney, not dated, DE.

every need fulfilled by their enslaved people. White mistresses would even use enslaved women as wet nurses for their children, showing the intimacies of a slave-owner relationship and the solid reliance of owners on their enslaved people.⁵⁹ Slave owners' intimate lives were always linked to their slaves and the importance of the slaves' role cannot be overlooked. Eliza Lucas's dependence on her slaves continued when she traveled to London for her husband's position in the early 1750s. They brought a few slaves with them to continue their services in the household and hired English servants to supplement the work that would normally be fulfilled by numerous household slaves. This was a common practice for slave owners traveling abroad, and it shows that planter families always needed a slave at their beck and call.⁶⁰ In every aspect of a slave owner's life, from successes with agriculture, to setting the dinner table, it was rooted in the labor of enslaved people. Therefore, in Lucas's indigo scheme, all hands would be at work in the process to make her goals come to fruition.

The role that enslaved people played in the indigo process may be absent in the letters written by Lucas, but Lorri Glover recently has uncovered their crucial role. Glover read against the grain, as many historians studying women or people of color in history must, and she reveals the valuable help of the slaves and particularly of male slave, Quash. Quash had a colorful life story, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3 along with a more detailed description of enslaved labor influences in the indigo process. Quash was a skilled carpenter and a literate slave, and this made him valuable to both George and Eliza Lucas. Skilled slaves were coveted and important people in plantation households and the Lucas family fought about where they should work. Quash and Dick, the skilled cook at Wappoo, caused a quarrel between father and

⁵⁹ Glover, 118.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

daughter when George asked Eliza to send the two slaves back to him in Antigua. He thought Quash's skills could be put to better use with him and must have missed the savory meals that Dick prepared. To these requests Eliza always offered an excuse as to why she could not send them, and George kept deflecting her excuses. However, the daughter was the victor in the fight, and Quash and Dick remained with her in South Carolina.⁶¹ This quarrel happened after the cultivation process of indigo, but it shows how planters like Lucas would not part with certain slaves because of their skilled craftsmanship. It shows that these skilled individuals were valuable and indicates that they were vital to slave owners.

With the exploitation of the enslaved labor and the combined efforts of Eliza Lucas, the Cromwell brothers, local planters, they were able to successfully grow and process indigo. Lucas made a gift of the seed in 1744 to other local planters, so they could continue with their efforts in the process of making it a cash crop for the colony.⁶² From hers and other planter's efforts indigo became a crop that the South Carolina Assembly proclaimed "an excellent colleague commodity with Rice"⁶³ and cut out the French indigo from Britain's trade.

Eliza Lucas's efforts in the cultivation of indigo was a part of a grander plan to experiment with new crops that would advance the economic prosperity in colonial America. Despite early failure, she had enough resolve to push forward and pursue her "scheme" and achieved her goal. She did not boast in public or write a pamphlet on her pursuits in indigo to flaunt her accomplishments. She simply wrote her father of her success, gifted local planters with seeds and went on with her life. It would not have been seemly for her to publicly boast of her success because her social environment dictated that a female was supposed to be modest. Lucas

⁶¹ Ibid., 100.

⁶² Ravenel, 104.

⁶³ Glover, 61.

fulfilled social expectations about her gender role in this instance, while stimulatingly pushing the bounds for females in the private setting of the home. Her domestic sphere just so happened to be a plantation, and her pursuits in that sphere helped to transform indigo into one of South Carolina's most lucrative exports. Again, the curious dichotomy of a female acting in a "man's role" is shown in this scenario and shows that Lucas was a legitimate planter, but still had to cater to the gender norms of the time. Lucas had to know how to operate successfully in her father's place and navigate as a woman in a man's profession. And succeed she did.

Conclusion

In the midst of the indigo "scheme" Eliza Lucas married her neighbor and good friend Charles Pinckney after the death of his wife in 1744. As discussed in Chapter One, during this time and age, marriage was a surrender of rights for a woman and all that she owned technically would be under her husband's name. This shift of power must have been a severe blow to a woman in Eliza Lucas's situation because other women did not typically have as much agency and power in their lives as she did. Upon her marriage she went from being a planter in her own right, to being the wife of a planter. The new Mrs. Pinckney was dealt a lucky hand once more in her marriage to Charles Pinckney because he was the sort of man who supported her "pursuits and independent actions."⁶⁴ George Lucas was alarmed that his daughter might be overstepping her bounds into her husband's sphere too much. He made it clear that she should inhabit a more restricted role than she had become accustomed to in her previous five years as master of Wappoo. However, she did not completely comply with his demands and continued to oversee agricultural operations, with her husband's blessing of course. Glover notes that for Eliza Lucas

⁶⁴ Ibid., 83.

Pinckney, “work that had started out as unavoidable because of her father’s absence and her mother’s illness had become a source of deep interest and personal pride.”⁶⁵ She would continue to pursue her botanist experiments and retain what agency was proper for a wife at the time.

Marriage did not break Eliza’s independent spirit or the power that her planter lifestyle had given her. She raised her children to have this same sense of independence. Her two sons, Charles Cotesworth, and Thomas Pinckney, were prominent politicians in South Carolina. Charles Cotesworth was one of the signers of the US Constitution and Thomas was a governor of South Carolina. Her daughter Harriott married a prominent planter Daniel Horry and helped him in the same way her mother had done for her father. Harriott would be widowed in her thirties and was left to oversee her deceased husband’s plantation. Like her mother, Harriot had to assume her husband’s duty and operate as a “deputy husbands” for her future children. Indeed, Lucas’s children showed that they were raised by driven parents and cultivated independent minds.

Eliza Lucas Pinckney was widowed after 14 years of marriage, and she faced the same circumstances as in her youth.⁶⁶ She was left in charge of a plantation and fulfilled this role until the eldest male in the family could take over. Eliza, no doubt, looked back to her time as master of Wappoo, Garden Hill, and Waccamaw and felt confident that she could maintain her husband’s estate as she had done for her father. She was a woman of great resolve and had not only filled the role of her father but thrived as a planter from her seventeenth year until she was twenty-two. She had managed to keep three plantations up and running and contributed to the cultivation of indigo in South Carolina. When the world began to slip away at her husband’s

⁶⁵ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁶ Schultz, 81.

death, perhaps her previous experience as a planter held her together and allowed her peace of mind when thinking about the future. A memory that she had successfully inhabited the role of a planter in her youth and that she could do it once more. For her work as a planter patriarch, she is remembered and celebrated in South Carolina and her society would be shocked to find that through the centuries she has outshined her father and her husband in history.

Chapter 3: Quash

Introduction

The previous two chapters focused on the lives of female planters. This chapter will focus on the life of one enslaved man named Quash, to highlight another marginalized group in colonial America. Enslaved people spent their lives meeting every need of mistresses like Ann Drayton and Eliza Lucas. Enslaved men and women had a broad spectrum of experiences under slavery in colonial America, from enduring back breaking labor and violence to resisting their owners and creating strong Black community ties. Quash's life story provides a glimpse of one enslaved person's experience of slavery and freedom from the early eighteenth century to the beginning of the Revolution era. Quash demonstrates that enslaved people could inhabit many roles within their lifetime. He was many things: a "mulatto", a field worker, a carpenter and joiner, a fugitive slave, a baptized Christian, and ultimately a free man. The multiple roles and identities that enslavement forced Black people to inhabit were interconnected and their humanity needs to be highlighted by focusing on all aspect of their lives.

Quash's life also reveals the many ways that enslaved people contributed to the wealth of the colonies through their labor, from the "unskilled" field laborers to the highly sought-after craftsmen. Black craftsmen presented competition for the white artisans in the business market and proved that skilled slaves could outperform their white counterparts. Quash and other enslaved people in colonial America were the backbone of the wealth that made South Carolina a thriving colony and secured the wealth of white families. An intimate look into their lives can reveal many complexities that often go overlooked in the retelling of slavery.

Perhaps more importantly, Quash's attempt to self-emancipate highlights the resistance that was a part of everyday life under slavery. He shows how enslaved people's actions influenced legislation passed by whites to keep them under control. White fears and anxieties show in the "Negro Acts" that were passed and demonstrate that slaves were able to not only influence legislation, but also the everyday mindset of their owners. Quash's life shows that some slaves were able to become free in the closed slave system of South Carolina, even though it was very uncommon for this time and place. In freedom he could choose the work he wanted, live as he liked, and be the master of his own fate. As is true for many free Blacks during the colonial period, Quash's life in freedom is difficult to trace; however, surviving sources show that he was prosperous as a carpenter, bought land, and freed his children.¹

In this Chapter, I reconstruct Quash's life with a particular focus on the laws and customs that ostensibly controlled his life, and the ways in which he resisted those constraints. Although slaves were considered property rather than people before the law, they were still governed by certain laws and practices that would shape their lives as well as society. In the Chapter's first section, I focus on Quash's mixed-race heritage, his upbringing on Wappoo Plantation and how he became a skilled slave. It is important to lay the foundation of Quash's ethnicity and "racial" background because it connects him to the high rates of miscegenation in South Carolina and illustrates what Black women in his life faced. Quash's training as a skilled slave is significant to understanding how he was perceived in society and what other skilled slaves endured. Skilled

¹ For advertisement of his skills see *The South-Carolina Gazette* (Thomas Whitmarsh, Lewis Timothy, Elizabeth Timothy, Peter Timothy, at Charlestown), 1732-1775. <https://www-accessible-com.libproxy.clemson.edu/accessible/docButton?AABeanName=toc3&AAWhat=builtPageCorpusToc&AANextPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp&AAErrorPage=/printBrowseBuiltTocPage.jsp#b0> June 4, 1715, (Hereinafter *SCG*) For land he was able to attain in lifetime as a free man see *SCG*, August 10, 1763. For buying the freedom of his children see Andrea Feeser, *Red, White, and Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2013), 107, 134-135.

laborers played a crucial role in their plantation's output and contributed valuable work to South Carolina as a whole.

In the next section I shift my focus to Quash's work in the indigo process, and in particular how he made the vats for the plant to ferment in and turn to dye. This was a decisive part in Eliza Lucas's indigo scheme. Quash's work was chosen over a white artisan's craft and proved to be of superior quality. I then shift focus to Quash's attempt to run away in the winter of 1742 - 1743. This form of resistance was common in slave societies, and I will expand upon this. Also, in this section I argue that slaves were aware of the "Negro Acts" and as well as foreign edicts, including the Spanish Edict of 1683, which encouraged their resistance. I build upon Philip Morgan's work to argue that slave resistance was a part of everyday life in the slave system of South Carolina and should not be seen as isolated or infrequent attempts. This section reveals the strength and courage of enslaved people taking a step towards freedom, despite the brutal consequence to their actions. Next, I focus on Quash's life after his runaway attempt that led to his manumission. I argue that his baptism in 1746 and his status as a skilled slave allowed him to bargain for his freedom. I then will discuss what he does in his life as a free man.

Quash's life was unique for an enslaved man in colonial South Carolina and should not be seen as a commonplace. His life as a skilled slave allowed him certain privileges that other slaves did not have. Nonetheless, it is important to trace his life story, connect his situation to other slaves in South Carolina and investigate his life in freedom. Doing so reinforces an argument that enslaved people's lives were complex, and that there was no "typical" experience of slavery or freedom. Overall, his life shows that slaves contributed to the wealth of South Carolina and that they were able to influence society legally and socially.

Childhood on Rice Plantation and becoming a “Skilled Slave”

For most of his enslaved life Quash was owned by a member of the prominent Lucas family. John Lucas purchased Wappoo plantation in 1714, on which Quash would eventually work. It is unclear whether Quash was sold to John Lucas with the estate purchased in 1714 or if he was acquired later. However, he was included in the list of slaves when George Lucas, John Lucas’s son, came to South Carolina in 1739.² Quash’s parentage and early beginnings are undocumented, but his ethnic identity can be guessed by looking at trends in slave importation of the colony. When John Lucas bought Wappoo Plantation, it was over 30 years after the original settlement of the colony in 1670. The population of imported slaves came from different areas depending on the time span. Philip Morgan argues that in the early years of colony slaves were brought from the West Indies, not directly from Africa. Many of the early settlers of South Carolina came from Barbados and other British colonies in the West Indies and brought their slaves with them. Some of the slaves brought to South Carolina might have only inhabited the islands of the Caribbean for a short time and then they were brought to the mainland of South Carolina. However, Morgan notes that most of the early slaves in South Carolina had been seasoned and become acclimated to the New World environment and spoke English. It was not until the turn of the turn of the eighteenth century that native-born Africans directly from Africa were brought regularly to South Carolina.³ Quash was born sometime between 1714 and 1739, so he could have been the son of an African born mother, or a descendant of the Africans first

² Lorri Glover, *Eliza Lucas Pinckney: An Independent Woman in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), 60.

³ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2-3.

brought to the West Indies and then to South Carolina.⁴ His name harkens back to the African tradition of naming a person on the day of the week that they were born. Quash is a masculine form of Sunday, so perhaps he was born on a Sunday and not just given the name without knowing the practice.⁵ Maybe his mother had come directly from Africa and still wanted to keep her African naming traditions alive. Quash was a common name and can be seen later on in the Lucas family descendants' plantation ledgers like Eliza Lucas Pinckney's sons-in-law's inventory lists in the 1780s.⁶ And there was an infamous runaway slave named Quash who had been at large for seven years but captured and killed in 1734.⁷ This name choice shows that slaves were able to retain some of their traditions from West Africa and allowed to use these names throughout their lifetimes. Quash's origins and name are significant to highlight because the African roots of slaves often go overlooked and are lost to the historical records.

Quash was often described as a "mulatto" by Eliza Lucas in her correspondence with her father and in her marriage settlement.⁸ Calling him "Mulatto Quash" indicated that he was of mixed black and white ancestry, which most likely resulted from a sexual encounter between an enslaved mother and white overseer or owner. John Lucas was an absentee planter after his purchase of the plantation, so he probably was not the father of Quash. It could have been the

⁴ I conclude that Quash was born during this time frame based on the training that a carpenter required. His abilities as a carpenter by 1740 would make him at least late teens to most likely early twenties. The date range of his possible birth from 1714 to 1739 are the time between John and George Lucas's ownership.

⁵ Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), 181.

⁶ *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: Digital Edition*, ed. Constance B. Schulz, https://rotunda-upress-virginia.edu/libproxy.clemson.edu/PinckneyHorry/?_gl=1*12ahtw4*_ga*NDgwMDIyNDM1LjE2NDk0MjI5MzE.*_ga_89MNNJWMNQ*MTY0OTk1NTIxMy4yLjEuMTY0OTk1ODI2Ni4w Daniel Huger Horry, Jr., Inventory, 16 January 1786. Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Marriage Settlement, May 1744 DE. (Hereinafter DE)

⁷ Wood, 283-284.

⁸ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, [1745], Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, 7 January 1743, DE. Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Marriage Settlement, May 1744, DE.

overseer that he hired in his stead that sexually exploited an enslaved woman that resulted in Quash's birth.⁹ The sexual exploitation of slave women and the prominence of miscegenation in South Carolina was common knowledge and practice during the colonial period. Eighteenth-century travelers talked about the openness of the subject in society and how white men boasted publicly of such matters to show that it was perceived as normal behavior. It was not hidden or a veiled subject in society as it was in other eighteenth-century American colonies, such as Virginia or North Carolina. Enslaved women in South Carolina, as in the West Indies, faced sexual violence because these white societies did not think it was taboo.¹⁰ For example, an excerpt from the *South Carolina Gazette* shows the environment that Quash's mother, sisters, and female friends that were enslaved were subjected to. It began by saying if a man was in a "strait" for a woman that he should "wait for the next Shipping from the Coast of Guinny. Those African Ladies are of a strong, robust Constitution; not easily jaded out, able to serve them by Night as well as Day. When they are Sick, they are not costly, when dead, their funeral Charges are but viz. an old Matt, one Bottle Rum, and a lb. Sugar."¹¹ This exploitative advertisement was published for any literate person in South Carolina to read. This topic was not limited to hushed voices at a party or in the private conversations of "gentlemen", but openly acknowledged in public. Indeed, enslaved women were seen as sex objects and white men exploited and degraded them when the opportunity presented itself. Quash's mother, sisters, and other enslaved females were subjected to forced sexual violence by owners, overseers and even the enslaved drivers on the plantation, showing that higher status in the plantation system granted men access to females'

⁹ Feeser, 108.

¹⁰ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 139-149.

¹¹ SCG, July 17, 1736.

bodies.¹² Slave women had no hope for legal protection in this society because there were not any laws that would qualify their sexual attacks by men as rape. Rape could only be associated with white women outside the confines of marriage. Even if a slave woman was sexually assaulted by an enslaved man he could only be punished by the owner and not the law.¹³ Enslaved husbands or fathers or the women themselves could not do anything to protect them from sexual assault, and some historians have noted that enslavers regularly denied enslaved men the authority over the women they courted and married. This resulted in them being unable to protect their women from the sexual abuse by the owner and overseer.¹⁴ Furthermore, the law protected the white men who sexually assaulted these enslaved women. South Carolina was the only colony in North America that did not allow absolute divorce because of adultery. Legal historian Marylyn Salmon argues that if white women could file for divorce because of their husband's "adultery" with a slave woman, it would be too restrictive for men's sexual behavior. Divorce by adultery would not do in a society that encouraged the sexual exploitation of slave women.¹⁵ These were the conditions that resulted in the birth of "mulatto" slaves like Quash.

During Quash's childhood on Wappoo plantation, he would have begun to work in the rice fields at a young age. However, later in his childhood or early adulthood he was chosen to train as a carpenter. When he first began work producing indigo in 1740, he was already a skilled carpenter. Thus, he would have been trained in his up brining to acquire the skills to build the wooden vats for the indigo, and to craft intricate wood detailing for the Pinckneys' home in

¹² Karen Cook Bell, *Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 33.

¹³ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 33.

¹⁴ Cook Bell, 32-33.

¹⁵ Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 65.

1744. It is unclear who trained Quash in his carpentry and joining skills, but historian Philip Morgan argues that over the course of the eighteenth-century more opportunities for skilled laborers arose due to economic growth, and owners had slaves trained to be skilled craftsmen. There was also an incentive for owners to have slaves trained so they would be a more valuable commodity. A skilled slave was an asset for families to have and could be sold for a higher price. This is significant because over the course of the eighteenth-century slaves as property became more valuable than land. So, a skilled slave would increase the overall wealth of an owner's estate and give them more financial security.¹⁶ In fact, advertisements for slave sales included the skills that slaves had in order to show the value that each slave would bring to a household. Three of the most valuable slaves in colonial South Carolina were all carpenters valued at 2,000, 1,800, and 1,250 pounds each.¹⁷ This proves that a slave's skills could elevate their value in society and on the slave market. Thus, Quash's status would have risen because of his skill set as a carpenter.

Quash and other skilled slaves would be trained in similar ways. In the early part of the century slaves most likely were trained under white artisans who were paid handsomely at the expense of slave owners. Thus, Quash was likely taught his woodworking by a white artisan in the Charleston area in the 1730s. Some slaves were chosen to learn a skill as young as five or six while some were chosen later in their mid to late teens. Morgan notes that craftsman apprenticeships usually began when a slave was around 16 or 17 years old. It is impossible to know if Quash was picked at a young age or in his teens to learn his craft, but by the 1740s he appeared to be a seasoned carpenter that could take on any task asked of his owners. His skills

¹⁶ S. Max Edelson, "Reproducing Plantation Society: Women and Land in Colonial South Carolina." *The History of the Family* 12, no. 2 (2007): 132.

¹⁷ Morgan, 227.

would be taught to other slaves in the fashion that came about by mid-century where slave artisans learned their skills from another slave rather than whites. Quash conformed to these trends because he later trained Pompey, an enslaved man on Wappoo, in carpentry.¹⁸

As the eighteenth century progressed, the demand for skilled labor rose, and Peter Wood argues that the demand for skilled artisans in the colony was strong enough that race or free status did not matter in job listings. He notes that there were advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1734 that read “any white man, or Negro having a mind to learn the Coopers trade, to correct spoiled wine and to distill, may apply to Peter Birot, who will teach them under reasonable conditions”.¹⁹ This shows that some artisans did not care about an apprentice’s race as long as they had someone to train. Thus, when Quash was chosen to be trained in a craft, he was a part of a grander movement to develop skilled workers in colonial South Carolina, regardless of race.

As a result of slaves becoming skilled laborers, they began to compete with white artisans in the business market, and some were even preferred to white artisans. For example, in 1733 Ann Drayton and Governor William Bull sent skilled sawyers to Georgia with General James Oglethorpe to help build and settle the town of Savannah. These Black skilled workers were chosen for the job over the work of white artisans and must have proved to be satisfactory because two streets were named after their owners for contributing to the settlement.²⁰ Because of these trends, whites began to fear that they would be outdone by enslaved craftsmen. Morgan

¹⁸ Morgan, 54-55, 205, 214-215. For Pompey as Quash’s apprentice, see Feeser, 107.

¹⁹ Wood, 196-197. *SCG* October 5, 1735.

²⁰ Brittany V. Lavelle, “The Making of a Legacy: Three Generations of Drayton Family Women and Their Influences on the Landscape of the Lowcountry and Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Charleston.” (Clemson: Clemson University Libraries, n.d.), 33.

notes this feeling in South Carolina's society and quotes a Lowcountry resident saying "So it goes through all Carolina; the negroes are made to learn all the trades and are used for all kinds of business. For this reason, white people have difficulty in earning their bread there."²¹ This proves that whites were being affected by the actions of Black craftsman and that competition for labor fueled whites' anxieties. Wood also argues this fear among whites and that there was a shift towards making slaves more dependent on their white owners and curbing their growing initiative.

This fear and anxiety among whites also had legal manifestation in the slave codes of South Carolina. Slave codes were used to police slaves with restrictions on their movements, prevent run aways, and patrolling by whites of the area to keep rebellions at bay. Every few years the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly created new legislation "for the better ordering of slaves."²² In the "Negro Act of 1740," the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly mandated that no slave could rent a store, room, or plantations for their own benefit.²³ The very existence of this legislation suggests that there were, in fact, enslaved people who rented houses, rooms, and plantations with their profits from a trade. This law further shows that enslaved people made whites anxious of their success as artisans and led to whites passing legislation to restrict Black people from advancing in society. White South Carolinians did not want Black artisans to rise in station, but to stay subservient within the perceived social hierarchy that was crafted by whites themselves. These actions to make Black people, enslaved or free,

²¹ Morgan, 226.

²² Cooper Thomas, Editor; McCord, David, Editor. *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*. Columbia, S.C., Printed by A.S. Johnston; Republican Printing Co., State Printers.,343. (Hereinafter McCord, *Statutes*)

²³ *Ibid.*,413.

more dependent shows that Black artisans played a significant role in the craftsmanship of the Lowcountry and posed a threat to white workers.

The number of slaves that became skilled laborers grew over the course of the eighteenth-century but should not be seen as the typical experience for enslaved people in colonial America. Morgan notes that one in six rural slave men were skilled craftsmen in the 1730s and by the 1780s and 1790s it rose to one in four slave men. Quash and other slaves chosen to learn skills left the field laborers behind. Most slaves were field laborers and they continued to do backbreaking labor in the fields. Women especially were left to agricultural labor because skilled jobs were most often given to men. White colonial enslavers saw African women just as capable as any man to work in the fields and even in the early days of Virginia they were taxed as tithable workers when white female indentured servants were not.²⁴ Enslaved women were given the most tedious field work. They were considered “full hands”, and gender was not a factor in the tasks given on rice plantations. Even if a female slave did learn a skill, such as midwifery, or medicine practices, they were still expected to work once they retired in their slave cabins. They had to cook, clean, mend and tend to their families after working in the fields or their skilled work.²⁵ Enslaved women faced double time in their work, and this illustrates the privileges that skilled laborers like Quash enjoyed in comparison. Quash likely interacted with field slaves on a day-to-day basis and may have even experienced guilt about his relatively superior station. Indeed, some scholars note that skilled slaves felt guilty about their privileged lives compared to field laborers.²⁶ Although it is impossible to know whether Quash felt a sense of separation from

²⁴ For statistics and showing skilled labor as men’s work, see Morgan, 205-206. For tax on African enslaved women’s working, see Cook Bell, 22-26.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 22-35.

²⁶ Morgan, 236. Morgan shares the story of a slave who was relieved when he was returned to work in the fields, so he could feel a sense of community that he lacked as a skilled slave.

the field laborers, his skills meant that he worked on significant jobs on his owner's plantation. In turn, this elevated his station on Wappoo plantation and would later help him make a life in freedom.

Indigo and Rebellion

With his training in carpentry, Quash played a significant role in making indigo colonial South Carolina's second most important commodity crop. During this time, from 1739 to the mid 1740s, Quash was under the direction of his owner George Lucas's daughter, Eliza Lucas. As described in the previous chapter, Eliza Lucas became Quash's "temporary owner" in 1739 when her father was called back to Antigua to fight the Spanish and left his three plantations in the hands of his seventeen-year-old daughter. Under Eliza Lucas's direction at Wappoo, Quash helped further her desire to cultivate indigo on her family's plantations. Indigo was among the crops that local planters were experimenting with because the war with Spain caused an increase in shipping prices.²⁷ To process indigo, Quash crafted the wooded vats that the indigo would ferment in to become the valued dye. After the plant was harvested it was put in the vats and filled with water. The plants were then weighted down and remained submerged in the water, and when the plants had sat in the water long enough enslaved people would use large wooden paddles to beat the plants back and forward to introduce oxygen into the solution and later lime was added. The water was then drained, leaving a mud like paste in the bottom of the vats. The indigo "mud" would be scooped out, flattened, and then dried. Once dried the indigo paste would be cut into squares and packed tightly for transportation.²⁸ Most of this complicated process was

²⁷ David L. Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South Carolina." *The Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 1 (1976): 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2205661> 61, 61.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 62. Feeser, 80-81.

done in the wooden vats that Quash crafted; his work was therefore a crucial part of producing quality indigo dye.

Quash began to build the vats before James and Patrick Cromwell, two brothers skilled in indigo production, arrived from Montserrat to help Eliza Lucas. Although neither Quash nor Lucas understood the full process of indigo cultivation and processing, Quash nonetheless managed to build the vats.²⁹ It is unclear whether he built these early models with wood or brick, but sources indicate that he built some before the Cromwell Brothers arrived in South Carolina.³⁰ Building the vats under these circumstances must have taken patience and skill. Not to mention that this equipment was expensive to buy with the value of five vats together was around one hundred and fifty pounds, which was the average price for a young adult male slave.³¹ Lucas must have trusted Quash because she tasked him with this important and expensive project, even preferring him over white artisans.

After Quash's early attempts at creating the vats on Wappoo were underway, James Nicolas Cromwell, the elder brother, was sent to teach Lucas how to process the plant. At some point Cromwell crafted vats that were made of brick. However, this produced inferior indigo because brick vats gave linen a red cast. This complication was unacceptable in trying to make a dye that was to compete with French indigo on the world market. Eliza's mother, Anne, complained to George Lucas about this and Lucas wrote that he desired Quash to make vats at Garden Hill out of wood instead of brick.³² Quash undertook this work and crafted a functioning vat that proved to produce superior indigo than with brick vats. He spent thirty-three days making wooden vats

²⁹ Glover, 63.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

³¹ Morgan, 38.

³² George Lucas to Charles Pinckney, (1699-1758), 24 December 1744, DE.

for Garden Hill and other places.³³ The fact that George Lucas turned to the work of an enslaved man over the craftsmanship of white man speaks volumes for Quash's skill. The wooden vats that he was making helped to create a dye that was superior to the ones that Cromwell produced and advanced the process to make indigo a valuable product of South Carolina. Black intelligence in the indigo process should not go overlooked, and Quash's story is only one example of how enslaved people made indigo production possible.

Enslaved labor in the indigo process should not play second fiddle to the work of Eliza Lucas, the Cromwell brothers, or Andrew Deveaux. The origins of the slaves on Wappoo are unknown, but Africans from Verde Islands and the Senegambia would have had experience in both growing the plant and converting it into dye for textiles. It is also proved that many slave owners would buy slaves specifically from certain areas in Africa for their knowledge in rice growing, so this could be the same case with indigo.³⁴ Perhaps more importantly, the Black population of Montserrat had knowledge of the indigo process, and George Lucas was aware of this. James Cromwell had not been George Lucas's first choice to send to South Carolina. He tried first to find an enslaved person from Monserrat to teach his daughter how to grow and process the crop. That he did so shows that colonists saw the Black population in Monserrat as skilled laborers and desired their work above white craftsman or laborers. Enslaved people in Monserrat had been growing indigo for some time until they were banned from growing crops,

³³ Feeser, 105. Garden Hill was one of the three plantations belonging to the Lucas family, including Wappoo and Waccamaw.

³⁴ For Africans with indigo knowledge see Constance B. Schulz, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: A South Carolina Revolutionary-Era Mother and Daughter" in *South Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times, Volume 2*. Marjorie Julian Spruill, Valinda W. Littlefield, and Joan Marie Johnson, eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 86. For specific buying of slaves from Africa based on skill set see J. Brent Morris, *Yes, Lord, I know the Road: A Documentary History of African Americans in South Carolina, 1526-2008* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 7.

including indigo, for their own personal benefit.³⁵ This act shows that slaves in Montserrat and perhaps other areas were knowledgeable with the growing process of indigo and could shed light on enslaved people at Wappoo's contribution to the indigo scheme. It also shows the forced dependence of slaves on their masters because it took away their choice to grow extra crops for their own benefits. Even after this law was passed, Montserrat's enslaved people were still seen as skilled growers of indigo, which is why George Lucas tried to find a Black Montserratian to send to Wappoo. George Lucas was unable to locate a Black Montserratian to send for unknown reasons, so he found a second choice and sent the Cromwell brothers.³⁶ Thus, he knew that Black know-how was more valuable than white.

Owners would often mention the skills and reliance on enslaved individuals in the indigo process that prove enslaved knowledge was decisive in the overall success. Andrew Deveaux, Eliza's neighbor, was able to produce a successful crop that was made by "one of his own negros" and it was reckoned to be as good as any French indigo. On a separate indigo operation, a slave named George critiqued the skills of the overseer directly. George recommended to steep the indigo from five to seven hours, depending on the time of day and had secured eighteen pounds of indigo from each vat because the overseer had not only steeped it for too long, but also used too strong of a lime solution in the water.³⁷ This shows that Black know-how was valuable and could mean the difference between a ruined or a flourishing crop. Henry Laurens bragged on his female slave, Hagar, "for her honesty, care of Negroes, and her great care of Indigo in the

³⁵ Feeser, 103. The legislation is An Act of the Island of Montserrat Entitled an Act for the Further Restriction of Slaves, by Prohibiting them from a Public Market on Sundays and for Further Refraining Licentious Meeting of Negroes, 1737, Board of Trade Original Correspondence.

³⁶ George Lucas to Charles Pinckney, (1699-1758), 22 May 1745, DE.

³⁷ Morgan, 164.

mud.”³⁸ This attention paid to skilled slaves shows the importance of enslaved individuals to the overall productivity of a colonial plantation and Lauren’s description of Hagar shows that gender was sometimes disregarded in the praise of field work. These women were expected to work along enslaved males and perform the same tasks as them. In a world that was dominated by white men’s power, these instances show that Black enslaved laborers were the determining factor in the success of indigo. Thus, Black laborers and possibly some of the slaves on Wappoo helped in the indigo process, even if this is not clear from Lucas’s correspondence. Without the labor of the slaves on Wappoo or other plantations that were cultivating indigo and countless other crops, Lowcountry planters would not have accumulated the wealth that they did. Eliza Lucas relied on her slaves fully in the process to cultivate indigo and should be recognized in the contributions to the future cash crop of South Carolina.

Quash’s valuable work on the indigo process continued, as noted by Eliza Lucas Pinckney, who took this last name upon her marriage to Charles Pinckney in May of 1744. In a letter to her father in 1745, Eliza stated that “molo Quash has undertaken a large job” and could not be returned to her father.³⁹ Indeed, Quash was a skilled worker and Eliza needed him to stay and help in the indigo pursuits and other jobs to suit the plantation’s needs. We have already seen that Quash’s work, along with the labor of the enslaved people on the Lucas Plantations, contributed to the overall success of indigo in South Carolina. Their contribution helped establish wealth for the Lucas and Pinckney families and the overall wealth of South Carolina. Even though Carolina indigo was not considered equal quality to French indigo, Carolina indigo exports increased from a few pounds to over a million in just thirty years from 1744 to 1774.

³⁸George Lucas to Charles Pinckney, (1699-1758), 22 December 1744, DE. Morgan, 164.

³⁹ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, [1745], DE.

Many families became rich off the proceeds of indigo exports and planters were able to petition parliament to offer a bounty on South Carolina indigo in 1749. Indigo would remain a cash crop up until the revolution and made South Carolina continue its place as the most prosperous colony in mainland America. None of this wealth could have been achieved without the labor of the enslaved, from the everyday field hands to the skilled carpenters.⁴⁰

Although Quash's owners respected his skill and considered him a valued slave, he sought to escape slavery and Wappoo plantation. In the winter of 1742-1743 he fled with a group of slaves from the surrounding community. His reasons for running away are not documented, but perhaps Quash had become discontented with the tedious process of developing indigo for his mistress and when rumors began to spread of a group planning to escape to St. Augustine, he took a chance on freedom. Unfortunately, the group of slaves were unsuccessful in their flight to freedom and were tried for their actions in January of 1743. Despite their failure, their attempt to run away is a part of a grander narrative of slave resistance in early America. It connects Quash to the other slaves who resisted slavery in their everyday life to gain back a semblance of order and agency that their owners had stolen from them. As scholars have shown, acts of resistance represented enslaved people's attempt to assert autonomy in their lives and take power back from their owners. There were many methods of resistance in everyday life from small acts such as breaking tools to slow their work process, to planning large scale rebellions like the Stono Rebellion of 1739. Quash's attempted run away is only one episode of slave resistance in the colonial South. Slave resistance should not be seen as isolated acts or rare occurrence, but as ever present in the slave system. In Philip Morgan's sprawling book *Slave Counterpoint*, he does

⁴⁰ For the quality of Carolina indigo, see Glover, 62. For the increase of indigo exports, see Coon, 64. For petition of Parliament see Glover, 62.

not dedicate one singular chapter to slave resistance. Instead, he argues throughout the book that it was always present in the landscape of slavery.⁴¹ Resistance was common and interwoven into the fabric of the institution. For example, enslaved people had to have a written ticket for permission to be out in public every time they ventured off the property of their owners. Nonetheless, they would continue in everyday resistance to overcome these restrictions.⁴²

In their own way slaves could still spread the word of potential acts of resistance, without detection from their owners. Sampson and Harry, the “ring leaders” of the group that Quash was a part of, were owned by two different people in the community.⁴³ This shows that there were at least three different areas that heard the news of the attempt to run away; Sampson, Harry, and Quash’s places of bondage. Rumors of resistance spread across the slave community and shows that there was an effective and active network of enslaved voices. Quash was able to hear the rumors of the attempted escape and took a chance to be a part of it.

Running away, the particular form of resistance that Quash chose, was commonplace in colonial South Carolina. In almost every issue of the *South Carolina Gazette*, a runaway slave advertisement is printed and shows the frequent flights of slaves. From the very beginning of the colony, slaves ran away from their owners seeking freedom, and colonist responded by passing laws to deter these actions. In 1683, the colony passed its first act to prevent runaways and continued to pass similar laws in attempt to solve a seemingly insurmountable problem and also shows that the laws were not being obeyed by whites. For a first attempt at escape, law required slaves to be publicly and severely whipped, not exceeding forty lashes. The second time a slave

⁴¹ Morgan, xxii.

⁴² McCord, *Statutes*, 399.

⁴³ SCG, January 10, 1743.

would have an “R” branded on their right cheek. For the third attempt, a slave was beaten, not exceeding forty lashes, and their ear cut off. The fourth attempt’s punishment was gender specific. If a female ran away for the fourth time, she would be beaten, branded with an “R” on her left cheek and have her left ear cut off. If a male slave ran away for the fourth time he would be castrated and if he should die during this process the owner would be compensated by the public treasury for their “loss”.⁴⁴ These are only two laws that were written during the colonial period in South Carolina to prevent runaways, but this problem occupied most whites’ minds because they wanted to keep their valued property under a tight grip.

The runaway laws and the numerous “Negro Acts” passed during the colonial era reveal the insecurities of whites. Whites passed various statutes to keep slaves under control and help bolster whites’ power. Quash and other slaves like him posed a threat to white authority and it scared whites into taking legal measures to keep them under control. Slaves were not allowed to gather in large numbers, strike a white person, or carry firearms. There was even one act that dictated slaves to wear cheap cloth because some whites believed that “many of the slaves in this province wear clothes much above the condition of slaves” and needed to be remedied to signify slaves’ perceived lowly status in society.⁴⁵ They would have to wear “Negro Cloth” which was a course linen and would indicate that the slave was of a lower social class to whites and free Blacks.⁴⁶ The fact that clothes were used to keep slaves in a subservient role shows how insecure

⁴⁴ McCord, *Statutes*, 360. These laws were meant to hold slave owners accountable for punishing their slaves. If they did not punish the slaves and someone found out about them, they could be turned into the local authorities and be made to pay a fine. This is significant because it shows that some slave owners did not want to punish their slaves, which adds another dynamic to the owner-slave relationship.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* For no large groups see For striking a white person in 1722 see 377, and 405 for 1735 reinstating of the law. For firearms see 345, and there were many more laws passed stating slaves should not be in possession of firearms. For clothes see 396.

⁴⁶ This law wasn’t strictly enforced and later in 1744 a law was passed to continue the use of Negro cloth because whites continued to complain that slaves were dressing above their station. This shows that some whites were letting their slaves dress in finer clothing and disregarded the law.

white owners were in their power. Indeed, South Carolina colonists were aware of their limits as so-called masters and depicts a very different image of the all-powerful master and the obedient slave. These laws show that there was a power struggle between master and slave and that the power was not always simply with the owner. It was something that had to be fought over and won and whites took legal action to assert their supposed dominance in society.

In contrast, colonial legislation reveals the courage and the rebellious nature of enslaved people. The fact that the run-away laws dictate punishment for multiple attempts show that incidents like this were frequent and serial. Enslaved people often “stole” themselves, even though they were not guaranteed to make it very far. Reading these laws against the grain shows that resistant was frequent and that enslaved people’s actions that were a threat to white’s power. It also shows that enslaved people were fleeing places of violence and cruelty and negates the paternalistic relationship between owners and the enslaved. Enslaved people were choosing to risk death if they failed in their attempt to run away, but it was worth it if the possibility of a better life presented itself. The actions of enslaved people mattered, and in few places is this clearer than the statutory law of slavery.

If a slave like Quash ran away, owners took measures to recapture them. Runaway slaves’ ads would be posted in the *Gazette* describing their skin color, their dress, and any other significant details that could render them conspicuous.⁴⁷ For example, Johnathan Scott described his runaway slave named Casar by stating “he is this Country born, about 28 Years of Age, and

⁴⁷ I found it interesting how they would describe the skin tone and origin of the slaves in these advertisements. Slave owners would often list the slave’s African origin. This shows that there was still a distinction between locally-born slaves and slaves who were African born. This could have been included to note if the slave could understand English or not. Also, some scholars note that South Carolinians believed that African-born slaves were more rebellious than local born slaves.

is a tall well set lusty Fellow, near 6 Feet high, he has a fresh Cut in his Left Hand between the fore Finger and Thumb and has on when he went away a brown Negro Cloth Jacket and Breeches.”⁴⁸ This highly detailed description made it difficult for Casar to stay hidden in society and also shows the attention to detail that masters would pay in these description to get back their “property.” Quash never appeared in the *Gazette*, so his personal appearance is not known. Eliza Lucas probably did not have time to put the advertisement in the *Gazette* because Quash was found soon after he ran away. Nonetheless, these advertisements connect with Quash’s story because they highlight how often enslaved people, no matter their skill set or social status, ran away. Quash’s absence from the advertisements also accounts for cases of unreported runaways and gives room for more runaway attempts than are mentioned in the *Gazette*.

Another aspect that the runaway advertisements reveal is the fury that slaves were able to evoke in their owners and how effective this form of resistance was in influencing the minds and actions of owners and society. Rebecca Massey advertised in early February of 1739 about the runaway of her “young mustee wench” named Ruth and that she had been gone ten weeks. Massey wrote that Ruth “speaks good English” and that she was “born in the said town (Charleston)” and was of “middle stature, and her upper teeth are a little rotten.” Massey advised anyone who found her to “give her a good 50 lashes” and then return the said slave.⁴⁹ Massey was so infuriated that she wanted Ruth beaten before being returned and then would probably beat Ruth again once she reached home. The fury that Massey felt also shows that a female owner could be just as ruthless as any male owner. Quash and Ruth both had female owners and should not be seen as lucky to have an owner of the “weaker” sex. Eliza Lucas and Rebecca

⁴⁸ SCG, March 28, 1743.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Feb.1, 1739.

Massey could inflict any measure of violence that they wanted because in the eyes of the law slaves were their property and could be dealt with how they liked.

Quash and other slaves that “stole themselves” through running away not only gained their freedom for a while but took away the “property” of their owners and the labor that they provided. Every day that a slave was missing was a day that the owner lost valuable work in their plantations and further built up their frustration and anger of their missing slave. Quash was stealing himself and his labor back from Eliza Lucas. He was taking charge of his life and taking a chance on freedom by leaving his place of captivity where, although he was a valuable worker, he was not given the freedom to control any aspect of his life. In running away, he was restoring power to himself and taking it back from the Lucas family. Slave advertisements reveal that ultimately power did not lie fully with an owner.

The destination of runaway slaves in the colonial era proves that slaves were conscious of legal norms as well as geopolitics. Fugitive slaves would head south to Spanish Florida, not north as in the later Antebellum era. This was due to the Spanish edict of 1693 that declared all slaves who fled to Florida and converted to Catholicism would be granted their freedom. Many of the runaway slave advertisements note that slaves were bound for St. Augustine, and Eliza Lucas confirmed that was Quash’s destination.⁵⁰ This is a significant trend among runaway slaves and was the same case in the famous Stono Rebellion of 1739. Slaves’ knowledge of the Spanish edict shows that enslaved people were aware of legal doctrine of European powers and could spread the word to others in the area, so they could use it to their advantage.

⁵⁰ Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, 7 January 1743, DE.

Enslaved men and women were also aware of the colonial statutes white owners passed to control their movements. Indeed, Wood points out that a 1714 statute that transported slaves out of the province instead of executing them for capital crimes (murder excepted) had to be repealed in 1717. The 1714 statute changed the execution punishment because it was becoming a financial burden on the community to pay the price to execute the slaves. The 1714 statute was repealed later in 1717 because it “has encouraged negroes and other slaves to commit great numbers of robberies, burglaries, and other felonies, well knowing they were to suffer no other punishment for their crimes, but transportation.”⁵¹ When Wood describes this episode, he emphasizes the changing cost of who would pay for the execution of the slaves in the community.⁵² However, this episode also reveals that enslaved people were aware of the law, and they used this knowledge to manipulate white society. The 1714 statute was repealed because of the direct actions of enslaved people. This exhibits that power in slavery was never absolute; it fell along a continuum of unfreedom and freedom. Quash and countless other enslaved people used their legal savvy to aid them in their resistance. Sometimes this step was not always successful, but it was fueled by their willingness and courage to fight back against their oppressors.

Soon after Quash, Sampson, Harry, and the other enslaved people escaped they were captured, and they were subsequently put on trial in January of 1743. Their swift capture might have been from a careless flight or resulted from higher surveillance by white patrols in January during the hiring season.⁵³ The trial was briefly mentioned in the *South Carolina Gazette*'s issue

⁵¹ McCord, *Statutes*, 370.

⁵² Wood, 279-280.

⁵³ Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 26.

on January 10, and it revealed interesting facts surrounding the incident. It was made clear that the proceedings were directed under the “Negro Act”, referring to the Act of 1740 that was passed in the aftermath of the Stono Rebellion. The 1740 act was reissued in 1743 to continue its existence and enforcement in society and to keep white’s anxieties of slave rebellion and resistance under control.⁵⁴ The ringleaders, Sampson, and Harry were convicted of “enticing” slaves to run from the area according to the 1740 slave acts.⁵⁵ Sampson was hung, and Harry was whipped and “pickled”. Pickled was the practice of pouring vinegar or salt water on the open wounds created by the whip. This was done upon three days on the square of Charleston for the public to witness. These public displays of brutality were used to comfort the anxieties of whites that a rebellious slave was punished and to deter future rebellion. Quash, Sampson, Harry, and the others ran away in the post-Stono Rebellion world, a world in which slave law further limited their freedoms.⁵⁶

In contrast to Sampson and Harry, Quash and several other slaves proved themselves innocent in the runaway scheme. Eliza Lucas was present at the trial and mentioned it to her father in a letter but did not seem to be worried or disturbed at Quash’s actions. Perhaps she really thought him innocent and thought he had just slipped away for a while to return later. She writes of the trial with no disdain or derision for Quash’s behavior and was probably just happy to have him returned to Wappoo to continue his work with the indigo. For his absence, he may have been beaten by the overseers or Lucas herself, but there is no mention of it in her letters.

⁵⁴ McCord, *Statutes*, 419. The 1740 code further shows that slaves were able to influence the legal scope of society because these acts were created as a direct result of slave resistance. Whites were so frightened by the combined efforts of the slaves in the Stono Rebellion that they passed the 1740 acts to ensure that the situation did not happen again. So, Quash and the others were tried with these acts in mind and shaped the outcome of the trial.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁵⁶ Surprisingly, slave law also held whites accountable for better treatment of their slaves in order to prevent more rebellion.

She just seemed happy to have him back and working for her. If Quash had been convicted and sentenced to death, Lucas would only have received two hundred pounds for him in return. Quash was worth far more to his mistress alive than dead, and two hundred pound was a significantly low price for a slave of his skill set.⁵⁷ Thus, Quash was returned to the plantation with his mistress to continue his work.

Road to Freedom

Quash's behavior did not seem to lower his status in the eyes of his mistress, and this shows how valuable Quash was to Lucas. Eliza kept him, even though he was a flight risk. Many owners would have sold Quash to be rid of him and to further punish him. However, Eliza kept him to use his skills for her benefit. Quash was eventually given to Eliza Lucas as a gift in her marriage contract by George Lucas.⁵⁸ As purported property of Eliza and Charles Pinckney he continued to prove himself to be a valuable worker. Quash was given the entire project of woodworking in the newlywed's household in downtown Charleston. Charles Pinckney wrote him detailed letters of instruction for the house and figures for Quash to follow.⁵⁹ This shows first that he was a literate slave and second, that Charles Pinckney had confidence in his abilities. Quash was chosen over a white artisan to do the intricate works and design on the home to impress all of Charleston society. The letters also indicate that Quash was trusted to work on the project without direct supervision from the Pickneys. Quash was also paid for his work on the house, which further shows that he was a valued worker.

⁵⁷ Glover, 43.

⁵⁸ Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Marriage Settlement, May 1744, DE.

⁵⁹ Feeser, 105-106.

In 1746 Quash took a spiritual step to freedom when he was baptized and changed his name to John Williams.⁶⁰ He made the step to become “washed in the blood of Jesus” and be reborn as a man of God. Quash’s baptism occurred during the period known as the first Great Awakening in which the spread of evangelism took hold of the American Colonies based on the Methodist teachings of Charles Wesley and others. Evangelism emphasized the individual and a personal religious experience with God.⁶¹ Thus, it gave people personal autonomy within a religious setting and brought about further emphasis on personal freedoms and authority. Quash, now John Williams, probably felt a sense of spiritual freedom that he wanted to be reflected legally in his life. This was the problem that converting enslaved people posed in white society. Enslaved people converting to Christianity had become an awkward situation for white owners because their slaves thought their freedom was guaranteed as a brother or sister in Christ. This expectation of freedom as a result of conversion was a reason that during the eighteenth-century slave owners did not generally promote converting their slaves to Christianity. As a result of long-standing philosophical and religious proscriptions against enslaving fellow Christians, many believed that enslaved Africans, who were not Christians, could be rightfully kept in bondage.⁶² Once enslaved people converted, it posed a moral qualm for some owners who associated Christianity with freedom. In contrast, some owners used parts of the Bible to preach obedience to their slaves and to justify their actions as slaves’ owners. Christian slave owners often referred to Ephesians 6:5-7, that begins with “Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto

⁶⁰ Ibid., 107.

⁶¹ Robert Elder, *The Sacred Mirror: Evangelism, Honor, and Identity in the Deep South, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 5-7.

⁶² Morris, 8.

Christ...”⁶³ With verses like this one slave owners could justify owning slaves and hypocritically not mention or think too long on passages in which God freed his own people. The reactions of enslaved people and owners to conversion differed, and like many aspects of the slave system, it all depended on the personal nature of the owners and enslaved person. However, this phenomenon shows that enslaved people continued to influence shifting legal norms and practices. Their influence was in a spiritual sense and for some slave owners it could have been a reason for them to feel unjustified in their institution.

Perhaps the newly baptized John Williams took advantage of his owners’ religious principles to gain more freedom in his situation and bargain for his manumission. Eliza Lucas Pinckney was a very dedicated Christian woman, and it would be feasible that Williams could use Christianity to bargain for his freedom and change the landscape of society. Whether Williams relied upon his conversion to assert his claims to freedom or not, he was eventually freed. Indeed, Charles Pinckney formally manumitted John Williams in May of 1750, just four months after Pinckney had bought him outright. This short time frame between full ownership and manumission is curious for Charles’ behavior because it was a relatively short period between these two events. Perhaps Pinckney chose to buy Williams outright so he could eventually free him. After all, Williams was a skilled slave that the Pinckney family valued, and he probably used the good graces of the family and his position as a Christian Brother to claim his freedom. Perhaps Charles Pinckney was persuaded by Williams or even his own conscience to manumit him. The fact that Williams was manumitted is a remarkable occurrence for the closed system of South Carolina, where slaves were not often manumitted by their owners. Most

⁶³ Noel Rae, *The Great Stain: Witnessing American Slavery* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2018), 254-257.

often, if they were manumitted it was upon the death of their owners in a will. Quash's owners decided to free him well before they faced their death beds and had many more years to live.

The legal process of manumission in South Carolina was not prohibited, but there were legal barriers that were in place to make the process a strain to slaves and owners alike. South Carolina required owners to register freed slaves with the state and the 1740 slave codes strengthened the requirements to document the free status of individuals.⁶⁴ Despite these restrictions, Pinckney freed Williams in May of 1750. Williams's manumission papers list the history of his ownership as well as Pinckney's formal release of his ownership claim. The manumission document does not state if Williams contributed financially to his freedom or not, but this is certainly possible. Many artisan slaves were able to save money from extra jobs and put these funds towards buying their freedom from their owners. So perhaps Williams did this.⁶⁵ The manumission document was signed and witnessed by Eliza Lucas along with Thomas Burrington and Ann Pinckney.⁶⁶ Williams would need a copy of his freedom paper to always carry with him or he could face re-enslavement. If a slave was off the property of their owner, they always had to carry a ticket with them or be apprehended. A statute from 1740 stated that if any black person was caught wondering the roads at night without a pass and resisted a white person they could lawfully be executed.⁶⁷ Thus, it was important for Williams to have some documentation on his person to declare him a free man and not be re-enslaved or murdered.

⁶⁴ Emily Blanck, "The Legal Emancipations of Leander and Caesar: Manumission and the Law in Revolutionary South Carolina and Massachusetts." *Slavery & Abolition* 28 (2007): 240-241.

⁶⁵ Blanck also notes the risky nature of slave's self-purchasing their freedom because South Carolina's laws denied slaves rights to own property and therefore have money of their own. So, slaves could be paying their masters for their freedom and the owner turn around and deny them their wish and keep the money that was paid. Blanck notes that this resulted in many slaves using a third party to help keep the slave's money safe.

⁶⁶ Manumission, John (Quash) Williams, 12 May 1750, DE.

⁶⁷ McCord, *Statutes*, 399.

With his manumission papers signed and all the legal requirements met, John Williams was now a free man, and with his freedom he presumably could be the master of his own fate. However, in a society where slavery was race-based, he found himself in the conflicting role as a Black man, yet a free person. Historian Warren Eugene Milteer notes the precarious situation that free people of color found themselves, in which they were “both privileged and victimized, both celebrated and despised.”⁶⁸ Therefore, free people had to meticulously navigate a society in which Black skin implied slavery. The population of free people of color rose during the colonial period and their presences in the British colonies mostly resulted in children who were born to a white female that was a former indentured servant that had sexual relations with an enslaved man. Manumission also played a role in the rise of free people of color in the South and was even more pronounced in the era of the American Revolution. Thus, Quash was a part of the growing population of free people of color in the South, especially the large population in Charleston, and he and others created a place in society that was distinct from their enslaved and white counterparts.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Warren Eugene Milteer, *Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of Color in the South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

One month after being a free man, John Williams posted in the *Gazette* advertising his skills to make a living by his trade.⁷⁰

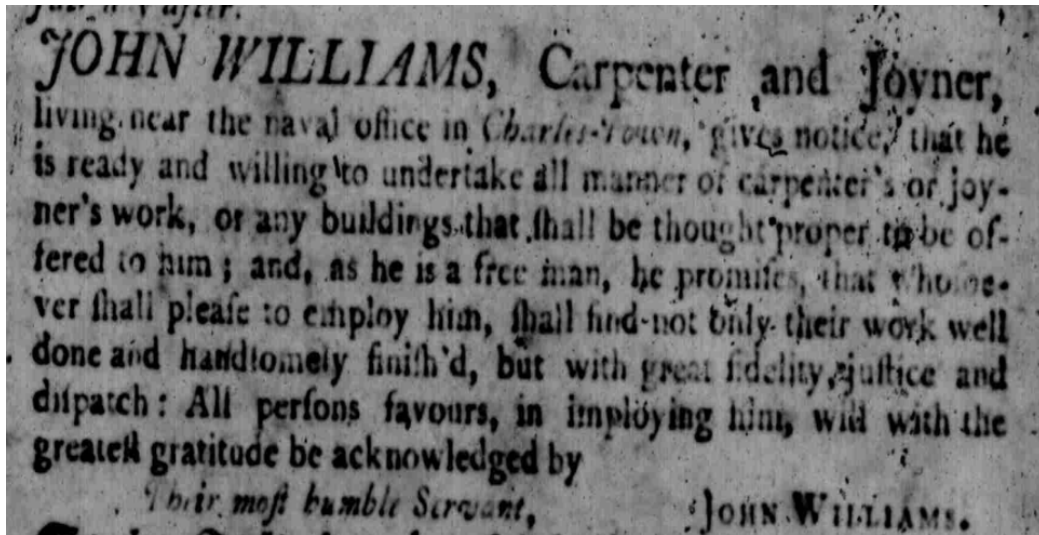


Figure 3 June 5, 1750 *Gazette* advertisement

His presence in Charleston over the next decade shows that he was able to stay in the province without persecution even though there were statutes from 1712 and later in 1735 that required any free black to leave within six months of manumission. These laws, like many laws regarding household matters, were not strictly enforced, which allowed Williams to stay in the area and prosper. Indeed, throughout the America colonies, laws restricting the activities of free Black people did not completely stop their attempts to improve themselves economically.⁷¹ Some free people were more fortunate than others and no two stories were alike for this community, but some were able to cross barriers and have a successful life in freedom. John Williams was among this group of small business owners and land holders, and his story illustrates that it was possible for a Black man to thrive in colonial America. During the next thirteen years that Williams spent in the area he did well for himself and in the early years of his freedom he

⁷⁰ SCG, June 4, 1750.

⁷¹ Blanck, 241. Milteer, 14.

received help from white men of the Charleston community. Andrea Feeser notes that Reverend Alexander Garden, who baptized Williams, bought two lots from Charles Pinckney for Williams to hold in a trust for his daughters.⁷² She does not explain clearly why Williams did not buy the property for himself. Maybe because it was the first year of Williams's freedom, he did not have the funds to buy the property by himself and needed help from the reverend to do so. It also could have been from strict laws that could threaten a free Black person's ownership of land. However, the fact that the Reverend bought the land on William's behalf shows that he was able to gain the confidence and admiration from another white man in this strict racial society. This adds to the overall character of Williams and further shows that slaves and former slaves had influence in society. He was in the good graces of not only his previous owners, but also the Reverend. Free people of color's interactions with white society were important to their success and could advance their economic prosperity. They "found ways to navigate the barriers of racial categorization, wealth inequality, and gender norms to contribute to their communities and work together with their neighbors." Quash and other free people of color were able to gain respect of their white counterparts, and some were even left in the wills of their white friends showing that strong ties were being made across racial lines. Spiritual ties were also formed when free people joined churches and further created an interracial bond in the community to help bolster their pursuits. Free people of color recognized that churches were a place of power and the need to be welcomed there would signify a stronger standing within their own community.⁷³ Therefore John Williams used his social connections to prominent whites and his skills as a carpenter, to secure land and keep an eye looking to the future for the financial security of himself and his family.

⁷² Feeser, 107.

⁷³ Milteer, 34-35.

With the funds from his carpentry skills, John Williams was also able to buy the freedom of his two daughters, who were enslaved by another family in the Charleston area. In my early research nothing ever indicated that Quash had children or a family. Eliza Lucas or Charles Pinckney never mentioned any of his offspring or hinted at him being a father. However, Andrea Feeser discovered that he did have at least two daughters, Mary and Sabina, and that he was able to buy them from Joseph Pickering in 1751. She notes that the two girls were listed as the daughters of an enslaved woman named Molly, who was also owned by Pickering.⁷⁴ Feeser does not state that Molly was the wife of Williams or if there was a romantic connection there. It makes me wonder why he did not try and free Molly if she was the mother of his children. Maybe, she was a favorite of Pickering, and he would not part with her, or perhaps Williams did not wish to free her. Or maybe her price was too steep for him to pay. There are many unanswered questions about his family life, and some may never be answered. However, this separation of him and his children shows the too often trend of separating a family within slavery. They did not have the freedom to be together or have hopes of being united while they were all enslaved. Only in freedom was Williams able to reunite himself with his children and take the lead as the head of the family.

John Williams successfully navigated colonial society as a free Black man until August 1763, when he left South Carolina because of “some discouragement he has lately met with”⁷⁵ His last advertisement in the *Gazette* notes that he was selling his property and planned to leave the province by December. The advertisement is a testament to his overall economic success. Williams was selling the two lots on Ellery Street, an additional 400 acres lot and another 200-

⁷⁴ Feeser, 107, 134-135.

⁷⁵ *SCG*, August 10, 1763.

acre lot.⁷⁶ This shows that he was able to generate a good amount of wealth within thirteen years of freedom. He was a landowner of various tracts of land when there were some whites who did not own land themselves. Also, some records indicate that he might have been slave owner himself and if so would make him a very rich man indeed.⁷⁷ This would have made Williams exceptional by the standards of the time, as slave ownership was a marker of wealth and status.

It is unclear why Williams ultimately left South Carolina, but it was significant enough for him to sell his plots of land and lose the clientele he had acquired over the years. Possibly his wealth and prosperity opened him up to persecution by anxious whites. As the eighteenth-century progressed, race-based restrictions in colonial society became more severe as a growing Black majority fueled white anxiety. By the 1770s it had become customary for South Carolina Governors and elite white men to pit Native Americans and enslaved and free Black people against one another, so they would not combine forces and destroy white's power in society. In 1758 South Carolina Governor Glen told his successor William Henry Lyttleton, "it has always [sic] been the policy of this gover[nmen]t to creat [sic] an aversion in them [Indians] to Negroes."⁷⁸ With the increasing anxieties of whites about Black insurrection, perhaps a white Charleston "gentleman" did not like the fact that Williams was able to achieve so much and thought he was getting as they say too "big for his britches". Whites in South Carolina had been passing legislation to make enslaved and free Black people more dependent on their white owners and counterparts and Williams's prosperity could have left whites feeling uneasy.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Feeser, 107.

⁷⁸ William R. Ryan, *The World of Thomas Jeremiah: Charles Town on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 116-117.

⁷⁹ McCord, *Statutes*, 413. These are only from the 1740s Negro Act and have been discussed previously in this chapter with regards to the work of skilled laborers.

Although we cannot know why Williams decided to sell out and leave South Carolina, one contemporary example can help us understand the potential dangers for wealthy free Black men in colonial South Carolina. Like Williams, Thomas Jeremiah was a free Black man who was a skilled tradesman. A harbor pilot, fisherman, firefighter, and slave owner, Jeremiah was accused of plotting to help the British Navy invade Charleston harbor, burn the city of Charleston to the ground, and enact a slave rebellion. His case, which was tried in 1775, sent South Carolina society into a frenzy and was even discussed on the floor of British Parliament. Jeremiah was an upstanding character and many Charlestonians admired him for his help in firefighting. Colonial Governors had even stepped in on his behalf in past brushes with the law. However, the threat of Jeremiah using his skills as a harbor pilot to help the British Navy was too much for Whiggish Patriots to contend with and they found him guilty in a trial without a jury.⁸⁰ This was due to the fact that under the Negro Act of 1740, any free or enslaved Black person accused of inciting a slave rebellion were to be tried without a jury. Jeremiah was ultimately hung and his body was burnt on August 18, 1775.⁸¹ Thomas Jeremiah posed a threat to the Patriot cause because of his skills and status in society and was murdered under what the Massachusetts Governor described as Patriot tyranny. Henry Laurens, president of the Committee of safety and the Provincial Congress, contended that Jerry was “was a forward fellow, puffed up by prosperity, ruined by Luxury & debauchery & grown to amazing pitch of vanity & ambition.”⁸² Laurens was one of the wealthiest men in South Carolina and had made his fortune directly off the slave trade. His statement shows the double standard that free Blacks

⁸⁰ Ryan, 157, 7, 19.

⁸¹ J. William Harris, *The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah: A Free Black Man's Encounter with Liberty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 128.

⁸² Ryan, 157.

faced in South Carolina. If free Black man such as John Williams or Thomas Jeremiah became too successful, the consequences could be deadly.

Therefore, Williams took the threat seriously and prepared to pack up his life of freedom that he had built in the Charleston community the past thirteen years. After posting in the *Gazette*, Williams disappears from historical record. He did not leave a trail to where he was going and there is no way to account for his movements afterward. His time in Charleston, his place of birth and up bringing, had come to an end. Perhaps he found prosperity in another colony and was able to live out the rest of his days in comfortable wealth. Regardless of his fate, Quash lived a life of unsatisfied half freedoms that free people of color faced in a society that viewed them as “slaves without masters” because of their Black skin.⁸³ However, Quash and others like him strove to carve out a semblance of freedom and autonomy in the land that they had been forced into and now called home.

Conclusion

Quash’s life shows one perspective of the experiences of slavery and freedom in colonial South Carolina. While his story is unique, it nonetheless provides insight into the lives of enslaved people that encountered than same life experiences as he did. Quash showed that enslaved people were a dynamic part of society, and that they were relevant to every part of South Carolina. Enslaved people affected the social aspects of the colony such as the competition skilled slaves posed in the business market, the anxious thoughts of slave owners in dealing with slave resistance and the moral qualms posed in the conversion to Christianity. Quash’s life also shows the important role that enslaved people played in contributing to the wealth of the colony with his work in the indigo process. Without his and the other enslaved people’s contribution on

⁸³ Milteer, 11.

Wappoo, Garden Hill and Waccamaw plantations, the indigo crop would never have been as successful. His life also demonstrates that resistance among slaves and free people of color affected the legal codes of the colony in which whites passed laws to assuage their anxieties by restricting enslaved movements. Both enslaved and free Black people's actions and reactions shaped the course of the colony legally and socially. The influences that Black people had on South Carolina reveals a more complex view of their station in society and restores their agency that has been neglected in the past. Quash's life can lay the foundation to a deeper look into the lives of enslaved people during the eighteenth century and further call for more studies of this nature to be done. By piecing fragments of enslaved people lives brings them to light and can end their silence.

Conclusion

The lives of Ann Drayton, Eliza Lucas, and Quash show that women as well as enslaved and free Black people played a role in the colony's evolution while showcasing the complex and interconnected world of colonial America. In a world that held white men at the top of the social hierarchy, their lives show that men relied on the cooperation, support, and knowledge of women and Black people. Drayton and Lucas prove that females had autonomy and occupied an important role in the public sphere. Women, most especially widows, made business deals, bought and sold land, and advertised in local newspapers like the *Gazette* to promote their business and rent their properties. They quarreled with men over past business deals or property disputes. Drayton and Lucas created substantial business ties with prominent men in society and established a strong and respected business identities. People in the Lowcountry community saw Drayton and Lucas as trustworthy businesspeople. Individuals asked Drayton for loans to help them get by. Neighbors and friends tasked Lucas with drawing up legal documents because her intelligence and sharp wit were known in the community despite her young age. Indeed, Lucas even had a wealthy widow, who she never names, pestering her to draw up a marriage settlement, but Lucas said it was "out of my depth" and continually politely refused the lady.¹ This goes to show that Lucas's legal capabilities had circulated in the community; even wealthy widows thought it appropriate to turn to her for help in transacting marriage settlements to

¹ *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry: Digital Edition*, ed. Constance B. Schulz, https://rotunda-upress-virginia.edu/libproxy.clemson.edu/PinckneyHorry/?_gl=1*12ahtw4*_ga*NDgwMDIyNDM1LjE2NDk0MjI5MzE.*_ga_89MNNJWMNQ*MTY0OTk1NTIxMy4yLjEuMTY0OTk1ODI2Ni4w Eliza Lucas Pinkney to Mary Bartlett, (1742).

protect their property from their future spouses. The public networks and business transactions that Drayton and Lucas achieved are only two instances of females operating successfully in the public sphere. Their efforts were a bridge between two generations of male family members and without their efforts, their family's legacy would not have been secured. With continued research into the intimate daily lives of females, scholars are sure to uncover more instances of women's importance in colonial South Carolina.

Quash's life proves that enslaved and free Black people influenced their society both legally and socially through their intelligence of agriculture practices, their successful capabilities in "skilled labor", and their courageous acts of resistance. Quash's work as a skilled carpenter opened up a world of possibilities for him and other skilled slaves. For example, Wood found that enslaved people were able to make extra money from their skilled labor, invest it, and upset the Charleston market.² As showcased in the indigo experiments Black agricultural know-how could mean the difference between a successful and ruined crop. White planters relied on enslaved agricultural knowledge and prove that there were significant instances where non-white males acted in important ways. Enslaved people's contributions should be recognized alongside their white counterparts, to place them in their rightful place of significance and influence. These are only a few findings that highlight Black intelligence and influence in the business market and with further research there can be more stories brought to light to bring agency to early Black Americans.

The life of Quash also exhibits the everyday existence of slave resistance through his run away attempt in the winter of 1743. This connects him with the grander narrative of slave

² Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), 210-211. Skilled enslaved people had social networks among themselves and could upset the entire Charleston market by selling rice and corn in the countryside that would affect the prices in the city.

resistance, and shows how enslaved people acted to regain power and autonomy in their lives. Their actions sent ripple effects in society and affected laws that were passed and controlled the minds of white society. The slave codes show the ever-increasing anxieties of the whites over the Black majority in South Carolina and how restrictions on enslaved and free Black people increased as the century progressed. Quash's story also shows that despite the increased restrictions of the laws enslaved people still chose to risk resistance to have seek better circumstances. Perhaps more importantly, it reveals that even if an enslaved person had rebelled against his owners he could be freed. This is what is so extraordinary about Quash/John Williams story. He rebelled against Eliza Lucas when he ran away from her. Nonetheless, she allowed her husband to free him and signed his documents as a witness. How was he able to make such a dramatic change? How did he appeal to the Pinckney's for his freedom? Did they bring it up on their own out of their affection for him like other owners? Or was it for other reasons? Whatever the reason for his manumission, in freedom Quash continued to impress white society with his skills and his dedication to Christianity. Williams had found a good position in society to make a life for himself and his children, and his story shows that people of color could play a significant role in society. He might have continued this; had he not been forced out of town due to unknown threats. His leave-taking reminds us that, despite his exceptional skills and relative prosperity, Black men remained vulnerable in a slave society like colonial South Carolina.

Drayton, Lucas and Quash had to find a balance to their lives, so as to not upset society for pushing their bounds too far. Even though Drayton and Lucas were able to successfully operate in the man's world of business there was no major push in society to place women in charge of property and businesses outright. Drayton and Lucas themselves did not make an overall argument for women to have property rights or a presence in the public sphere. They saw

themselves as acting on behalf of the men in their lives, and they used positions of power to increase the prosperity of their family through slavery and colonization. These two women walked a fine line in society to remain in authority without upsetting the social order. Drayton, Lucas and other women operating in the public sphere throughout the eighteenth-century South Carolina benefitted from living in a society in which gender ideology had not conformed to binary categories of differences. Indeed, the patriarchal order was not solidified in South Carolina till the early national period because of “the challenges of settlement, a high mortality rate, a Black majority, Indian Wars, and the Revolution.”³ However, by the late eighteenth-century ideas about gender and racial identity would solidify and become more restrictive for the future generations of women and people of color.⁴ These shifts in society should be examined more closely to understand the changing dynamics and will lead to a better understanding of society throughout the colonial period.

The racial shifts most especially need to be examined to understand the changing thoughts and ideologies about race in colonial America to establish a foundation of race relations in this country. As shown in William R. Ryan’s *The World of Thomas Jeremiah*, the racial scope of the American Revolution has often been overlooked to focus on the high ideals of the cause for independence and freedom for white American men. Prior to and proceeding Quash’s life, white South Carolinians passed legislation to assuage their anxieties over the Black majority in South Carolina to keep them under control, force them into dependency by curbing their economic initiatives, and debase their social identity. These fears of an unbalanced racial population would continue to impact the thoughts and minds of the Drayton, Lucas and countless

³ Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 6.h

⁴ Christine Walker, *Jamaica Ladies: Female Slaveholders and the creation of Britain’s Atlantic Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 304.

other prominent South Carolina families. In fact, British forces used the Black majority to their advantage, and rumors of the Crown inciting slave rebellions against Patriot masters and Cherokee raids pushed even the uncertain men to take up the Patriot cause. Henry Laurens was disheartened by the thought of breaking away from Great Britain, but he believed that he was forced to do so because the Crown had attempted to incite Black slaves against their Whiggish leaning masters and actively instigate the July attacks by the Cherokee Indians. This brings the racial scope of the fight for independence to the forefront and exhibits the significance of a racial study of the past. The continued racial motivating factors in South Carolina's actions shows that Black people in colonial America – and especially wealthy, free Black men like Quash and Thomas Jeremiah -- posed a threat to the colonial social order. With the social environment in this state, Quash found a balance to his life during the thirteen years he operated in freedom before being forced to leave. Quash's story is unique and as Warren Milteer argues "no single racialized experience can encapsulate the range of capabilities, sufferings, triumphs, and challenges of free people of color in the colonial South."⁵ Therefore other stories need to be discovered to create a solid history of free people of color in the colonial South. This will lead to a more inclusive view of the past and bring the racial scope of colonial studies to the mainstream view of American history.

The lives of these two women and one Black man show a more diverse view of the past that show that females and people of color played significant roles in the evolution of the South Carolina colony. It is important to look into the intimate daily lives of individuals within the general culture of the past to fully gauge their influence in society. Their lives show that even when individuals may be unaware, they can be important role models and have influence beyond

⁵ Warren Eugene Milteer, *Beyond Slavery's Shadow: Free People of Color in the South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 24-25.

their own recognition and initial intentions. Through the intimate lives of these three people, it shows the importance of studying communities “to learn how people lived, how they reacted to and treated others, and what their lives meant to them.” Furthermore, local studies show the ambiguities and contradictions of a society and also the “negotiations across lines of race, class, gender, and power” to reveal a broadened view of the past.⁶ Hopefully my findings can be used to understand other colonial societies and will lead to other studies of women and minority groups in the British mainland colonies. Their stories should be told alongside their male counterparts to include a gender specific study of the past. Their stories and contributions mattered and effected the social, political, and economic environment of colonial America.

⁶ Orville Vernon Burton, “Reaping What We Sow: Community and Rural History.” *Agricultural History* 76, no. 4 (2002): 644-645.

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