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The Atlantic Legacies of Zephaniah Kingsley: Benevolence, Bondage, and Proslavery Fictions in the Age of Emancipation

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THE ATLANTIC LEGACIES OF ZEPHANIAH KINGSLEY: BENEVOLENCE, BONDAGE,
AND PROSLAVERY FICTIONS IN THE AGE OF EMANCIPATION

by

MARK J. FLESZAR

Under the Direction of Dr. Jeffrey Robert Young and Dr. Jared C. Poley

ABSTRACT

Nineteenth-century slaveholders of the Atlantic master class had many reasons to be concerned with the future. In a world ushered in with the aid of the Haitian Revolution, slave revolts in these sensitive times seemed to erupt with increased frequency, leaving greater destruction in their wakes. Abolition and a transatlantic antislavery movement appeared as determined crusades to bring an end not only to human suffering in black chattel slavery but to the system's unsurpassed wealth. In this era of sweeping changes a vision of British West Indian society without slaves was first debated and then made a reality on 1 August 1834. In the months and years that followed British Emancipation, there was much to debate in the postslavery situation from what seemed like all quarters. Abolitionists scrutinized production levels and profits. Slave-

owners clamored for compensation for losing property in persons and, on the whole, feared the complete breakdown of Caribbean society that was sure to follow.

In recent years scholars have noted the ways in which the institution of slavery and the practice of slaveholding were quite diverse across time and space. Less attention has been given to variations within slavery's demise and to the master class's attempts to control the postslavery landscapes of the Atlantic world. The following dissertation examines the legacies of Zephaniah Kingsley, a planter from northeast Florida who confronted the Age of Emancipation in the last decade of his life with an ambitious proslavery colonization scheme in 1830s Haiti. Establishing a large plantation there stocked with some of his former slaves, Kingsley conducted his elaborate efforts under benevolent pretenses in order to manipulate public opinion but worried about his own sordid actions in the long march of history. Since his death in 1843, generations continue to be haunted by Kingsley's enigmatic life and the tragedies of his exploits. In studying the ambitious events that occupied his final years, we can better understand the ways in which slaveholders like Kingsley confronted the prospect of emancipation and launched new mechanisms of control.

INDEX WORDS: Atlantic world, Caribbean history, West Indies, Hispaniola, Slavery, Race, Colonization, Emigration

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MARK J. FLESZAR

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

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2013

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Mark Joseph Fleszar
2013

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DEDICATION

For everyone who stuck by me through the thick of it all. In good times and bad, I was fortunate to have been guided always with the help of many lighthouses and their keepers.

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I had imagined many times over the years what I might say in the acknowledgements of my dissertation after living the graduate school life for what feels like an eternity. Now that the time is here at last, I realize that the task seems ill-suited to succinctly thank everyone who helped, supported, or was even just kind to me in my educational pursuits when it mattered. While most of those people will never read this dissertation, it is their collective generosity that made it possible in the first place.

I've managed to collect a lot of information about the life of Zephaniah Kingsley during this process, and wasn't surprised to find several instances that overturn myths of longstanding. But that's for another day. Over the years such research has taken me to many places with many fine people graciously offering their time and assistance. Through a strange and happy set of circumstances I was extremely fortunate to have Jeff Young as a dissertation director at Georgia State University. His brilliant works are both humbling and inspiring. To him I am grateful that he happily accepted the position, even though the circumstances could've been better, and for his valuable comments, suggestions, and support over the years. Now at the University of Pittsburgh, Michele Reid-Vazquez showed an unwavering interest in my scholarship and always had time for my endless ramblings and complaints about this, that, and the other. Her invaluable aid over the years made my research possible, and her encouragement gave me the confidence to go where the project took me. Jared Poley and Rob Baker fulfilled many roles for me during my long stretch at GSU that aren't exactly in their job descriptions. Both of them pushed and prodded me when I needed it, though their services as life coaches were second to none when times were tough. For their fine scholarly expertise, time, and friendship I am indeed a very fortunate recipient.

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INTRODUCTION: THE DISMAL TIDE

Nineteenth-century slaveholders of the Atlantic master class had many reasons to be concerned with the future. In a world ushered in with the aid of the Haitian Revolution, slave revolts in these sensitive times seemed to erupt with increased frequency, leaving greater destruction in their wakes. Abolition and a transatlantic antislavery movement appeared as determined crusades to bring an end to the human suffering of black chattel slavery. In this era of sweeping changes a vision of British West Indian society without slaves was first debated and then made a reality on 1 August 1834. In the months and years that followed British Emancipation, there was much to debate in the postslavery situation from what seemed like all quarters. Abolitionists scrutinized production levels and profits. Slaveowners clamored for compensation for losing property in persons and, on the whole, feared the complete breakdown of Caribbean society that was sure to follow.¹

The events of this Age of Emancipation were closely watched, studied, and debated by slaveholders elsewhere. The lessons of history and precedent here, it was reasoned, might be highly instructive weapons with which to combat similar scenarios. Elite masters throughout the Atlantic world effectively comprised, according to Matthew Pratt Guterl, a singular class bound together in a borderless world with common goals, aspirations, and visions of the future. While most members of the master class naturally sought the security of their property and power, in

¹ Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 460-62; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (New York: Verso, 1988), 454-58; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xxii; W. Emanuel Riviere, "Labour Shortage in the British West Indies after Emancipation," *Journal of Caribbean History* 4 (1972): 5-9.

spite of their commonalities they could and did approach the prospect of slavery's ultimate demise through assorted means.²

Scholars have only recently been much more attuned not only to the sheer diversity of slavery (and the slaveholding experience itself) but to the variations experienced in its demise. As Dale Tomich has argued, "slave labor and its abolition cannot be seen as a linear evolutionary process, but as complex, multiple, and qualitatively different relations with the global processes of accumulation and division of labor."³ These sweeping transformations gave more impetus to contemporary debates about the merits of free versus slave labor as well. Reformers might theorize about the many merits and superiority of Smithian economics from the safety of a far off metropole, but planters fervently argued that such musings were dangerous and bound to have real, lasting consequences for all of West Indian society and beyond. This chasm only widened as the Atlantic community drew different lessons from Britain's so called "mighty experiment," even in the short time after it commenced.⁴

Responses of slaveholding elites outside the British Caribbean might meet what they feared was slavery's inevitable end in a variety of ways. Apathy in general does not seem to have been a quality held by the master class when it concerned the future of their slave property. Events of the last half century all appeared to signal a generalized hostility toward the institution of slavery and its uncivilized and licentious master class. Those who held a bright view of slav-

² Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1; Enrico Dal Lago, "Comparative Slavery," in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, eds. Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 671-72, 676-79.

³ Dale Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 69.

⁴ Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 121-43; Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008),

ery's future were perhaps a numerical few. Southern slavemasters, in the Lower South particularly, gradually warmed to the idea of slavery in more decidedly domestic terms. Masters increasingly spoke of their own slaves as familial dependents and these relations in terms of reciprocal obligations. Paternalism, of course, attempted to bring some semblance of order and calm to southern slaveholding society. Inundated from within and without, it served many slaveholders well enough that they might not only steel themselves to the notion that slavery could ever dissolve, but to inspire them in the process to create new realities in which such phenomena was well within their control.⁵

One such slaveholder who actively anticipated and confronted these challenges was Zephaniah Kingsley (1765-1843) of East Florida. A successful merchant, slave trader, and planter he built an impressive empire of wealth centered on slave labor. Most observers noted his impressive degree of intelligence; he could be quite optimistic, energetic, and otherwise engaging. His qualities were considered to be, on the whole, rather infectious.⁶ But he was also ambitious, ruthless, and cutthroat in business. As a master he ruled his slave kingdom through his own dominating figure and with a studied view of the lessons of bondage and of the fragile human psyche.⁷ In his earlier years he was an imposing figure of great strength and a large pres-

⁵ Lacy Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 526-27; Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 224, 228, 232-33; Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 250-54.

⁶ For example, E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833 to October, 1834*, 3 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1835), 2: 71; Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley*, ed. Daniel W. Stowell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 108-09, 111-12.

⁷ See Zephaniah Kingsley's "A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society, As it Exists in Some Governments, and Colonies in America, and in the United States, Under the Name of Slavery, with its Necessity and Advantages. By an Inhabitant of Florida," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 39-75.

ence. The later years found him frequently embittered and restless, but determined to enforce his will at all costs.

Today Kingsley's life and exploits have been generally limited to the occasional footnote in the realm of southern history, as Daniel L. Fountain rightly asserts.⁸ Traditionally, the planter has been depicted as more of a curiosity within early Florida studies, which remain understudied. Best known for *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society*, his proslavery pamphlet first published in 1828, Zephaniah Kingsley professed to dedicate the work "to the people of Florida, and to political economists throughout the Southern States," but found favor with neither group. Proposing to strengthen the system of southern slavery through altering social habits and exposing what he considered to be foolish racial prejudice, he reasoned that reality made reform necessary and timely. Masters in the Lowcountry were especially vulnerable and grossly outnumbered by their slaves. Threatening the rights of free people of color and alienating them in the process, he believed that southern states created enemies unnecessarily out of potential allies. Such was not the case in many areas of the slaveholding Atlantic, Kingsley argued, where "[they] have found it in their interest universally and decidedly to place themselves in the scale of the whites, or in opposition to the slaves."⁹ "Experiment," he suggests, should be the guiding principle with which to reform slaveholding society.¹⁰

By his own admission, Kingsley reasoned that such ideas were "in contradiction to common practice and the received opinion of nine-tenths of all the slave owners of the United States," but persisted nonetheless by reissuing the pamphlet in four editions between 1828 and

⁸ Daniel L. Fountain, "The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley," *Southern Historian* 17 (1996): 34-44.

⁹ Kingsley, "A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society," in *Balancing Evils Judicially*, ed. Stowell, 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43, 58.

1834.¹¹ Contemporary readers found the work sometimes imaginative but awkwardly compiled. In many places it appears almost crudely packaged of thoughts both various and jumbled. Although clearly learned and large in scope, Kingsley's *Treatise* failed to reach his audience. The core of the pamphlet simply did not resonate for much of his readership in its history, lessons, or remedies.¹²

Kingsley's *Treatise* was meant for an American audience though decidedly a product ideologically borne of the West Indies. Raised in a household built by merchant strategies nearly global in reach, he spent nearly twenty years in the Caribbean amassing a small fortune of his own through mercantile activities and slavetrading before settling in Spanish East Florida in 1803. Arriving in Spanish Florida with extensive connections in the Atlantic trade and some 67,160 pesos (equal in dollars) in money and slave property, Kingsley immediately entered a frontier society as one of its wealthiest residents. From such a position along the Caribbean rimland, he quickly acquired several plantations from the Georgia-Florida border south to St. Augustine and other points in between. Dividing his time between the Atlantic merchant trade, slavetrading ventures, and growing long-staple cotton, citrus, and sugar, Kingsley's Florida holdings alone amounted to several thousand acres of rich agricultural lands tended by hundreds of slave laborers.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹² See "Review. To our Southern Readers," *The Free Enquirer*, 5 November 1828 (New York, NY); William P. DuVal, "Communication. For the Florida Courier. To the Freemen of Florida," *Florida Courier*, 21 April 1831 (Tallahassee, FL); Benjamin Lundy, "The Florida Pamphlet," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, May 1831 (Baltimore, MD); idem., "More of the Florida Pamphlet," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, June 1831; William Jay, *Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1853), 53; William Goodell, *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice: its Distinctive Features Shows by Its Statutes, Judicial Decisions, and Illustrative Facts* (New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), 376.

¹³ Daniel W. Stowell, "Introduction," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 2-3.

For four decades the East Florida transplant built and orchestrated an impressive plantation empire. To do so Kingsley proceeded carefully, but confidently, to seize every available advantage and opportunity. He implemented diverse strategies to better adapt to changing market demands and promote efficiency. His overall behavioral qualities in money matters are decidedly mixed. On the one hand, he sought maximum profit and minimal expense in all ventures. On the other hand, Kingsley was never so foolish as to risk his long term financial prospects or mastery when a situation presented itself.¹⁴

Kingsley was an ardent proslavery paternalist through and through, but much of that reasoning also came from his need for absolute mastery, more efficient slave labor output, and fewer overall expenses. He readily shifted such burdens whenever able. For example, he employed a liberal mixture of reward systems, psychological warfare, and violence to great effect. He was well aware that small gestures or apparent freedoms in theory meant greater enslavement in actuality. These actions bound each bondman more firmly to the plantation grounds, its people, and its master. After toiling in the master's fields, some of Kingsley's slaves were allowed to tend to their own provision plots, family quarters, and other needs. All of this equated to a more stable and efficient workforce who Kingsley relied on for the precise movements of his empire.¹⁵

¹⁴ The voluminous case file for Kingsley's Patriot War claim contains abundant references of his planting strategies at work from several witnesses. See Account No. 88415, Zephaniah Kingsley, Settled Miscellaneous Accounts, Office of the First Auditor, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter NARA). Note that the Patriot War claims were previously held in College Park, Maryland, but were recently transferred.

¹⁵ See his statements in Kingsley, "A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society," and Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," both in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 64-65, 69-72, 74-75, 110. The task system, which was not used for all of his slave force, could be manipulated by the master as a tool for punishment or reward. S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 83-89; Dale Tomich, "Une Petite Guinée: Provision Ground and Plantation in Martinique, 1830-1848," in *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, eds. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 238-40; Mary Turner, "Planter Profits and Slave Rewards," in *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, ed. Roderick A. McDonald (Kingston, Jamaica: Press University of the West Indies, 1996), 232-52.

The kind of wealth and privilege that Kingsley chased for decades required a Herculean effort. He spent years carefully assembling a large holding of slaves, which his contemporaries frequently noted were overwhelmingly young males, many of whom were considered “prime” or highly-skilled, very valuable working hands. This labor force was a diverse lot, many of whom he purchased directly from both coasts of Africa.¹⁶ Others, we now know, were *ladino* or creole-born slaves from South Carolina, New Orleans, and disparate points in the Caribbean. Much less is known about those who lived and died under Kingsley’s long mastery, but his published writings offer a wealth of information on the subject from the point of view of a Caribbean master quite comfortable with evolving theories of dominance and the often fragile human psyche.¹⁷ More is known about the slave women who he took for mistresses and their children, though the sum total of the information is decidedly disappointing. For the most part these individuals rarely appear in Kingsley’s surviving writings outside legal matters, but these women and children clearly occupied privileged roles and likely helped shape his views on identity and race.¹⁸

Despite his initial optimism, Kingsley’s writings are littered with growing anxiety over Florida’s racial and slavery policies. There was good reason for such a perception. By the 1820s he had become much more vocal about what he seemed to regard as threats to his mastery and financial future.¹⁹ The lush Florida locale, initially responsible for his sustained wealth and ad-

¹⁶ Kingsley, “A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 69; Kenneth F. Kiple, *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 108-09.

¹⁷ Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 168-69; Testimony of Francis Richard, Account No. 88415, Zephaniah Kingsley, RG217, NARA. On theories of dominance utilized by planters see Robert Forster, “Three Slaveholders in the Antilles: Saint-Domingue, Martinique and Jamaica,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 36 (2002): 25-28.

¹⁸ See Kingsley’s “Last Will & Testament (1843),” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, particularly 120.

¹⁹ Kingsley, “A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society,” in *Ibid.*, 65.

vantages, betrayed a fiercely contested past. In an Atlantic world already fraught with danger and uncertainty, the region was particularly so.²⁰ Throughout its long history Florida fluctuated between problem and opportunity for many would-be empires. The likes of Spain, Britain, France, and the United States had all attempted to possess it totally. While Spain and Britain, at least for a time, took hold of La Florida, the greatest impact came from the United States.²¹

Invasions in the 1790s and 1810s attempted to finish what fierce economic penetration into Spanish Florida had started. Invading forces of Georgia militia and American troops sent by President James Madison brought an end to East Florida's prosperity by the destruction unleashed during Patriot War. These forces battled Spanish soldiers, militia units, and Seminole warriors throughout the province. Kingsley's plantations were reduced to near rubble and his losses extraordinary. Unbeknownst to planters like Kingsley, the high water mark of Spanish Florida's economy had now come and gone. Other threats loomed as well. After acquiring La Florida from Spain by cession in 1821, American actions in the region loosened a dangerous element when its military mounted a lethal, prolonged war against the region's large native population. These factors meant that success was often fleeting, and many strategies for both financial and racial mastery were not only prudent but indeed critical to one's future successes.²²

Whatever else may or may not be true of Zephaniah Kingsley, his impressive station in Florida society as a part of the Atlantic world's master class was built upon a solid foundation of practicality. By the 1830s he faced the dismal tide posed by several threats he regarded as omi-

²⁰ Nathaniel Millett, "Borderlands in the Atlantic World," *Atlantic Studies* 10 (April 2013): 277-86.

²¹ Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 280-81.

²² J. C. A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 1-51, 87-133; Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers*, 282-309. An excellent account of the instability experienced by Native Americans is in Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

nous and disturbing. His published views on race left him essentially alienated from all sides. Potential rebellion in the region posed very real threats to his property and persons. He feared the prospects of emancipation as most distressing. All told these times convinced Kingsley that the future must be of his own making. If emancipation had only recently begun the era's so called "mighty experiment," he suggested that "motives of necessity and self-preservation" likewise compelled him to undertake "my Colonization experiments, made in the Island of Haiti," which he started in late 1835.²³

Between 1835 and his death in 1843, Zephaniah Kingsley's efforts to create a viable community of black workers in Haiti are utterly unique in the details. They are, moreover, among the least examined and understood part of his biography. Analysis of the complexities involved in such an undertaking was severely hampered in previous years because of lacking primary source material, an inadequate historiographical basis, and difficulty in contextualization. At the most basic level the venture was, however, quite simple. From 1837 until his death Kingsley had sent nearly sixty of his slaves to labor on a plantation operated under his oversight by members of his mixed-race family. Bound to the estate lands under penalty of law for a term of nine years and required to pay for their own purchase prices, the laborers essentially represented that portion of Kingsley's own professed "free labor" experiment. He made larger efforts to attract other willing black emigrants as well. Framed as the work of a philanthropic architect, these schemes were made all the more disturbing in that Kingsley still held a vast amount of slaves in Florida who continued to labor for his benefit.²⁴

²³ Zephaniah Kingsley to the Editor of the *Christian Statesman*, Hayti, 30 June 1838, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 102.

²⁴ Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," in *Ibid.*, 108.

Since the American Founding, the idea of African colonization has primarily focused on the return of slaves and free blacks to the African continent. Such proposals continued well into the American Civil War period, when President Abraham Lincoln debated and rejected the idea as illogical. The popular Back to Africa Movement was later revived by Marcus Garvey in the 1920s. Overall, the prospect of returning to Africa held little appeal for most native born slaves (creoles) and free blacks. The United States, after all, had been the only country they had ever known. Other areas did hold various degrees of appeal under the right circumstances. Scholars have until recently been remarkably slow in tracing several of these destinations chosen by nineteenth-century emigrants. For example, we now know that smaller migrations to Canada, Mexico, and several other Caribbean locations occurred throughout the century, but there were also more substantial waves of emigration to Trinidad and to Haiti in particular.²⁵

A few works on Haitian emigration are instructive of the problems in situating Kingsley's "experiments" to that island locale. Carter G. Woodson's 1918 study entitled *American Negro Migration* noted that blacks were motivated to emigrate because of racial violence and chronic injustice. Only by leaving and separating themselves from such inequities could an idea like Black Nationalism thrive.²⁶ Many years later Floyd J. Miller's *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* traced the roots of this concept found in the migration movements of the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries and explored emigration as a phenomenon in its own right. Miller found that emigration largely failed in the scheme of things, especially to Haiti, but remained a persistent idea particularly for those whom he calls the "totally alienated" and disaffected. This was certainly true for some of the emigrants, but the lot

²⁵ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York, 2006), 243-44, 396n29.

²⁶ Carter G. Woodson, *American Negro Migration* (Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918).

of Kingsley's laborers had little practical choice in the matter. In this sense Miller makes no distinction between willing and forced migrants which complicates his findings. More importantly, the author's work notes only two main periods for Haitian emigration found primarily in the 1820s and 1860s. Based on my own findings this model of Haitian emigration needs to be discarded. This unfortunate oversight overwhelmingly neglects the critical 1830s and 1840s period in which Kingsley's colonization effort took place.²⁷

A recent volume in the same vein, dealing solely with black emigration to Haiti, is Chris Dixon's *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*. Dixon's sophisticated treatment rightly argues that as a phenomenon, emigration was integral to the black experience of the nineteenth-century. Whereas Miller argued that emigrants primarily left in political expression, Dixon insists that the political aspect remains only part of the explanation. Crucial to his argument is the notion that individual advancement helps to explain much of the reason for black emigration to Haiti. The author asserts that the decision to leave was easier for many African Americans because their presence would elevate Haitians in a "civilizing mission" of sorts.²⁸ For Kingsley's forced laborers, survival was clearly the most important overriding factor. Unlike the work of Miller and Dixon, which also neglects the crucial 1830s and 1840s period entirely, I examine in the present work the fate of the common laborer sent to Haiti under Kingsley's scheme during a little documented period. The ways in which they juggled the demands of their own personal freedom with the needs of family, community,

²⁷ Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), x.

²⁸ Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).

and authority in an era of great upheaval in Haiti otherwise challenges much of the prevailing scholarship that has appeared to date.²⁹

The implications of this study herein suggest that for Zephaniah Kingsley the Haitian colony personally represented his solution to the problems posed by the categories of Slavery and Freedom made and remade throughout the Age of Emancipation. In this regard his settlement represented, much like Haiti itself, an unfinished experiment. More to the point he rationed that the polarity between these groupings of Slavery and Freedom was part economic and part moral. Thus Kingsley reasoned late in his life: “The best we can do in this world is to balance evils judiciously.”³⁰ The implications of that philosophy reverberated well beyond the confines of borders and eras. Generations of his own slaves and of those emigrants sent to Hispaniola felt its impact long after Kingsley’s demise. Far from being the successful result of a benevolent architect, the colony was in reality a self-interested scheme that drew few supporters and was ultimately destructive of the lives involved. Some semblance of the hope found within the story, heretofore misinterpreted, is in the remarkable struggle undertaken by the surviving emigrants to flee the original colony and in so doing craft a collectively-told counternarrative outside of the planter’s domination.³¹ Those later efforts, not Kingsley’s initial endeavor, are the real substance of the story.

Given the absence of historical scholarship related to the Haitian settlement itself, it is not altogether surprising that much of what transpired there has been misinterpreted in terms that are strictly positive. Kingsley’s own words about it being a harmonious society and the former

²⁹ See the third chapter of the present dissertation.

³⁰ Kingsley quoted in Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 111.

³¹ An account that otherwise grants the unquestioned benevolence of Kingsley’s Haitian efforts is Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 67-69.

bondmen there laboring blissfully remain essentially unquestioned to date despite longstanding evidence to the contrary. This is particularly surprising given that free blacks and abolitionists discussed Kingsley's settlement but found little evidence to distinguish it from slavery, while slaveholders generally offered no endorsement and much ridicule. Amidst Kingsley's deliberate posturing and vaguely articulated plans for the future of his Haitian schemes, those slaves kept in Florida have been largely separated from subsequent discussions. Over the years this appears to have been part of a larger, evolving narrative that has taken a liberal amount of creative license in portraying Zephaniah Kingsley as a bold and unapologetic thinker, racial progressive, and friend to all black Americans. A sizeable amount of this sanitized story thus seems indicative of the ways that modern society has continued to come to grips with the slavery past.³² In this way Kingsley's thoughts, motives, and ultimate actions seem stripped of their contexts and the unseemly parts discarded in favor of a more romanticized version of history. Aspects of the master class related to power and prestige simply do not resonate much with a public hoping to find some semblance of a "silver lining" in the otherwise typically dismal and destructive story of slavery.³³

The following dissertation seeks to better understand the life of Zephaniah Kingsley and his important legacies from the Age of Emancipation. In the analysis that follows, Kingsley's Haitian efforts transpired much later in the context of his long and interesting life, setting his plan in motion while nearing his seventieth year. Chapter One, "The Conspicuous Mr. Kingsley: A Biographical Sketch, 1765-1843," intends to provide some basic context about Zephaniah

³² Ira Berlin, "Coming to Terms with Slavery in Twenty-First-Century America," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of History*, eds. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-17.

³³ Lois E. Horton, "Avoiding History: Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Uncomfortable Public Conversation on Slavery," in *Ibid.*, 135-49.

Kingsley and, as the title suggests, privileges some of his more public exploits that ultimately led him to undertake his bold and controversial experiment in Haiti.

Chapters Two and Three deal primarily with the black settlement in Haiti from the conceptual stage to realization. “‘My Laborers in Haiti are not Slaves’: Proslavery Fictions and Planter Control in the Age of Emancipation,” looks at the multiple contexts for Zephaniah Kingsley’s proposed settlement in Haiti during a particularly tumultuous era in the Atlantic world. This lengthy chapter examines roughly the last decade of Zephaniah Kingsley’s life that was concerned with his “colonization experiments” during the 1830s and 1840s period. Through an Atlantic lens it traces from start to finish the planter’s efforts to employ diverse strategies to maintain power, wealth, and prestige against increasingly dire circumstances. In his desire to replicate a working plantation scenario in Haiti, he balanced his Florida holdings and reconceptualized Atlantic mastery in a way never before imagined.³⁴

Chapter Three serves as a counterpoint to Zephaniah Kingsley’s overwhelmingly positive portrait of his Haitian settlement and its laborers. Drawn in particular from the accounts of travelers and others visitors to the colony at various points during its existence, “From Florida to Hispaniola: Cabaret as an Atlantic Community” challenges the planter’s version of events. This chapter suggests that the laborers regarded their own circumstances as far from ideal. By demonstrating the hollowness of Kingsley’s overall claims, it follows that the utopic view ascribed to his Haitian efforts should no longer be used to support the fictions of his proslavery narrative that have otherwise endured as a modern folktale of a benevolent architect rescuing his plantation household from the many dangers that threatened his mastery at every turn. A particular strength of this chapter is that it contributes to meager historiographies of particular periods in

³⁴ I am indebted to the insights found in David Lambert, “Afterword: Critical Geographies of Slavery,” *Historical Geography* 39 (2011): 174-181.

works concerning Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Studies of Hispaniola during President Jean Pierre Boyer's rule (1818-1843), for example, have typically attracted much less scholarly attention than others. By addressing an era almost entirely neglected in studies of black emigration to Haiti, it serves to complicate the ways in which the Republic of Haiti fared at a critical intersection of Haitian, Dominican, and Atlantic histories.

Chapter Four traces Zephaniah Kingsley's long evolution from historical figure to historical fiction. It outlines the popular legend of the Kingsley Myth popular today in Florida and the course that the story took to the present day by way of local, state, regional, and national accounts. As such it is at once necessarily part historiographical as well as an exercise in crafting historical memory. The main purpose of this chapter is to outline the strengths and weaknesses in treatments of Kingsley to date and suggests that the popular portrait is itself a historical commodity originally used to entice prospective tourists to visit postbellum Florida's tropical locale. Winter visitors to St. Augustine originally heard about Kingsley as one of many colorful residents of its past. The story was later picked up by the owners of his nearby Fort George Island plantation who struggled mightily to find ways to make the expensive property pay. Fittingly, it was here many years after Kingsley's time that disparate bits of information, gossip, and other storylines converged with mysterious clarity to create a subject that news outlets from all over the country suddenly found worth seeking out. In challenging the history of the various myths used to support this popular portrait of Zephaniah Kingsley, this chapter likewise argues that his complicated and weighty legacies have consistently obscured the very human costs used to build, support, and unknowingly sustain a fictional, proslavery portrait through the present day.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE CONSPICUOUS MR. KINGSLEY: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, 1765-1843

Beneath an unmarked grave in Brooklyn, New York, is the final resting place of a figure whose historical legacy is as complex as it is controversial. A unique voice of the Atlantic world in the Age of Emancipation, Zephaniah Kingsley (1765-1843) was as difficult a person to know in his own day as it is in ours. Best known as a proslavery author whose supposedly antiracial viewpoints made him out of place in his antebellum South, his life and exploits today have gained increased attention in recent years. Much of Kingsley's life remains something of a blank canvas. As such his thoughts and actions have often been viewed through the lens of small fragments of evidence drawn from his few published writings.¹

Understanding Kingsley is made much more difficult for at least two reasons. In the scheme of things we know very little of his long life before he came to Spanish Florida in 1803 and far less than we would hope after that time. It was his prominent role in East Florida society and outspoken views on slavery and race that created much interest in his origins. Floridians, however, had long offered their own take on Kingsley's story, recounting bits of gossip always gleamed, it was said, from supposedly "reliable" sources. Surprisingly, this collective knowledge rarely translated into biography. One short piece that appeared in 1945, for example, stood for generations as the subject's best known interpretation.²

¹ See his published proslavery writings in Daniel W. Stowell, ed. *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press, of Florida, 2000).

² Philip S. May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist (1765-1843)," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 23 (January 1945): 145-59. This was eventually replaced by Stowell, "Introduction," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 1-22.

The biographer's task is always a difficult one. Some historical subjects are no doubt easier to tackle than others.³ Others, such as Zephaniah Kingsley, always seem determined to frustrate their biographers. It is understandable how this is proven to be the case. "Some people hide things which they think other people don't like," Zephaniah Kingsley told Lydia Maria Child in 1842. "I never conceal anything."⁴ Like much of what Kingsley had to say in print, it was something of a riddle or posturing phrase meant to disarm a critic. Throughout much of what material has surfaced in recent years, similar phrases full of a kind of doublespeak or empty assertions and half-truths are all plentiful indeed. Problems with surviving evidence, such as conflicting and outright lies have no doubt contributed to the absence of biography until much more recently. What follows is therefore an updated biographical sketch that seeks to briefly outline the life of Zephaniah Kingsley and to highlight in particular his more deliberate efforts to effect lasting changes in the Atlantic world. In this regard it should be seen as more of a concise companion to my previous effort that offered a full-length narrative account of Kingsley's life that was chronological and altogether straightforward.⁵

Before coming to East Florida in 1803 Kingsley's life and early years yields a bare outline filled with some glaring inconsistencies and open to multiple readings of the surviving evi-

³ Peter Burke, "Overture: The New History: Its Past and its Future," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 12-15; Lloyd E. Ambrosius, "Introduction," in *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft*, ed. Lloyd E. Ambrosius (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), viii-ix; Jo Burr Margadant, "Introduction: Constructing Selves in Historical Perspective," in *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. Jo Burr Margadant (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 9.

⁴ Kingsley quoted in Lydia Maria Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 111.

⁵ Mark J. Fleszar, "The Atlantic Mind: Zephaniah Kingsley, Slavery, and the Politics of Race in the Atlantic World," (MA Thesis, Georgia State University, 2009).

dence.⁶ Minimal entries in the London records of the Society of Friends indicate that Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. was born on 4 December 1765 and his birth registered at the Society of Friends House in Bristol, Gloucester County, England. He was the first son and second child born to Zephaniah and Isabella Kingsley. His father was a Quaker born in England in 1733, and his mother, Isabella Johnston (or Johnstone), in Scotland in 1737.⁷ Zephaniah Kingsley, Sr. was then a linen merchant in Bristol but also rented a small shop “under the Eastgate” in Chester during the fair season. Meager evidence yields some colorful episodes, such as bringing charges against a youth for the “theft of some muslin,” which apparently took more than a year to complete.⁸ His eager pursuit is, however, understandable. The business was not successful, and by 1768 Kingsley Sr. had found himself bankrupt and hounded by his creditors.⁹

In 1770 Zephaniah Kingsley Sr. left Bristol for Charles Town, South Carolina to enter the colonial trade as a merchant.¹⁰ Such a decision made good sense, as David Hancock has argued, because its “pre-existing social and financial connections mattered least” at the entry level, and was alone only a “middling business.” During this period Britain’s North American and West

⁶ Jean B. Stephens, “Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans,” *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History* 15 (1978): 75.

⁷ A listing gives the birth of Zephaniah Kingsley Sr. to Benjamin and Elizabeth Kin[g]sley on 12 November 1733, Spalding and Wainfleet MM, Lincolnshire, England. His birth entry is Zephaniah Kin[g]sley, Film No. 817376, England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975 (Database). Her death certificate lists Isabella Kingsley born in Scotland in 1737, dying 14 December 1814 at age 77 in New York, New York. Death of Isabella Kingsley, Film No. 447544, New York Deaths and Burials, 1795-1952 (Database).

⁸ Examinations 62, 102, 106, 107, Depositions and Examinations, QSE/15 1766, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, Cheshire Record Office, Chester, England; Ian Mitchell, “The Development of Urban Retailing 1700-1815,” in *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600-1800*, ed. Peter Clark (London, UK: Hutchinson & Co., 1984), 268.

⁹ Bankruptcy notices are in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, December 1768, and *London Gazette*, 30 April 1771.

¹⁰ Zephaniah Kingsley Sr., Loyalist Examination Transcripts, South Carolina Volumes from New York Public Library Transcripts of American Loyalist Examinations and Decisions, RW 3169, Volume 52, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia (SCDAH).

Indian colonies received most of the empire's exports.¹¹ Difficult days hounded Charles Town economically, and it found itself at something of a political crossroads. The merchant's arrival was nevertheless timely. The city was on the verge of another economic boom that continued until the revolution offering opportunities for those on the make.¹²

South Carolina's economic and social contexts allowed the elder Kingsley to rise rapidly. He formed various merchant partnerships engaged in the Atlantic trade with contacts based at London, the Caribbean, and at various points throughout the British Empire. He acquired a staggering amount of property as well "on Speculation" during the particularly destructive revolutionary period from 1775 to 1781. This included more than £10,000 sterling in "landed property" alone stretching from Charles Town to Georgia. In all he later reflected that his pursuits made him "a very liberal and handsome Fortune."¹³

Details of the Kingsley family's residence in America are few. Scattered references to Kingsley Sr.'s merchant and other activities typically reveal little. More routine matters such as jury duty, witnessing various legal proceedings, or attending Friends' meetings are common. One interesting example finds the elder Kingsley the recipient of three chests of tea shipped from London that he was forced to dump into Charles Town harbor by the local General Committee in one of several "tea parties" there.¹⁴ Other evidence shows that the Kingsleys, like many Atlantic

¹¹ David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 81, 29, xx; Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 159-62.

¹² Walter B. Fraser, Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 127-29, 133-35; S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 176-86.

¹³ Kingsley Sr., Loyalist Examination Transcriptions, SCDAH.

¹⁴ *South Carolina Gazette* (Charles Town), 21 November 1774; 165-66, George C. Rogers, Jr., "The Charleston Tea Party: The Significance of December 3, 1773," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 75 (July 1974): 166-67n15.

families, did travel extensively during their South Carolina residency.¹⁵ The family routinely made voyages between Britain and its North America colonies. These times of abundance were short lived. Loyalists like Kingsley Sr. found their own fates bound to the British Empire. He was jailed on at least three occasions, routinely harassed, and sustained the theft of his goods. Considered an enemy to the American cause, his properties were confiscated and he was banished from the province indefinitely. His debts totaled, in his estimation, more than £15,000. Sailing at once for England in December 1782, Kingsley Sr. left his wife and children in Charles Town at the mercy of local charity while he tried to recoup his wartime losses from the Crown.¹⁶

Many Loyalists found themselves in difficult financial positions and overburdened by international red tape. Collecting on debts was especially problematic, though it was essential to survive. Starting over in Saint John, New Brunswick, the Kingsleys faced the task of rebuilding their lives. They eventually reclaimed some of their former wealth. Some of it came through the merchant trade, importing their goods largely by way of London firms. However, these exile families did not find their fortunes overnight. Charity from friends, relatives, and other close relations was especially critical. Groups such as the Society of Friends also sent various forms of aid from America hoping to alleviate suffering. Many weathered these uncertain times the best that they could, as the Kingsleys had. By all accounts this was a rather slow, drawn out process.¹⁷

¹⁵ Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

¹⁶ Kingsley Sr. Loyalist Transcripts, SCDAH; Henry Laurens to Elias Vanderhorst, 4 February 1783, in *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume 16: September 1, 1782-December 17, 1792*, eds. David R. Chesnut and C. James Taylor (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 139-40; Isabella Kingsley to The Honorable Speaker and the Honorable Members of the House of Representatives, Petitions to the General Assembly, S165015, SCDAH; Zephaniah Kingsley Senr. to The Honorable John Lloyd, President and the Rest of the Members of the Honorable Senate, 6 November 1784, Parr Town, Nova Scotia, Petitions to the General Assembly, S165015, SCDAH.

Life in New Brunswick was cold and stale for the Loyalists. Many felt that they had been unfairly relegated to the margins of the British Empire. News was an especially critical component in the early years after the American Revolution. Families waited to hear the fates of family, friends, business partners, and their slaves. Kingsley Sr. and his merchant friends corresponded regularly between towns, trading rumors and other bits of information, themselves eagerly anticipating word from London about goods that they desperately needed. The few letters that remain of his business correspondence all contain a similar quality about them. Financial concerns seemed to weight the heaviest, which no doubt would have come to impact the entire family in ways both large and small. Most of the children, including Zephaniah Jr., were well into their teenage years by this point; some would no doubt be able to contribute to the struggling household at last. Gradually it seems that Kingsley Sr. settled into a comfortable role as one of a group of leading citizens of New Brunswick.¹⁸

The Napoleonic Wars proved to be an opportunity to capitalize on Europe's insatiable demand for goods. It should come as neither surprise nor coincidence that we see Zephaniah Kingsley Jr.'s appearance at Charleston in December 1793, poised for his own place in the booming West Indies trade of the war-torn 1790s.¹⁹ Swearing an oath of allegiance to the United

¹⁷ Michael John Prokopow, "'To the Torrid Zones': The Fortunes and Misfortunes of American Loyalists in the Anglo-Caribbean Basin, 1774-1801," (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 1996), 392-96; Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 180-89; Gwendolyn Davies, "New Brunswick Loyalist Printers in the Post-War Atlantic World: Cultural Transfer and Cultural Challenges," in *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era*, eds. Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 128-64; Harold Everett Conrad, "The Loyalist Experiment in New Brunswick," (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1934), 128-61; 38-51. The classic account is Esther Clark Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, reprint 1981).

¹⁸ Joseph Wilson Lawrence, *The Judges of New Brunswick and Their Times*, ed. Alfred A. Stockton (Saint John, New Brunswick: n.p., 1907), 265-66.

¹⁹ Charles Town had been renamed as Charleston shortly after the American Revolution. Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr., Oath of Allegiance, 20 December 1793, in *South Carolina Naturalizations, 1783-1850*, ed. Brent H. Holcomb (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985), 93. Leaving Saint-Domingue in 1798 he then swore

States on 20 December, Kingsley promptly left for the French Caribbean. His merchant trading activities compounded his large family holdings. Doggedly pursuing his own fortunes, he later concluded that “I have visited all the West India Colonies, and resided in most of them – I spent several years in Cuba, and St. Domingo, as well as on the Main Land of South America.”²⁰

The West India merchant trade might yield an adventurer handsome profits for the foreseeable future, but it brought little financial security and much danger to many. Few roads to financial wealth could rival profits from the plantation complex.²¹ Large landed estates growing lucrative cash crops with slave labor had long been a proven model in world history. By the early nineteenth-century, intense monoculture practice in the Caribbean left choice properties difficult to find and land concentration increasingly common. Planting here left little margin for error and great risks. The long term prospects of avoiding financial ruin or worse were not in one’s favor.²²

Spanish Florida had much to offer those willing to seek their opportunities. For merchants and would-be planters its geographic location was outstanding. Adjacent to the United

another oath of allegiance to Danish authorities at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas and resided there for a number of years. Daniel L. Schafer, “Zephaniah Kingsley’s Laurel Grove Plantation, 1803-1813,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 116n15.

Cultural exchanges were particularly intense in St. Thomas. On this point see Julius S. Scott, “Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, eds. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 128-43; and C. S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 24-38.

²⁰ Kingsley Jr. and George Kingsley, either an uncle or brother, are sometimes found together and sometimes apart in several voyages between New Brunswick and the Caribbean throughout the 1790s, and from Saint-Domingue and the French Antilles in particular. Rationalis [Z. Kingsley], “No. II: To the Legislative Council of the Floridas,” 26 December 1826, *East Florida Herald* (St. Augustine, FL) (quote).

²¹ Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), x.

²² David Watts, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development, Culture and Environmental Change since 1492* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 383-84; Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism, Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 152-53; Frank Moya Pons, *History of the Caribbean* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 98-100.

States, Spanish colonists routinely took advantage of the border situation by engaging in commerce both illicit and not. On the edge of the Caribbean as well, Spanish Florida easily partook of its trade and attracted a revolving cast of characters seeking their fortunes. La Florida had been governed since its British period (1763-1784) as two separate colonies. Of the two East Florida was the more lucrative. Tied economically and bureaucratically to Havana, it was administered locally by royal governor but answerable to authorities from without.²³

The colony was known by northern neighbors in terms that were historically infamous. From about 1687 Spanish Florida maintained the controversial practice of offering freedom to slaves of British colonial masters under authority of the Spanish Crown in exchange for their conversion to Catholicism upon arriving in the province. The policy incensed British authorities, who maintained that the Spaniards hoped to foment rebellion and the ultimate destruction of its imperial neighbor. Made a formal policy by Crown decrees in 1693 and again in 1733 (in a slightly altered form), Florida's British neighbors rightly understood what historian Jane Landers calls the "provocation inherent" in the standing policy. Spain's colonial administrators hoped to bolster their tenuous position by using black pawns in a deadly serious game of international politics with a frontier twist.²⁴

Repeated efforts to break the stalemate between Spain and Britain throughout the eighteenth-century caused much frustration and significant devastation that stretched north from

²³ J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 271-72; Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eyes of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 236-39; John Jay TePaske, *The Governorship of Spanish Florida, 1700-1763* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1964), 23.

²⁴ Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 25-6; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1975), 304-07; John J. TePaske, "The Fugitive Slave: Intercolonial Rivalry and Spanish Slave Policy, 1687-1764," in *Eighteenth-Century Florida and Its Borderlands*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1975), 1-12; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 64-65, 71-76.

Spanish East Florida to South Carolina. Despite holding the large territory it called La Florida since the sixteenth-century, Spain gradually saw its Atlantic holdings steadily erode. With the addition of its Georgia colony in 1733, Britain intended to send a clear message to Spain that its own power was growing hand over fist. Built essentially as a racial and economic “buffer zone” of sorts between the lucrative protestant slaveholding empire of British South Carolina and Catholic Florida, Georgia posed a real threat to its neighbor even though no settlement transpired for another quarter century beyond the Altamaha River to the Spanish border, in the so-called “Debatable Land.”²⁵ Population numbers are telling in this regard. Within three decades the fledgling British colony attracted about 2,600 whites importing 3,600 black slaves, while Florida contained only about 3,000 Spaniards. It was South Carolina that continued its rise as a source of wealth and power; its white population of more than 20,000 had been achieved a decade and a half earlier and showed no signs of declining.²⁶

Plagued by chronic shortages of basic necessities, a nagging dependency on North American merchant goods, and a lack of commerce and willing emigrants eager to come to the Spanish colony, the Crown offered free land in East Florida for those men of property and promise to settle there. Although the 1793 policy forbade Americans from settling in Spanish Florida because of sufficient concerns over introducing what the Crown regarded as unruly elements, rhetoric and reality were two different matters. The Spanish welcomed many controversial figures,

²⁵ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 179-80. Eliga H. Gould has called the history of the rivalry “entangled.” Gould, “Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery,” *American Historical Review* 112 (June 2007): 764-86. See Herbert E. Bolton and Mary Ross, *The Debatable Land: A Sketch of the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Georgia Country* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925).

²⁶ Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 200-01; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and The transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 46; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, 182.

giving license to settler communities outside of St. Augustine from sheer pragmatism, ambivalence, or a mix of both.²⁷

The differences that separated Spanish Florida from its American neighbor were sometimes real and sometimes exaggerated, but the former did provide something of a haven for a particularly ruthless, parasitic class of Atlantic creatures who commanded considerable wealth and power disproportionate to their numbers.²⁸ Additionally, persistent issues concerning the British and local native populations burdened Spanish authorities as well. Indeed, the Florida borderlands area was typical of many frontiers areas, replete with a sense of impermanence, confusion, and a nagging vulnerability in all areas of life.²⁹

If Spanish Florida lacked markers of material success traditionally sought by contemporaries and later historians alike, it did prove to be quite wealthy in its “possibilities.” Outsiders’ fascination with Florida began as early as the early sixteenth-century with Spanish exploration and its elusive dream of finding the fabled city of “El Dorado.” The Dutch, French, British, and Americans all followed suit in the centuries thereafter. Florida seemed to reside in the imagination of the Atlantic world as one imperial conquest away from becoming a utopia teeming with unbridled riches.³⁰

²⁷ Roger G. Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 214-23; Robert Franklin Crider, “The Borderland Floridas, 1815-1821,” (PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, 1979), 37-44.

²⁸ Janice Borton Miller, “The Struggle for Free Trade in East Florida and the Cédula of 1793,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 55 (July 1976): 49-50, 54; Sherry Johnson, “The Spanish St. Augustine Community, 1784-1795: A Reevaluation,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (July 1989): 41, 47-50; Hoffman, *Florida’s Frontiers*, xv.

²⁹ Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan, “On Frontiers: The Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire in the Americas,” in *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire*, eds. Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 10-11; James G. Cusick, “Creolization and the Borderlands,” *Historical Archaeology* 34 (2000): 48-51; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 60-61; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 276-80.

For two decades Spain lost its Florida holdings to the British by way of the Treaty of Paris (1763). Returning in 1784 to an economic landscape caught between what property holders there envisioned and the limits of the possible. Upon Britain's withdrawal from East Florida, longtime resident Francis P. Fatio explained to the newly appointed Spanish Governor Vincent Manuel de Zéspedes that the region had become little more than "a desert guarded by Spanish troops."³¹ Populating the area was critical, Fatio explained, for its virtual emptiness ensured that its demise would come at the hands of an abundant and hostile Native American population. To this he might have also added that chronic imperial warfare, persistent economic woes leading to the flight of the few remaining inhabitants, or an imperial takeover by Spain's enemies were all very real threats as well. Any meaningful change, however, simply required more people.³²

What it lacked in population Spanish Florida made up for in available land. Hampered in the best of imperial times by chronic food and money shortages, Florida received little or no support from its parent in Madrid, then engaged in a new dawn of warfare that soon engulfed the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Spanish administrators encouraged other Catholics to come to Florida. Irish Catholics, for examples, were a group considered highly desirable and could offset what Spanish officials deemed "men without God or king."³³

³⁰ Christopher P. Iannini, *Fatal Revolutions: Natural History, West Indian Slavery, and the Routes of American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 184; Charles W. Arnade, "Raids, Sieges, and International Wars," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael V. Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 100-15; TePaske, *The Governorship of Spanish Florida*, 108.

³¹ Francis Phillip Fatio, "Description of East Florida, 18 March 1785," in *East Florida, 1783-1785: A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of Them Translated*, ed. Joseph Byrne Lockey (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), 481.

³² Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1988), 430-74; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1989), 137-48; Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers*, 236. Most of the settlers lived in the garrison town of St. Augustine, the only town in all of East Florida at that time.

³³ Susan R. Parker, "Men Without God or King: Rural Settlers of East Florida, 1784-1790," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (October 1990): 136.

Most numerous outside the town limits of St. Augustine, these overwhelmingly protestant and largely non-Spaniard settlers occupied a distinct, sparsely settled zone of landholders that inhabited a kind of “world apart” from authority that stretched from the St. Marys River south to the gates of the lone town. This distance of about 60 miles contained only a few hundred persons who included a large group of Loyalists from the Bahamas, various points throughout the British Empire, and the United States.³⁴ To remedy this situation Havana granted permission for Governor Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada (served 1790-1796) to issue a headright policy on 20 November 1790.³⁵ The policy was not immediately or alone successful. Considerable economic incentives from the Spanish Crown, a difficult border situation with the U.S., and blatant self-preservation tactics yielded noticeable results, which were decidedly mixed.³⁶

By 1803 East Florida’s land grant policy appears to have attracted enough settlers and concerns to warrant changes to some of its basic terms. Grant totals were slashed in half. Heads of households now received fifty acres for themselves, twenty-five acres for all dependents over age sixteen, and fifteen acres for those under that age. Although no population numbers exist for the province, Governor Enrique White spoke in October of that year of “the great number of persons coming to enjoy the favors and privileges which his Majesty has granted to those who may come to establish themselves in this province...”³⁷ Two weeks before this Zephaniah Kingsley

³⁴ Patricia C. Griffin, “Life on the Plantations of East Florida: 1763-1848,” *Florida Anthropologist* 56 (September 2003): 163, 166, 180.

³⁵ Don Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada, Royal Order of 1790 (translation), 20 November 1790, St. Augustine, in *American State Papers, Documents of the Congress of the United States, in Relation to the Public Lands, from the First Session of the Twentieth to the Second Session of the Twentieth Congress, Inclusive: Commencing December 3, 1827, and Ending March 3, 1829*, eds. Asbury Dicks and John W. Forney (Washington, DC: Gales & Seaton, 1860), 749-50. The policy gave land quantities are follows: “one hundred acres to each family of family, and fifty to each white person, or of color, of which said family is composed”.

³⁶ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 372-73; Miller, “The Struggle for Free Trade in East Florida,” 48-59; Hoffman, *Florida’s Frontiers*, 243-52.

appeared in St. Augustine, where in front of the *escribano* (notary) he took “the oath of fidelity & vassalage to our Sovereign, and to take up arms in defence of this province against any enemies who might intend hostilities against it, & to subject himself entirely to the Laws of the Kingdom.” Kingsley quickly found social distinction with the Spanish administrator who registered his oath with the honorific title “Don.” His reported wealth was staggering, claiming 67,160 pesos “in houses, money & negroes,” drawn mostly from familial holdings. Falsely declaring himself “a native of Mississippi [sic],” the new Spanish subject had immediately deceived officials as to his origins.³⁸

Wasting little time to establish himself, in less than a decade Zephaniah Kingsley had amassed several thousand acres of choice land, several plantations, and held over one hundred slaves. From his large plantation at Laurel Grove on the St. Johns River he employed a diverse planting strategy by growing cotton, citrus, and foodstuffs until operations were destroyed by war in 1812 and 1813.³⁹ Additional revenue came by cutting timber and operating merchant stores that catered to the river community and its travelers. But it was slavetrading that provided Kingsley with a handsome fortune. With frequent ventures to the Caribbean and to the West African coast, he earned a reputation as one of East Florida’s largest importers of Africans.⁴⁰

³⁷ Don Enrique White, Modification of Royal Order of 1790 (translation), 12 October 1803, St. Augustine, in *American State Papers*, eds. Dicks and Forney, 750.

³⁸ A translated copy of Kingsley’s Spanish oath appears in Claim of Zephaniah Kingsley, Case No. 88415, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Kingsley to Governor of Florida, St. Augustine, 25 November 1803, Roll 80, East Florida Papers (EFP).

³⁹ *Ibid.* Kingsley’s case against the United States Government for damages sustained during the Patriot War contains a wealth of information about his holdings and overall losses of the period. These records were thought to have perished but were rediscovered only recently. On their discovery and scope of contents see Frank Marotti, *The Cana Sanctuary: History, Diplomacy, and Black Catholic Marriage in Antebellum St. Augustine, Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 5-6.

⁴⁰ James A. McMillin, *The Final Victims: Foreign Slave Trade to North America, 1783-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 90; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 167, 174-75. See EFP for

Spanish Florida's small class of elite slaveholders retained many of the habits shared with the Caribbean and Latin American master classes of the Atlantic world. Many of its members, Kingsley included, fathered children by one or more black mistresses but provided for them thereafter. Although never entirely free of the racism and social prejudice that interracial liaisons often provoked, Florida slaveholders who carried out the practice were not otherwise prevented from achieving elite status within society and, more importantly, their right as masters was not challenged. The practice continued incidentally when Spain ceded the last of its Florida holdings to the United States in 1821.⁴¹ Chosen two years later as one of only thirteen East Floridians to represent the region in the second Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Kingsley publicly retained his privileged position in spite of fathering several children of mixed-race. Problems arose, as it were, when public duty collided with issues pertaining to race and mastery.⁴²

Appointed to several select committees to hear issues then confronting the struggling province, Kingsley resigned his commission likely in disagreement with committee members over proposed racial laws that would impact his power and complex domestic situation. Shortly thereafter he challenged the wisdom of the Council's anticipated direction, submitting his "Address to the Legislative Council of Florida on the Subject of its Colored population by Z. Kingsley, a Planter of that Territory," probably in 1826. Oddly enough, he penned two further letters to the Legislative Council under the classical pseudonym "Rationalis," both of which appeared

known slave imports into Spanish Florida. His exploits in transshipping slaves in the Caribbean to various parts conform to Greg E. O'Malley's findings in "Final Passages: The British Inter-Colonial Slave Trade, 1619-1807," (PhD Dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 2006).

⁴¹ Frank Marotti, *Heaven's Soldiers: Free People of Color and the Spanish Legacy in Antebellum Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 26, 34-35.

⁴² Philip Matthew Smith, "Persistent Borderland: Freedom and Citizenship in Territorial Florida," (PhD Dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2007), 159-60.

for the small readership of the *East Florida Herald*. Nearly all of the letters' contents are found in the more formal "Address" and feature more than sufficient details with which to identify their author. Given his public role in particular it would be most unlikely that locals had not otherwise known of him.⁴³

Kingsley's professed purpose in the appeals to the Legislative Council concerned the fate of Florida's free black population. He worried that the Council reflected strong regional prejudices that might come to punish his indiscreet relationships with black women, the women themselves, and his mixed race children. Implicit in this protest was the Council's blatant challenge to his own mastery. Kingsley seemed to regard the affronts as violations of historical precedent, economics, self-interest, and common sense. Severity and rigidity in slave systems, he reasoned, would not bring order and a neat separation of the white and black races. Comparative observations from the Greater Caribbean pointed instead to racial war. "Rewards as well as punishments are the great stimulant, to rectitude of conduct—but we have lost sight of all but the punishments," he chided Floridians.⁴⁴

Drawing lessons from taboo topics such as miscegenation and the Haitian Revolution, Kingsley awkwardly asserted that the slave system was best secured by manipulating its slave labor force. They could be made to work effectively, perhaps even happily, if instilled with "hope" or "self interest" to such ends. To do so required a free black population as friends, not enemies. His strategy is thus to disarm potential conspirators in the fields and slave quarters, and retain valuable racial mediaries that would help avert a war of masters versus slaves, whites ver-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 171; Daniel W. Stowell, "Introduction," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 5-6.

⁴⁴ Rationalis [Z. Kingsley], "Letter to the Editor of the East Florida Herald," 12 December 1826, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 37.

sus blacks.⁴⁵ “Happily perhaps for this Territory, little has been done as yet by Legislative provisions, of a permanent character, to influence the condition of the colored population either for good, or for evil,” Kingsley wrote in his first Rationalis letter. “It was surely best, to wait the slow progress of reason and investigation of facts, arising from the experience of others, rather than with rude and unhallowed hands, erect a fabric, liable to tumble in ruin, around our own heads.” For Rationalis the question of “Whether in the Government of our slaves, we shall adopt the mild policy of the Spaniards, or the rigorous legal severity of some of the southern states, is yet to be decided.”⁴⁶

No direct challenges to the Rationalis letters materialized. The restless planter wasted little time in expanding their basic ideas for a pamphlet he self-published in 1828 under the lengthy name *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative, System of Society, as it Exists in Some Governments, and Colonies in America, and in the United States, Under the Name of Slavery, with its Necessity and Advantages. By an Inhabitant of Florida.*⁴⁷ Although copies were apparently few, at least one New York reviewer, though not persuaded by its arguments, thought its quality “curious” and applauded the Floridian for his boldness. As with all of Kingsley’s surviving writings the *Treatise* likewise is a series of jumbled thoughts, observations, and comparisons. While the learning is sound and indeed sincere, the reviewer too noticed those qualities, stating: “Thousands might peruse the pamphlet now before me, without perceiving—I do not say merely the full extent of its aim, but even without clearly distinguishing the many important con-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Rationalis [Z. Kingsley], “Letter No. 2: To the Legislative Council of the Floridas,” *East Florida Herald*, 26 December 1826 (St. Augustine, FL). This letter is not included in Stowell’s edited volume.

⁴⁷ The pamphlet is reproduced in full in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 39-75.

sequences it involves.”⁴⁸ Kingsley dedicated the work “to the people of Florida and political economists throughout the Southern states,” but it is difficult to conceive why he chose his course of action. In favor of the pseudonym he now attached his name to the very same controversial ideas that failed to receive enthusiastic supporters in his own backyard.⁴⁹

In the *Treatise* its author advanced a racial theory Atlantic in scope, amounting to psychological warfare that the slaveholding master class might effectively unleash on slaves everywhere. He proposed limited offers of freedom for a privileged few slaves in order to instill “hope” in other bondmen. This would render the masses much more loyal, dependable, and manageable in their vulnerable mental and physical states of enslavement.⁵⁰ From the painful lessons drawn from the Haitian Revolution and trends in the Atlantic world, he saw racial warfare as inevitable and knew that whites desperately needed allies in the fight against the overwhelming numbers of black slaves. Naturally, those of mixed-race descent (often children of the master class) and free blacks with property would align with white slaveowners based upon in-

⁴⁸ “Review: To Our Southern Readers,” *The Free Enquirer*, 5 November 1828 (New York, NY).

⁴⁹ One scholar, Michael O’Brien, blatantly called the pamphlet “eccentric.” Michael O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 960. The general implication drawn from recent scholarship seems to be that Kingsley’s ego allowed him to do as he pleased on the subject of slavery. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders’ New World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 14-15.

A more nuanced version suggests that Kingsley’s rationalizations, strange and stubborn as they may seem, were part of the evolving doctrine of what Jeffrey Robert Young sees as the transatlantic, culturally-ground household model of slavery, which he calls “corporate individualism,” or what Lacy K. Ford simply recognizes as “paternalism,” though minus its weighty historiography. Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 161-92; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 581n5. I have also benefited from Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 257-317. See also the dated but still useful discussion in Shearer Davis Bowman, *Masters & Lords: Mid-19th Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 162-83.

⁵⁰ Another Florida pamphlet writer, Moses E. Levy (1781-1854), an acquaintance of Kingsley’s stemming from their residences at St. Thomas years earlier, arrived at the opposition conclusion on this point in 1828. Levy considered “deferred hope” as a “dangerous state of mind” in his *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned*, ed. Chris Monaco (Micanopy, FL: Wacahoota Press, 1999), 13.

terest and/or ties of affection. Even though most of the era knew full well that racial mixing was long an integral part of Caribbean planter behavior, U.S. readers of Kingsley's *Treatise* claimed that they could not comprehend his bizarre reasoning and overall logic. Although he espoused sound proslavery ideas, Kingsley's Caribbean behavior and worldview were both out of step with his surroundings, putting him squarely at odds with nearly every national proslaveryite to that point.⁵¹ The infamous *Treatise*, a proslavery pamphlet that attacked racism and defended miscegenation, predictably made him an outcast everywhere. Given the difficulties with which his contemporaries had in contextualizing his own life and ideas, it is not so surprising that the work only served to paint its author as an oddity or "nonconformist."⁵²

Kingsley revisited his pamphlet on three more occasions between 1829 and 1834. Subsequent editions published in New York featured stylistic changes and an appendix, but these only compounded earlier problems of muddled presentation. Within the span of a few pages, he now managed to discuss nearly every taboo slavery topic of the day. His argument perhaps unwisely hoped to persuade readers by references to the Haitian Revolution, a summary of slave revolts throughout the Greater Caribbean and U.S., and weighed in on the raw events of the Nat Turner revolt of late 1831. He even went so far as to mention his own role as the slave trader who purchased the late Gullah Jack (Pritchard) years earlier in "Zinguebar" [Zanzibar], East Africa, but promptly resold him at Charleston. The entire nation knew quite well that Jack and Denmark Vesey both met their demises in a conspiracy that sent shockwaves through the slave-

⁵¹ Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 70-96; Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 89; O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 960.

⁵² The term was applied to Kingsley's overall behavior as decidedly out of step with the rest of the Slave South, though not that of the Atlantic, coming into favored usage largely after Percy MacKaye described him as "that redoubtable Scotch-Floridian" who "defied the onslaughts of both America and Spain in their attempts to diminish his nonconformities..." That the idea is still applied to Kingsley blatantly shows how the slaveholder is viewed by popular opinion minus his Caribbean qualities. See MacKaye's "Foreward" to Carita Doggett Corse's *The Key to the Golden Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1931), xiii.

holding southern states. Kingsley's deliberate linkage to this event might have been for some type of attention; it made little sense to add it in later editions, as it served no real purpose to his original argument. Whatever his ultimate strategy, the Florida planter had again seriously misjudged his audience.⁵³

While critical reactions to the *Treatise* emerged shortly after publication of the first edition, it was not until 1831 that much of the most damaging sort appeared in regional and national publications. Between March and June the Florida planter's Caribbean ideas provided easy targets for northern abolitionists and southern slaveholders. Following Benjamin Lundy's extensive excerpts of Kingsley's pamphlet printed in his *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, William Lloyd Garrison's own paper commented, "I have some reason to believe, that slavery is not in Florida, any more than elsewhere, an institution of mildness and mercy." The *Liberator* intended to show its readers that the institution had a much different side, Garrison argued, than "the beautiful ideal of slavery with which the Floridian seems to be so enamored."⁵⁴ Florida politicians were no less amused by Kingsley's antics. Inching toward sectional defensiveness in a western hemisphere preoccupied by prospects of slave emancipation in the British Caribbean, racial warfare at home, and worsening sectional politics, Territorial Governor William P. DuVal attacked Kingsley's character and accused him of advancing views that were not only bizarre but dangerous.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kingsley, "A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 67-68; Edwin L. Williams, "Negro Slavery in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 28 (October 1949): 99. One historian rightly hints that scholars generally take Kingsley's statement on this point at his word, though I would strongly suggest that the idea can certainly apply to all of his proslavery writings. Philip D. Morgan, "Conspiracy Scares," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 59 (January 2002): 169.

⁵⁴ Benjamin Lundy, "Slavery in Florida," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, March 1831 (Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD); Garrison, "Slavery in Florida," *Liberator*, 16 April 1831 (Boston, MA).

⁵⁵ William P. DuVal, "Communication," *Florida Courier*, 21 April 1831 (Tallahassee, FL).

In an episode of Jacksonian era frontier politics, Kingsley circulated a petition to remove the governor from office that was then presented to the president.⁵⁶ DuVal was accused of fraudulent practices, theft, deceit, and political favoritism by several East Florida residents who hoped to prevent his reappointment. Anti-Jackson candidate Joseph M. White, territorial delegate from East Florida, sought a formal investigation to the charges leveled against DuVal. His duties included presenting Kingsley's memorial to Jackson. In a letter to Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, White sought to put Kingsley's reputation as the memorial's writer beyond reproach. "Mr. Kingsley is a classical scholar, who would consider it a degradation to be put on a footing with Governor Duval in point of intellect, or education," White stated on 10 March 1831. "This gentleman has a large property in the Territory and exercising the right of a citizen, had written a respectful petition to the President, praying that some other person should be appointed Governor."⁵⁷ The administration's response was less than encouraging.⁵⁸

White found not only little support from Washington but was slapped with a counter-charge of attempting to discredit DuVal and conspiring with "dismissed officers and northern men." DuVal's vitriolic response in Tallahassee's *Florida Courier* of 21 April appears as much reactionary as it does volcanic. In it the governor suggests that Kingsley's views were not a well kept secret, and the planter was actually the longstanding subject of much public gossip and ridicule. DuVal repeatedly mocked White's assertion that Kingsley was a "classical scholar," using

⁵⁶ Stowell, "Introduction," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 12.

⁵⁷ Joseph M. White to Martin Van Buren, Washington, 10 March 1831, in *Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume XXIV, The Territory of Florida, 1828-1834*, ed. Clarence Edwin Carter (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 511.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

it instead to mount an attack on the delegate's "'learned' friend, Mr. Kingsley, of Fort George in East Florida."⁵⁹

"He is a gentleman of exquisite *taste* as well as learning," DuVal told his audience, "for it is said, that while he carries in his pocket the poems of the immortal Horace, he also cherishes in his bosom his *ebony wife*. This is the learned friend of the delegate, who, come three years ago, published a philosophic work, in pamphlet form, and distributed it among the citizens of Florida, advising them to intermarry with the *black race*, as the best means of improving their persons, society and manners. It is this work, I presume, that has given Mr. Kingsley his high literary standing with the delegate!" The governor added:

I should be extremely unwilling to part such 'learned' and congenial friends, and wish them no worse fortune than that—as they are already linked together, in the closest union, for the balance of their lives. I cannot, however, believe (although Mr. Kingsley is a very accomplished scholar) that he is exactly qualified to assume the *guardianship* of the *rights* and *morals* of our fellow-citizens in East Florida; and it will, I hope, be some hundred years to come, before the philosophy of Mr. Kingsley's *unsavory* doctrines, shall find many, or zealous advocates in our Territory.⁶⁰

Political suspicions in this era ran rampant. The *Courier's* editor could hardly resist commenting on the story, postulating whether or not White had sent Van Buren "a certain pamphlet published by Mr. K. advocating the breeding of Mulattoes." In so doing the *Courier* linked White's reputation to Kingsley's unpopular racial doctrine in hopes of ruining him politically. White's well-known ties to the so called Massachusetts "aristocracy" at Cambridge did not sit well with his opponents. Not surprisingly the *Courier* noted that "[t]here seems to be something ominous in this union of the Col. [White] with Mr. K. and with the Webster part of Massachu-

⁵⁹ DuVal, "Communication," *Florida Courier*, 21 April 1831.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, (italics in original).

setts.⁶¹ They have repealed the law in Massachusetts which prohibits the marriage of blacks and whites. And the Col. is praising Mr. Kingsley for his classical attainments. Mr. Kingsley's hopes must be reviving and we shall perhaps see a new edition of the 'amalgamation pamphlet,' revised and corrected by our late Delegate." Going further still, the governor's attack was unsatisfied with merely suggesting that White and Kingsley operated in secret circles to effect northeastern racial laws. Capitalizing on growing southern fears over slavery, the editorial then surmised that the whole affair "may be part of the plan to place Mr. Kingsley in the place of Gov. DuVal, in case the latter should not be reappointed. Does the Col. mean to become the advocate of certain doctrines advanced by Mr. Kingsley in a celebrated pamphlet distributed through the Territory two years ago? As the Col. favours *no party*, and has no '*peculiar creed*' it may be that he may extend his impartiality so far as to favour *no peculiar colour*."⁶²

Three weeks passed before White publicly responded to DuVal's blistering attack. As far as Kingsley was concerned, he soon realized that his solitary public defender refused to endorse his racial views and domestic practices. He did chide DuVal for his rhetorical performance, noting the "quite puritanical" quality of his address and professed abhorrence of so-called "unsavory doctrines." Sidestepping the concrete issues raised by Kingsley's *Treatise*, White could only weakly state that "As I have never become the defender or apologist of Mr. K.'s opinions, I leave the public to determine how far Governor Duval's practices authorize him to become the *ensor morum* of the community. If his exemption from all that is vicious, the delicacy and refinement of his taste, the exquisiteness of his sensibility, and spotless purity of his life, will authorize him

⁶¹ A reference to Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, who had recently debated South Carolina Senator Robert Y. Hayne on the nature of the Union and constitutionalism. The printed debates drew the ire of many in the southern states, contributing to growing sectional polarization. Herman Belz, "Foreword," in *The Webster-Hayne Debate on the Nature of the Union: Selected Documents*, ed. Herman Belz (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), vii-xv.

⁶² Commentary appearing in the *Florida Courier*, 21 April 1831 (italics in original).

to ‘cast the first stone,’ I wonder that he has not before played moralist, and lectured some of his most intimate friends, upon taste and ‘savory doctrines.’” Somewhat harder to believe, White insisted that “If such opinions are entertained by Mr. K. I am entirely ignorant of them.”⁶³

A public attack of this type was absurd but deeply humiliating, and apparently ominous from Kingsley’s viewpoint. His ideas were under assault from essentially two opposing political sides, leaving him effectively alienated. The Florida scandal involved southern proslavery political interests vilifying Kingsley and his ideas, while at the same time northern newspapers like Lundy’s *Genius of Universal Emancipation* devoted extensive space to reviewing the *Treatise* in a less than flattering manner. For example, Lundy rightly pointed out that the substance of the pamphlet was little more than “cruel duplicity” committed on the pitiable slave, and his overall plan to reform slavery in order to strengthen the system would actually weaken it in the process, making slaves brutes before anything else.⁶⁴ Barely a month later, Kingsley transferred one of his plantation holdings to his eldest son George to hold in trust. Although born a slave to one of Kingsley’s own African slaves, Anna Madgigine Jai, he was later freed along with his mother by Zephaniah in 1811.⁶⁵ To him on 20 July 1831 Kingsley deeded his Fort George Island plantation “containing 750 acres more or less” for the token sum of ten dollars with stipulations that Anna and another mistress, Munsilna McGundo, each have life uses of their own houses there.⁶⁶

⁶³ Joseph M. White, “To the Public,” *The Floridian and Advocate*, 14 May 1831 (Tallahassee, FL).

⁶⁴ Lundy, “The Florida Pamphlet,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, May 1831; and idem., “More of the Florida Pamphlet,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, June 1831.

⁶⁵ Kingsley manumitted Anna and George along with Martha and Mary, his other children by her. See “Manumission of Anna (1811),” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 23-25.

⁶⁶ Title Abstract of Zephaniah Kingsley to George Kingsley, Trust Deed, 20 July 1831, Zephaniah Kingsley Collection, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida; Daniel W. Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve: Historic Research Study* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, Southeast Field Area, 1996), 45.

Dissatisfied and fearful about the security of his own mastery, slave property, and difficult domestic situation, Kingsley faced scrutiny from all political sides but alternated his criticism for British abolition, northern abolitionists, and industrial capitalism with persistent calls for reform of southern slave laws. It seems to have been a genuinely confusing time for the Florida planter. His inability to take a decisive stand was part of Kingsley's longstanding practical strategy to play any and all hands dealt for the greatest personal benefit. Such a strategy he used to great effect in navigating the often treacherous literal and figurative currents of the Atlantic. So it comes as no surprise that while Kingsley issued the third and fourth editions of his infamous *Treatise* in 1833 and 1834, respectively, he also likely drafted (or aided) in late 1831 an early colonization scheme for free blacks to Mexico in late 1831;⁶⁷ authored a memorial to Congress protesting the Florida Territorial Council's recent laws penalizing free blacks and whites suspected of interracial relations; and turned toward black colonization in Haiti as the most suitable and practical solution for worsening race relations in the United States. To be sure the varied pursuits were antithetical, but they do reveal a consistency in themes such as paternalism, obligation to the free black class, and an obsession with maintaining and controlling power, regardless of the audience employed.⁶⁸

Lobbying for Haitian colonization brought more attention to his ideas than did his pro-slavery writings, but it did so at a tremendous cost.⁶⁹ A carefully planned trip to tour the Haitian

⁶⁷ This is inferred by the New York appearance of *Working Man's Advocate* of 1 October 1831 and his 9 September arrival at Baltimore on board the schooner *Laura* from Charleston. *Baltimore Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser*, 9 September 1831. George Kingsley, his son, is another possibility. A comparison of the *Circular* with the *Treatise*, both reprinted in Stowell's *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, is instructive. Compare the *Circular*'s fourth paragraph on p. 77 with the *Treatise* section on p. 57; *Circular* fifth paragraph on pp. 77-78 with *Treatise* p. 58; sixth paragraph of *Circular* with *Treatise* p. 63n5; p. 80 of *Circular* with p. 54 of *Treatise*. Language similarities exist throughout. All page numbers relative to *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell.

⁶⁸ Stowell, "Introduction," and Kingsley, "Memorial to Congress by Citizens of the Territory of Florida (1833)," both in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 18-19, 82-4.

countryside for a possible colonization effort there would coincide with the publication of a series of letters Kingsley would write from that place. In the letters that appeared in a New York City newspaper he gave glowing reports of all things Haitian. Many were perplexed. By sternly contrasting America's obsession with race with his own proposals for a free, utopian work cooperative in the Black Republic, he continued to hold a large amount slaves in Florida. Public interest and critiques followed.⁷⁰

The first such expose appeared in September 1837 with the intriguing title "The Rich Mr. K. with His Black Consort and Offspring," later reprinted in the *Liberator* two weeks later as "Slaveholding Amalgamation." Its author, known only as The Invalid,⁷¹ related to its New England audience a version of Kingsley's history, only partly true, then prevalent in Florida circles. He did so by recounting the planter's past exploits as a slave trader, his present efforts heading a slaveholding empire centered at the very real location of Fort George Island, and about his curious domestic habits. The Invalid was told: "now you have a chance of seeing something new under the sun."⁷²

⁶⁹ Northern abolitionists in close quarters evidently circulated Kingsley's *Treatise*, citing it in their anti-slavery publications at this time. See William Jay, *Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization, and Anti-Slavery Societies, Third Edition* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 49, a work that went through several editions throughout the 1830s; Lydia Maria Child, *The Evils of Slavery, and the Cure of Slavery: The First Proved by the Opinion of Southerners Themselves, the Last Shown by Historical Evidence* (Newburyport, MA: Charles Whipple, 1836), 10-11.

⁷⁰ See his "Letters on Haiti" reprinted in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 86-101.

⁷¹ Florida attracted hundreds of yearly visitors through an extensive advertising campaign as a healthful climate to relieve suffering. Comments varied widely about the result. For example see Dr. Andrew Anderson's letter on St. Augustine's benefits to invalids dated November 1829 and reprinted in *Florida Herald and Southern Democrat*, 1 February 1848 (St. Augustine, FL.); Orson, "Life in Florida: Number Two, Saint Augustine and Its Environs," *The Knickerbocker; or New York Monthly Magazine, Volume VIII* (New York: Clark and Edson, 1836), 553-59; An Invalid, *A Winter in the West Indies and Florida: Containing General Observations Upon Modes of Travelling, Manners and Customs, Climates and Productions, with a Particular Description of St. Croix, Trinidad de Cuba, Havana, Key West, and St. Augustine, as Places of Resort for Northern Invalids* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1839), 142-58.

Offering a rare snapshot of life at Kingsley's Fort George plantation at an unknown date,⁷³ the account juxtaposed the wealthy slaveowner's large holdings with clear evidence of his interracial practices that would have likely shocked northern readers. Wealth and luxury, in the author's telling, did nothing to prevent the planter from indulging in his carnal desires: "[T]o crown it all, what do you think he chose for a wife?" the Invalid asked. "Why, one of the blackest wenches that you ever saw. But perhaps you will think stranger, that he has been faithful to her for more than twenty years. He has a grown mulatto son by her, and two mulatto daughters, and they all live together in concord as blissful as the best." The account provided a firm backdrop or stage setting for later myths to thrive. As the story went, the white slaveowner surrounded himself with an African wife and mixed-race children living in perfect harmony, in open defiance of the laws of the southern landscape that surrounded them. The visitor noted that "laid out in parks, arbors, and flower beds," the plantation setting was in perfect order and rigorously maintained. He spoke of the unnamed "sooty spouse" who was "as black as jet—as strongly scented as a musk-rat—and, to prejudiced eyes, as ugly as pictures of the king of sinners," while the children he could only describe as "not so ugly."⁷⁴

⁷² "For the Register and Observer. Notes of an Invalid.—No. 9.," printed as "The Rich Mr. K. with His Black Consort and Offspring," *Christian Observer and Boston Observer*, 30 September 1837 (Boston, MA); subsequently reprinted as "Slaveholding Amalgamation," *Liberator*, 13 October 1837 (Boston, MA).

⁷³ While the article contained some significant errors, the number of children that Kingsley had is the most problematic for dating the visit. The author stated that "[h]e has a grown mulatto son by her [his wife], and two mulatto daughters. The son superintends the plantation..." The designation of "wife," while factually incorrect, can only be Anna Madgigine Jai, who bore Zephaniah several children by that time who were of age. However, Kingsley had two sons by her, the second as late as 1824. The oldest son, George, did lend his services to superintending the plantation before his departure to Haiti in the fall of 1836. He in fact came to "own" the plantation, at least in the eyes of the Florida Territory, from late 1831. John Maxwell Kingsley, the younger boy, at all of 13 years would have been far too young for such duties at the 1837 article publication date. A final clue about Kingsley's supposed "faithfulness" to his wife being "twenty years," while absolutely laughable, offers no aid help on the matter. As he purchased her in 1806 and manumitted her in 1811, John Maxwell's existence is still a problematic omission.

⁷⁴ "The Rich Mr. K." The Invalid's offensive description is not surprising, as Deborah Gray White argues. Such views were commonplace for many antebellum southerners, but they appeared frequently in travel accounts of northerners and Europeans as well. Many of the works "contained superficial analyses of African life and spurious

The domestic portrait continued indoors with a morning meal, after which Kingsley “showed his guests about the house.” The visitors found the Fort George residence filled with “the many curiosities he had brought from Africa,” which included “pictures of African beauties which were painted from originals by a French artist” that “adorned his parlor.” The works were reported to have been among Kingsley’s most prized. “One of the originals he had himself seen, and before her picture he pointed out his rhapsodies to his guests on her personal charms.” To that point in the story, we hear nothing of Kingsley’s own words. “Ah!” he is said to have memorably remarked, “the elegance, the enbonpoint [sic], the elasticity of the figure was unequalled. I know, prejudiced white people do not like the African style of beauty; but to see the original of this picture would I am sure disarm all prejudice. Then there is no complexion like the African for setting off with jewelry with effect,” he told the visitors.⁷⁵

As a father the planter seems to have fared no better. Because he “did not think so favorably of black men,” he was said to have “offered \$20,000 worth of property, and thirty or forty negroes, to any decent white man who will marry either of his daughters, and treat her well. But none have seemed to appreciate the tripple [sic] prize, and the old man still remains the only white man on the ground.”⁷⁶ Long the subject of local gossip, the intimacies, whispers, and secrets contained within the idyllic setting at Fort George Island were now plainly exposed for a national audience. Although Kingsley sold the plantation to his nephew eighteen months after

conclusions about the character of black women.” White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South: Revised Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 29-30.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

the Invalid's article appeared, his infamous residency there in life and legend forever bound its one-time owner to that place.⁷⁷

In a decade that featured no less than economic cataclysms in Europe and the United States, slave emancipation in the British Caribbean, and regional polarization in the U.S., longstanding fears about Native Americans and slaves conspiring to overthrow southern slavery were finally realized in a lengthy and brutal affair known as the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). The conflict was the culmination of several decades of bad blood between whites and Natives for land and resources, with the Seminoles almost always on the losing end. Earlier social, political, and economic disruptions between Europeans and Natives foreshadowed later events in that it became increasingly apparent that the groups could not or would not coexist. As was the case in many parts of the world, the expansion of the American slave economy was daunting in its rapidity and sheer force, making prime land for growing cash crops found in places like Florida even more desirable in a time which Dale Tomich has called “the second slavery.”⁷⁸

In countless national newspapers throughout the Second Seminole War, Kingsley appeared the victim of several deliberate Seminole raids that pillaged his plantations and carried away several slaves. Papers such as the *New-York Spectator* in July 1837 reprinted reports that

⁷⁷ After his primary residence at Laurel Grove Plantation on the St. Johns River was destroyed in the Patriot War, Kingsley made his primary residence at Fort George Island north of Jacksonville from 1814 until 1839, but it was only one of several places that he frequented. The identification of Kingsley solely with Fort George is misleading, distorting, and a product of the romanticism later rampant in Florida. The association is discussed in Antoinette T. Jackson with Allan F. Burns, *Ethnohistorical Study of the Kingsley Plantation Community* (Atlanta, GA: Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 2006), 5-14.

⁷⁸ Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 223-24; James David Miller, *South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013). The term “second slavery” is from Dale Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 56-71.

“Three negroes belonging to Z. Kingsley, Esq. arrived at Picolata yesterday from Drayton Island, near Lake George, who report that they saw Indian fires all around them, and that they left from fear of capture. It is feared that the remained, 17 in number, have been captured by the Indians, as they have not since been heard of. Mr. Kingsley re-established his plantation soon after the capitulation of the Indians.”⁷⁹ Subsequent accounts surfaced several times over the next few years, though most were stated to be rumor or blatant lies told by Kingsley’s own slaves. One such slave was said to have been taken in the early Seminole raids voluntarily returned from their camp in the fall of the following year complaining of bad treatment and “little or no” sustenance during his ordeal.⁸⁰ Similarly, a “gang of negroes” at Kingsley’s plantation at Drayton Island on the St. Johns River left the property for Fort Picolata bearing news of the Seminoles. Ordered by “a party of Indians,” Kingsley’s slaves were told “to work there no more, because they intended soon to re-commence the war.” Reflecting the chaotic and paranoid view of the Florida frontier, the editor claimed that the story was both “not believed” and “false,” but likewise admitted that “it is one which might be true...”⁸¹ In all cases Kingsley’s plantation settings had been frequent scenes of theft, destruction, and otherwise misfortune. Southern planters would have no doubt been reminded how quickly financial misery could befall masters, especially at the hands of rebellious slaves and “hostile” Indians.⁸²

⁷⁹ “Later from Florida,” *New-York Spectator*, 6 July 1837 (New York, NY). Drayton Island was one of several plantations that Kingsley maintained. It was primarily used as an orchard for his massive citrus holdings and populated only with small numbers of his slaves.

⁸⁰ *Pensacola Gazette*, 15 September 1838 (Pensacola, FL).

⁸¹ Reported in *Florida Herald*, 18 July 1839 (St. Augustine, FL); reprinted in excerpt form in *Rhode Island Republican*, 31 July 1839 (Newport, RI); *Niles’ National Register*, 10 August 1839 (Washington, DC); and *Liberator*, 16 August 1839.

⁸² Reported in *The Floridian*, 2 March 1839 (Tallahassee, FL); Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 198-99; Larry Eugene Rivers, *Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 203-04. An important comment

The formal end of the Second Seminole War came in August 1842. White Floridians met the war's conclusion with mixed emotions. Many of those most directly impacted by the hostilities were all too eager to put the Seminole threat permanently to rest by seeing the last of their numbers sent westward and far beyond territorial lines. Others held more complex views of the Seminoles and of Native Americans generally. The expansion of American society increased on the heels of industrialization and an expanding cotton frontier. Many came to believe in the decline of overall Native American strength and their collective inability to resist such sweeping changes. Spurred in part by the works of James Fenimore Cooper, this sentiment often featured highly romanticized views of Native Americans replete with easily identifiable heroes and villains.⁸³ The sentiment was all the more bizarre given that the Native populations had hardly resigned themselves to failure or simply stopped mounting defenses of their ancestral lands. In Florida the situation was more difficult. The Seminoles had destroyed many lucrative plantations, liberated a princely fortune in slaves, and conducted a coordinated war effort against the U.S. military on a scale scarcely believed possible to that time. Some Seminole leaders such as Micanopy and the martyred Osceola found sympathy in the press and were sometimes widely admired by white Floridians.⁸⁴ And though his own property suffered greatly during these Seminole raids, two of Kingsley's mixed-race sons were named after the Seminole chiefs.⁸⁵

is in James Oakes, "Larry Eugene Rivers's *Slavery in Florida: A Review Essay*," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80 (Fall 2001): 235-40.

⁸³ Matthew Clavin, "It is a negro, not an Indian war: Southampton, St. Domingo, and the Second Seminole War," in *America's Hundred Years' War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763-1858*, ed. William S. Belko (University Press of Florida, 2011), 183-85; William L. Van Deburg, *Slavery & Race in American Popular Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 14-17; Patricia Roberts-Miller, *Fanatical Schemes: Proslavery Rhetoric and the Tragedy of Consensus* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 56.

⁸⁴ Thom Hatch, *Osceola and the Great Seminole War: A Struggle for Justice and Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012), 236-37; John W. Griffin, "The Search for Osceola," in *Fifty Years of Southeastern Archaeology: Selected Works of John W. Griffin*, ed. Patricia C. Griffin (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 127;

During these difficult times Zephaniah Kingsley found himself caught between public roles that added considerable fuel to an evolving set of myths. His rather abrupt abandonment of his public proslavery views for an equally public position now advocating the merits of black colonization was too decidedly bizarre for most to accept. The shift was perhaps not more than a year. Following the fourth and final revised edition of his infamous *Treatise*, we have seen that Kingsley went to Haiti to inquire about prospects for establishing a colony for African Americans there under a black republican government. He continued to publish detailed accounts of his ventures for several years, including no less than three editions of a translated pamphlet on the Haitian Rural Code. While Kingsley did in fact carry out his larger plan to transfer his slaves to Haiti, he did so only partially and under a cloud of suspicion. As the author of a proslavery treatise who was well read in abolitionist circles, he continued to hold still more slaves in Florida.⁸⁶

One such abolitionist, Lydia Maria Child, recognized the absurdity. In July 1842 she published an account of her recent meeting with Zephaniah Kingsley as the twenty-third installment in her Letters from New York series. Their fascinating interview is, at times, remarkably candid and revealing. It presents a portrait of a slaveholder who is often uncomfortable trying to justify his own behaviors and rationalizations to an audience not of his world. At its best the meeting was, in Child's telling, light-hearted and enjoyable; at its worst, it seemed to devolve into the awkward and sometimes pathetic. On more than one occasion does Kingsley appear

J. Leitch Wright, *Creeks & Seminoles: The Destruction and regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 299, 301, 311-12.

⁸⁵ See Kingsley's will printed in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 118, 118n11-12.

⁸⁶ Mark J. Fleszar, "'My Laborers in Haiti are Not Slaves': Proslavery Fictions and a Black Colonization Experiment on the Northern Coast, 1835-1846," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (December 2012): 478-510.

stubborn, old, and weak, frequently hiding behind a single phrase, “The best we can do in this world is to balance evils judiciously.”⁸⁷ It is apparent that some of his more definitive statements are, if not outright lies, more like half-truths or, at the very least, quite deceptive. He did, however, admit that his supposed “plans” for Haiti would never fully materialize given his old age, even though he never said what they entailed. This meant that his large slave force still in Florida would remain in bondage and, he admitted, “my poor niggers would be badly off.”⁸⁸ Such “benevolence,” it seems, clearly had its limits. In the end, as with so many instances of the Kingsley story the piece likewise introduces more questions than answers.⁸⁹

Kingsley was not a young man when this last public critique appeared in 1842. Late now in his seventh decade the planter felt the weight of his years. Increasingly burdened by pain and discomfort, his ill health signaled that the end was drawing near, even if he remained stubbornly unaware of the fact. He arranged for a short visit to the Haitian settlement, but drafted a precautionary will on 20 July 1843. Leaving Florida in late August, Kingsley was scheduled to take a connecting vessel to Hispaniola from New York City but got no farther. On 13 September he died in Brooklyn at his family’s residence on Pearl Street. “He talked about taking a ride, and in about ten minutes after was a corpse,” a friend, signed J.M., recounted in the *Boston Investigator*.⁹⁰ He departed the world at aged seventy-seven years. In death he left behind much turmoil and a legacy so enormously complex that it continued to reverberate long thereafter.

⁸⁷ Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 110-12.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 107-112.

⁹⁰ “Obituary,” *Boston Investigator*, 27 September 1843 (Boston, MA).

CHAPTER TWO:
**“MY LABORERS IN HAITI ARE NOT SLAVES”:
PROSLAVERY FICTIONS AND
PLANTER CONTROL IN THE AGE OF EMANCIPATION**

Florida's firm connections to the Greater Caribbean drew the region into the complex and often contradictory changes then enveloping the Atlantic world. New technologies brought increases in production, but evolving labor reforms harnessed the power of greater numbers of workers. A new age of exploitation made the Atlantic system sleeker and more precise, though its impact was more wide ranging and more ruthless than ever. Tighter legal constraints often accompanied these changes. Stringent laws regarding race and property rights spread throughout the antebellum South, so that its elite slaveholding minority could better maintain control in spite of great changes enveloping the region. In spite of such reforms, threats in varied guises appeared as both ominous and intensely personal to masters like Zephaniah Kingsley. Threatening his vast wealth, mastery, and the legacy of his own mixed-race family in the process, he sought an escape from these dangers in the form of an ambition colonization enterprise. Using strict laws designed to maximize agricultural output, Kingsley responded by purposefully recreating an ambiguous plantation complex in eastern Haiti called Cabaret, managed in his absence by his mixed-race son, and outfitted with "cultivators" drawn from the ranks of black emigrants hoping to improve their situations. Far from this, most black laborers instead encountered misery and disappointment. Most of the emigrants had been Kingsley's own bondmen, removed from Florida by their former master and legally attached to his Haitian plantation. Once in Haiti, most of the indentured protested working conditions and the terms of their contracts, which promised eventual freedom and, more importantly, land. Most if not all of the laborers eventually escaped

these conditions, fleeing the Haitian settlement at Cabaret in small numbers from their first days on the island.¹

Zephaniah Kingsley's peculiar colonization scheme does not fit congruently within the historiography of proslavery ideology, colonization, or black emigration.² The settlement appears on its face an act of benevolence. Kingsley bankrolled a fledging agricultural colony for some of his own liberated slaves sent to Haiti and to provide for his black mistresses and mixed-race children. In an era when even the bare mention of Haiti conjured up thoughts of death, disorder, and end of white mastery, the decision to locate the settlement within the Haitian republic was nothing short of astonishing and an apparent affront to slaveholders everywhere. Appearances, however, are often deceiving. Despite philanthropic pretenses, Kingsley's colonization experiments were self-interested proslavery schemes designed to preserve his wealth and power against what he feared were overwhelming forces of the Age of Emancipation. In re-imagining the geography of his slave empire, these efforts to strengthen his mastery purposefully bound Florida and Haiti in an intimate fashion. Championed as an example of racial harmony and economic success by Zephaniah Kingsley himself, this chapter examines the planter's Haitian colo-

¹ The few published works to mention the plantation settlement are Jose Augusto Puig Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos a Puerto Plata en la Primera Mitad del Siglo XIX* (Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 1978); Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 67-69; Jennifer L. Anderson, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 266-68. An unpublished essay by the late Dominican historian Rafael A. Brugal (Paiewonsky) was immensely helpful, citing records that have apparently vanished in the decades since its appearance. Brugal, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda," unpublished MS, in possession of the author. I am extremely grateful to Dr. John Williman, himself a former resident of Cabarete, for supplying me with this document given to him by Brugal many years ago.

² Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); P.J. Stadenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Nicholas Guyatt, "'The Outskirts of Our Happiness': Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic," *Journal of American History* 95 (2009): 986-1011; R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

ny from conception to realization and is set within the broader context of the complex transition from slave to free labor in the Atlantic World.

Situated between the limits of the United States of America and the Caribbean, Florida's relationship with both regions proved problematic historically. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Spain's precarious hold on its Florida colonies intensified amidst international rivalries with Britain and France, mounting concerns over the French and Haitian Revolutions, and the militant policies of their "aggressive and unhappy northern neighbors" in the southeastern United States.³ In order to bolster its sagging economic situation, the Spanish Crown issued a Royal Decree on 20 November 1790 that encouraged immigration to La Florida in exchange for land grants. The policy brought a much needed boost in overall population numbers in the ensuing years, chiefly by the introduction of approximately 5,000 slaves that these immigrants brought to the colony before 1810. Many settlers, including Zephaniah Kingsley, also brought with them extensive personal and economic ties to the Atlantic World and a cutthroat business style marked by an "aggressive and violent individualism."⁴ These men linked Florida to the economies of the Greater Caribbean. Although Havana remained a crucial

³ Timothy Paul Grady, *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in Colonial South-East America, 1650-1725* (Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2010), 61-89; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: Peoples, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 246-71; Jane Landers, "Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida," in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, eds. David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 156-7 (quote); Robert J. Alderson, Jr., "Entangled Borderlands: The 1794 Projected French Invasion of Spanish East Florida and Atlantic History," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88 (2009): 54-82.

⁴ Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 2004), 79. Others drawn to East Florida cut from a similar cloth are found in: Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 245-6, 253-55; Daniel L. Schafer, "Family Ties that Bind: Anglo-African Slave Traders in Africa and Florida, John Fraser and His Descendants," *Slavery & Abolition* 20 (1999): 1-21; idem., "Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove Plantation, 1803-1813," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 101; Robert L. Gold, "That Infamous Floridian, Jesse Fish," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 52 (1973): 1-17; Susan R. Parker, "Success through Diversification: Francis Philip Fatio's New Switzerland Plantation," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Landers, 69-70, 74, 78-9; and idem., "Men Without God or King: Rural Settlers of East Florida, 1784-1790," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (1990): 135-55.

source of economic and political support, Spanish Florida found itself caught in an increasingly problematic and costly relationship with the United States after 1800.⁵ Repeated invasions of East and West Florida compounded the problem of a nagging economic dependency on sorely needed American imports and credit. To make matters worse, “the idiosyncratic and self-centered ambitions of a largely immigrant population,” as one historian suggests, further impinged Spain’s ability to hold onto La Florida in the face of overwhelming international forces.⁶ Spain finally ceded its Florida holdings by treaty in 1819, which put a formal end to the steady erosion of its colonial control, hastened no doubt by Spain’s policy of encouraging foreign settlement within its boundaries.⁷

Following the acquisitions of East and West Florida, the United States united them both under the Territory of Florida in 1822. One aspect destabilized in the process was race relations.⁸ Like much of the Greater Caribbean, early nineteenth-century challenges to interracial unions and the rights of slaves and free blacks affected Spanish Floridians as well.⁹ The results

⁵ J. C. A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 13-51; Sherry Johnson, “Climate, Community, and Commerce among Florida, Cuba, and the Atlantic World, 1784-1800,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80 (2002): 473-74; Hoffman, *Florida’s Frontiers*, 244.

⁶ James Cusick, “Across the Border: Commodity Flow and Merchants in Spanish St. Augustine,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (1991): 277-99, 298-99 (quote); idem., “Spanish East Florida in the Atlantic Economy of the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Landers, 168. See also Christopher Ward, “The Commerce of East Florida during the Embargo, 1806-1812: The Role of Amelia Island,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (1989): 160-79.

⁷ Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr. and Gene Allen Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997); James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 293-310; Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 229-48; Johnson, “Climate, Community, and Commerce,” 477-81; McMichael, *Atlantic Loyalties*, 149-68; Helen Hornback Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, reprint 1989), 227-28. See also David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 335-60.

⁸ Canter Brown, Jr., “Race Relations in Territorial Florida, 1821-1845,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73 (1995): 287-307.

were uneven and often ambiguous at best. For example, as early as 1810 white militia raids in East Florida found black protestors on the wrong side of Spanish law, sentenced to hard labor that would “make them understand and observe due submission and respect.”¹⁰ Continuing this precedent, territorial laws challenged many longstanding Latin American and Caribbean practices, which threatened Zephaniah Kingsley’s mastery.¹¹ He was elderly, in ill-health, and now had a troublesome family situation in the eyes of the law. The white planter admitted to at least nine mixed-race children born of four slaves or former slave women and had no white progeny.¹² Although this was not uncommon in much of the Atlantic world, Kingsley flouted social convention by brashly flaunting his lifestyle and openly advocating racial mixing in print, earning him condemnation in the court of slaveholder public opinion.¹³

⁹ Paul F. LaChance, “The Formation of a Three-Caste Society: Evidence from Wills in Antebellum New Orleans,” *Social Science History* 18 (1994): 212. According to LaChance, “interracial unions remained frequent up to the end of the eighteenth century” in Caribbean society; Nathaniel Millett, “Defining Freedom in the Atlantic Borderlands of the Revolutionary Southeast,” *Early American Studies* 5 (2007): 376, 380-81, 383-84.

¹⁰ Schafer, “Laurel Grove Plantation,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Landers, 98-101, 100 (quote).

¹¹ Frank Marotti, *Heaven's Soldiers: Free People of Color and the Spanish Legacy in Antebellum Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 150-51; Philip Matthew Smith, “Persistent Borderland: Freedom and Citizenship in Territorial Florida,” (PhD Dissertation, Texas A & M University, 2007), 88, 89; Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, reprint 1995), 14-33; Fountain, “The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley,” 34-36, 40-41. An alternate reading is found in Daniel L. Schafer, “‘A Class of People Neither Freemen nor Slaves’: From Spanish to American Race Relations in Florida, 1821-1861,” *Journal of Social History* 26 (1993): 587-609.

¹² The number might be thirteen children fathered by Kingsley. Problems with determining his offspring are discussed in Daniel W. Stowell, “Introduction,” in *Balancing Evils: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley*, ed. Daniel W. Stowell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), 3-4, 4n5; and Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 63. Another child he is believed to have fathered with his mistress Flora may have died in Haiti as well. Kingsley's will is vague as to the total number.

¹³ Christer Petley, “‘Home’ and ‘this country’: Britishness and Creole Identity in the Letters of a Transatlantic Slaveholder,” *Atlantic Studies* 6 (2009): 50-51; M. J. Steel, “A Philosophy of Fear: The World View of the Jamaican Plantocracy in a Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 27 (1993): 13-14; Brown, “Race Relations in Territorial Florida,” 291.

Patricia Roberts-Miller, *Fanatical Schemes: Proslavery Rhetoric and the Tragedy of Consensus* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), notes another American example in the case of Vice President Richard M. Johnson and his relationship with his mixed-race common law wife, Julia Chinn. Similar to Kingsley’s own situation, she argues that “Johnson’s crime is not having sexual relations with an African American woman, nor

Historians have long had difficulty in placing Zephaniah Kingsley and his worldview within the context of the antebellum United States. He is seen as something of an exception or, most notably, a “nonconformist.”¹⁴ Kingsley’s own background is instructive in this regard. His father was a merchant with extensive and complex transatlantic ties. International influences surrounded his early years as he spent large amounts of time in the port cities of Charleston, South Carolina; Liverpool, Bristol, and London, England during his adolescence. For a time he resided with his displaced family in New Brunswick, British Canada before crisscrossing the Atlantic and positioning himself squarely within the Caribbean trade.¹⁵ While Kingsley later in life returned to the United States and published his proslavery views for an American audience, his most formative experiences came from the West Indies.¹⁶

West Indian planters were peculiar in both behavior and patterns of thought. The Caribbean locale was a difficult existence for many. Colonists there exhibited a savage quality with their “relentless push for wealth,” “excessive individualism and indulgent self-expression,” a preference for preying on black women, and “sexual excess, ready violence, and social and cultural abandonment,” according to Trevor Burnard.¹⁷ A transatlantic print culture paraded the

fathering ‘mulatto’ children, but with his open acknowledgement of them, and his insistence on their being treated with respect.” She quotes the 30 June 1835 *Georgetown Sentinel*, which suggested “His chief sin against society was in the publicity and barefacedness of his conduct. He scorns all secrecy, all concealment, all disguise. He affects no squeamishness, no sensibility to public opinion (pp. 96-97).”

¹⁴ Philip S. May, “Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist, 1765-1843,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 23 (1945): 145-59. For decades it was the most popular source of information on Kingsley, though is perhaps best passed over due to its chronic errors, gross distortions, and questionable methodology.

¹⁵ Stowell, “Introduction,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 2-3.

¹⁶ Zephaniah Kingsley, “Address to the Legislative Council of Florida,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 27.

¹⁷ Trevor Burnard, “West Indian Identity in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Assumed Identities: The Meanings of Race in the Atlantic World*, eds. John D. Garrigus and Christopher Morris (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 71-87, 72 (quote); Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought*, 1-16; Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (Second Edition) (New York: Oxford University Press,

familiar and frequent stories of Caribbean planters bedding one or more black or mulatto women at a time as examples of social norms gone awry. For those on the make, the Caribbean was appealing because it offered significant freedoms and opportunities that so-called “civilized society” did not. Residents of the West Indies, Kingsley included, grew familiar with blatant interracial liaisons and also the ways in which colonial societies both drew and redrew the line between what was acceptable and not. Like many others in and of the West Indies, Kingsley too shared these views and behaviors.¹⁸

A case in point of clashing ideologies about race is found in the sociopolitical backdrop of the Florida Territory. Here and elsewhere throughout the American South important exceptions to the substance of the American proslavery doctrine existed before 1830.¹⁹ Only recently

1990), 120-58 passim; Matthew Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 28.

¹⁸ Christopher P. Iannini, *Fatal Revolutions: Natural History, West Indian Slavery, and the Routes of American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 189-91; Burnard, “West Indian Identity in the Eighteenth Century,” 75, 77-79. The literature is vast but also see Jack P. Greene, “Colonial South Carolina and the Caribbean Connection,” in his *Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 69-86; Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture During the Era of Abolition* (Brookfield, VT: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), 35-53; Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 21-22; Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*; B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy, 1750-1850* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2008); Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 209-40; Douglas J. Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); David Lambert, *White Creole Culture: Politics and Identity in the Age of Abolition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For an important discussion of the ways in which authorities attempted to police this behavior and preserve white privilege elsewhere in Spanish society see Virginia Meacham Gould, “‘A Chaos of Iniquity and Discord’: Slave and Free Women of Color in the Spanish Ports of New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola,” in *The Devil’s Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, eds. Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 232-46.

¹⁹ David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 211-12; Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 75-96, 102; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders’ Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 747; idem., *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders’ New World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 14-15. The transatlantic conversation on slavery that Kingsley was also enmeshed is discussed in Srividhya Swaminathan, “Developing the West Indian Proslavery posi-

acquired by the United States, Florida had one foot in its Spanish past and another in the present march of Atlantic economic expansionism. Several planters remained in the region long after Spain relinquished control and had racially-mixed families as did Kingsley. Certainly most problematic was that he was continued to be an intensely vocal, ardent proponent of slavery as well.²⁰

First published in 1828 for “the people of Florida” and “political economists throughout the Southern States,” Kingsley espoused his views in *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society*. Later reissued in three subsequent editions, this controversial pro-slavery pamphlet by the planter’s own claims rejected the idea of racism and, by using “established precedents” drawn from the history of circum-Atlantic slave systems, proposed to strengthen the system of slavery by amalgamation.²¹ In its later editions he went even farther by championing Haiti’s past, present, and then-future prospects, stating that the country is “evidently destined by nature, at no very distant period, if not to command, at least share the commerce of the surrounding ocean; and, without being over peopled, comfortably to accommodate twelve millions of inhabitants.”²² Kingsley thus breached what Michael O’Brien called a transatlantic

tion after the Somerset Decision,” *Slavery & Abolition* 24 (December 2003): 50-56; Jeffrey Robert Young, “Introduction: A Transatlantic Perspective on the Problem of Proslavery Thought,” in *Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740-1829: An Anthology*, ed. Jeffrey Robert Young (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2006), 51; and David Lambert, “The Glasgow King of Billingsgate: James MacQueen and an Atlantic Proslavery Network,” *Slavery & Abolition* 29 (September 2008): 391-402.

²⁰ Smith, “Persistent Borderland,” 173.

²¹ Zephaniah Kingsley, “A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-operative System of Society,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 39-75, 43 (quote). Revised and expanded editions of his pamphlet subsequently appeared in 1829, 1833, and 1834. The most widely read and cited edition is the Second Edition of 1829. As references to the first edition are all but nonexistent, the print run must have been quite small. All subsequent references to the *Treatise* are from *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell.

²² Kingsley, *Treatise*, 66. He witnessed some of the Haitian Revolution for himself during his residency on the island in the 1790s, a fact which he referenced repeatedly particularly in public discussions. Other writings reveal that he returned many times as a merchant in the Caribbean as well. See particularly the letters of Kingsley and his brother-in-law George Gibbs in the James Hamilton Papers, 1784-1892, housed at the Rare Book, Manuscript,

community of slaveholders and advocates of slavery who were bound by “a shared experience” rooted in “a sharp fear of Haitian dangers.”²³ This put him squarely at odds with nearly every proslaveryite to that point.²⁴ Given the backdrop of British emancipation, mounting slave resistance throughout the Atlantic, and the growing radicalism of abolitionism, he failed to find a sympathetic audience anywhere.²⁵

Humiliated in a well-publicized political battle with Florida’s governor, both proslavery and antislavery sources nationally mocked Kingsley and his racial doctrine.²⁶ Unwilling to risk the future of his entire fortune under seemingly ominous circumstances, the Florida planter established a 35,000 acre plantation at Cabaret on the northern coast of Haiti during the Age of Emancipation. Taking advantage of Haiti’s severe labor laws, Kingsley dubiously stocked his settlement with a group listed nominally as “indentured servants” culled from a portion of his own slave labor force in Florida. In order to achieve broad support for his elaborate endeavor, the planter undertook an extensive advertising campaign from 1835 to 1842 to attract settlers un-

and Special Collection Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; and the assorted correspondence in the James Hamilton Papers at the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens.

²³ Michael O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 302.

²⁴ Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 129-31; Tise, *Proslavery*, 66-67.

²⁵ Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 96-142; Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 106-20; Ada Ferrer, “Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *American Historical Review* 117 (February 2012): 40-66.

²⁶ William P. DuVal, “To the Freemen of Florida,” *Florida Courier*, 21 April 1831 (Tallahassee, FL); Joseph M. White, “To the Public,” *The Floridian and Advocate* (Tallahassee, FL), 14 May 1831; “The Florida Pamphlet,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (Washington, DC and Baltimore, Md.), May 1831; “More of the Florida Pamphlet,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, June 1831; William Jay, *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society, and American Anti-Slavery Societies*, Third Edition (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 49; Lydia Maria Child, *The Evils of Slavery and the Cure for Slavery: The First Proved by the opinion of Southerners Themselves, the Last Shown by Historical Evidence* (Newburyport, MA: Charles Whipple, 1836), 10-11; and an editorial appearing in *The Floridian*, 4 April 1840 (Tallahassee, FL). The absence of any public support for Kingsley’s views is telling.

der false pretenses of philanthropy. To achieve this goal, he improved (or so he thought) upon earlier schemes by emphasizing the dismal prospects of free people of color in the Americas, who he said stood little chance of bettering their situations anywhere in the Atlantic world except for the Haitian republic. In reality, Kingsley wanted a secure workforce in a region otherwise starved for labor that would form a peasant class of laborers permanently bound and dependent on the plantation settlement for their livelihood.²⁷ Once in Haiti, they would be bound under long-term legal contracts, rendering them immobile by law and custom.²⁸ The entire plan replicated a working plantation for Kingsley's own benefit, and for that of his black family, until his death in 1843.²⁹

Most white residents of Atlantic slave societies regarded Haiti with a mix of fear and contempt. Florida's own history was intimately bound and shaped by fear of the black republic for some four decades by the time Kingsley's ideas appeared. Shortly after the French and Haitian revolutions commenced, Spanish Florida officials worried incessantly over the spread of republican ideology, banning everything from French slave imports and incendiary materials to "arrest[ing] and export[ing] several former slaves from Haiti" before French-inspired invasions paralyzed the region beginning in 1793.³⁰ In 1796 Floridians were considerably alarmed when Spain's Charles V sent the Saint-Domingue-born black General Georges Biassou and his follow-

²⁷ Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 123, 134, 137, 140.

²⁸ [Anonymous,] *The Rural Code of Haiti; in French and English, with a Prefatory Letter to the Right Hon. The Early Bathurst, K.G.* (London: B. McMillan, 1827), 3. See Law No. 1, General Enactments Relative to Agriculture, Article 4.

²⁹ This essays draws particularly on ideas found in Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 175, 179, 186. He argues that "Historians often give little space to plans that failed, but they are important to show intentions, if not achievements" (p. 186).

³⁰ Andrew K. Frank, "Taking the State Out: Seminoles and Creeks in Late Eighteenth-Century Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 84 (Summer 2005): 18-19.

ers to reside in St. Augustine, provoking considerable resentment also from U.S. officials and nearby Georgians. Recent studies explain that the mere presence of anyone connected with the bloody revolt was deeply suspect. According to Jane Landers, “the contemporary suspicion was that all participants in Saint-Domingue’s slave revolt were primitive and dangerous, by virtue of their war conduct as well as religious practice, and planters throughout the circum-Caribbean feared their influence as a plague.”³¹

Events in Haiti further served as a catalyst as Spain’s precarious hold on its Florida territories waned. Following France’s withdrawal from Saint-Domingue in 1803, Napoleon sold its Louisiana claim to the United States, bringing American interests steadily closer to Florida. This was extremely distressing for Spanish citizens, especially given the recent land losses realized in the newly created Mississippi Territory (1798). These incidents culminated in an American takeover of West Florida in 1810 and subsequent military invasion of East Florida in 1812.³²

The so-called Patriot War (1812-1814) was a dizzying conflict brought on by an invasion of Spanish East Florida by Georgia militia and U.S. troops in March 1812. The disruption brought about the capture of Amelia Island and siege of St. Augustine before Spanish officials sent 270 Cuban Disciplined Black Militia members from Havana to help quell the assault by mid-July 1812. Inspired by the success of the Haitian Revolution’s black liberators and the prospect of abolition, the subsequent arrival of black Cuban prisoners sentenced from one to ten years of “hard labor or military service” in Florida did little to assuage fears on all sides. The

³¹ Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 132 (quote); David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 187, quoting a Spanish Honduran official that stated black soldiers from the island were “to be treated like people coming from a country where there is plague, with whom no precaution is excessive.”

³² Robert V. Haynes, *The Mississippi Territory and the Southwest Frontier, 1795-1817* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010); Andrew McMichael, *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 54-75; Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands*, 94-6; Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 110.

latter group consisted of “over 100 free people of color and slaves,” who helped repel the American invaders.³³ It is little wonder how U.S. officials could complain that Spain was laying the groundwork for another Haitian Revolution.³⁴

A culture of fear was ever present in antebellum Florida.³⁵ The massive maroon community located along the Apalachicola River in western Florida, a home to many Caribbean slaves, was a formidable threat to slaveholders.³⁶ The tenacity of this group located at the so called Negro Fort, coupled with another failed invasion of Amelia Island in 1817 by the French privateer Luis Aury and his “more than one hundred black Haitians,” kept the specter of racial warfare alive in Florida well into the antebellum period.³⁷ By the appearance of Zephaniah Kingsley’s very public views on Haiti, fears of race war again embroiled the region as continued conflicts between whites and Native Americans culminated in the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). In addition to numerous Seminole raids and real and imagined bloodshed alike, newspapers such as the *Jacksonville Courier* warned locals of an organization comprised of an “extensive combination of free negroes and slaves...headed by a few low, ignorant whites,” that recently appeared to the west in Alachua County, Florida. Such sights brought talk of “fanatics” attempting to incite

³³ Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 126-27.

³⁴ Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 188-89; Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 110-11, 157; idem., *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 222-23. Spanish Florida Governor Sebastián Kindelán felt sufficiently concerned about the conduct of his black troops, some of whom had fought in the Haitian Revolution, reminding them not to go too far in their duties.

³⁵ James M. Denham and Randolph Roth, “Why Was Antebellum Florida Murderous? A Quantitative Analysis of Homicide in Florida, 1821-1861,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 86 (2007): 216-39. See also Edward E. Baptist, *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida’s Plantation Frontier before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

³⁶ Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 2006), 120-25; Millett, “Defining Freedom in the Atlantic Borderlands,” 380-83.

³⁷ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 273-90; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 245.

rebellion among the slave populations of the South by reading abolitionist pamphlets to free and slave alike. “How many such will it require, to blaze every house in the South?” the *Courier* chided readers. “Shall we wait till the tragic scenes of Hayti are commenced, before we act, and act efficiently?”³⁸ Floridians scarcely needed elaboration on this point, as the idea still managed to elicit responses of white hysteria.³⁹

Between the 1820s and 1840s there were several endeavors to relocate black Americans abroad that involved Africa, Canada, and of course Haiti. Each was notable for its own reasons and part of a short list of destinations that particularly engaged the collective U.S. imagination.⁴⁰ Liberia was internationally the most controversial across the color line. Started in the nation’s capital in 1816, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was a highly ambiguous white organization made up of members from both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, including slaveholders, whose purpose was to remove free blacks to Africa from the United States.⁴¹ Its efforts to create a suitable place of resettlement along the lines of Britain’s Sierra Leone colony resulted in the founding of Liberia in 1821. “The colony was a death trap,” states Eric Burin in no uncertain terms, as approximately twenty-nine percent of the 1,670 total emigrants died there during the

³⁸ Reported in the *Jacksonville Courier*, 8 October 1835 (Jacksonville, FL). The 3 September 1835 issue of the *Courier* contains lengthy treatments related to emancipation in the West Indies, abolitionist societies, and abolitionist efforts to spread literature in an effort to agitate the slavery question. Schafer, “A Class of People Neither Freemen nor Slaves,” 601, 608n74.

³⁹ According to Matthew J. Clavin, Haiti continued to serve political uses in Florida politics as late as the secession crisis in early 1861. For example, former Florida Governor Richard Keith Call explicitly drew on the Haitian Revolution as a useful foil for demonstrating the merits of southern plantation slavery. The implication was that the revolution’s horrors were unique to the island itself. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 48, 66-7, 71-2, 153.

⁴⁰ Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 54-90; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 299-328, 361-89.

⁴¹ Historiography surrounding the controversial nature of the ACS is summed in Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 616n2-3, 617n5. See also Douglas R. Egerton, “Its Origin is Not a Little Curious’: A New Look at the American Colonization Society,” in his *Rebels, Reformers, & Revolutionaries: Collected Essays and Second Thoughts* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 107-19.

settlement's first decade alone.⁴² The ACS faced heavy opposition from the beginning. Proslaveryites, for one thing, considered the death toll sufficient proof of abolitionist cruelty in meddling with the black race.⁴³ As the endeavor was white-sponsored and had more than a taint of proslavery, neither the ACS nor Liberia were ever popular with northern or southern free blacks either. Black abolitionists, in fact, actively worked to build an international alliance against slavery both in print and through canvassing much of Britain for support. Colonization remained a persistent issue during the period and a common cause in the transatlantic abolitionist movement against slavery.⁴⁴

If Liberia proved to be too closely allied with the themes of proslavery, racism, and the shadowy workings of the ACS, Canada was a very different alternative for would-be black emigrants. Nineteenth-century Canada was home to about forty black settlements. Beginning with the forced exodus of black Cincinnatians in fall 1829, the Wilberforce settlement in western Ontario sat on some 800 acres by 1830. Estimates vary as to the number of emigrants, though it appears that about 200 residents stayed throughout the next decade. By the 1840s their numbers perhaps fell by half and only declined thereafter. In the meantime, northern free blacks had otherwise “damned colonization” in general, but one study notes that they “made an exception for Canada.”⁴⁵ Famed abolitionists the likes of Benjamin Lundy, George Thompson, William Lloyd

⁴² Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Institution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 17; Antonio McDaniel, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot: The Mortality Cost of Colonizing Liberia in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 75-106.

⁴³ The story of an atypical Mississippi slaveholder whose contested 1836 will stipulated that his slaves be sent to Liberia is recounted in Alan Huffman, *Mississippi in Africa: The Saga of the Slaves of Prospect Hill Plantation and Their Legacy in Liberia Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2004).

⁴⁴ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 47-78; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 294-306.

Garrison, and others championed Wilberforce in the press. While many slaveholders and the ACS alike found much to criticize, black support was strong because emigration was entirely voluntary and Canada was close to the United States. Other settlements continued to make it a popular choice for African Americans. In southwestern Ontario, for example, the area around the Dawn Settlement continued to receive large numbers of black emigrants at its peak in the 1840s.⁴⁶

Although Zephaniah Kingsley's public plan for black emigration to Haiti emerged in late 1835, the idea itself and the problems that inspired it were hardly new.⁴⁷ Nearly two decades beforehand the new Haitian president, Jean-Pierre Boyer, recognized his country's needs as many and seemingly insurmountable. Succeeding first President Alexander Pétion upon his 1818 death, the Port-au-Prince-born Boyer faced acute political isolation, endured talk of a renewed French invasion after the 1815 Bourbon Restoration, and weathered a mountain of international pressure to admit European merchants and speculators to Hispaniola. He did so also in the midst of a severe labor shortage. Racial animosity between mulattoes and blacks in Haiti only exacerbated these tensions. Like his predecessor, the mulatto Boyer seemed willing to entertain talks with France, but did so at the cost of alienating a substantial portion of the black Haitian population unwilling to risk re-enslavement to their old masters, economic or otherwise.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ William J. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963), 61; Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 268-75.

⁴⁶ Pease and Pease, *Black Utopia*, 46-62, 63-83; Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*, 62, 121, 261, 277; Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*, 100-01; Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 18, 53.

⁴⁷ Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 93-97; Julie Winch, "American Free Blacks and Emigration to Haiti," (paper prepared for the XIth Caribbean Congress, San Germán, Puerto Rico, August 1988), 2.

France's determination to reassert economic control over its former colony complicated the Haitian president's situation. The appearance of no less than fourteen French warships carrying 494 cannons forced Boyer's hand in agreeing to royal demands. Issued by King Charles X of France, the Ordinance of 1825 gave the French privileged rates on trading duties with Haiti (half the standard rate), and formally recognized the island's independence, for a price. By 1 January next, France demanded the first of Haiti's indemnity payments (roughly 30 million francs) to recoup about 150 million francs in total merchant and government losses from the revolutionary upheaval between 1791 and 1804. The mulatto-dominated Haitian Congress passed the treaty under Boyer's urging in hopes of moving past the affair, but the practical matter of paying the indemnity persisted.⁴⁹

To meet the burdensome payments owed to France, President Boyer authorized a direct tax on Haitian citizens, and implemented the infamous Rural Code of Haiti in 1826. Both measures failed. The public complained that the tax fell disproportionately on the poor. Enforcement within the capital itself was substantial, but apart from token adherence in the northern city of Cap-Haitien, the tax was simply ignored everywhere else. However, Boyer's hopes for Haiti's economic resurgence hinged upon his plan for agricultural renewal.⁵⁰ Signed into law in May 1826, the Rural Code was a new labor regime beyond slavery that impressed most of its

⁴⁸ Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 13-14; Robert K. Lacerte, "Xenophobia and Economic Decline: The Haitian Case, 1820-1843," *The Americas* 37 (1981): 499-502; John Edward Baur, "Mulatto Machiavelli, Jean Pierre Boyer, and the Haiti of His Day," *Journal of Negro History* 32 (1947): 307, 321-23; Frank Moya Pons, "The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: The Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labor, 1801-1843," in *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 184-91.

⁴⁹ Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 100-03; Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 13-14; Lacerte, "Xenophobia and Economic Decline," 499-502; Baur, "Mulatto Machiavelli," 307, 321-23.

⁵⁰ Dubois, *Haiti*, 105; Moya Pons, "The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo," 194-98; Baur, "Mulatto Machiavelli," 333-35; Lacerte, "Xenophobia and Economic Decline," 506-07.

population to “cultivate the soil.”⁵¹ The terms of indenture for most laborers limited contracts to terms of no less than three but not more than nine years in length, to be enforced by a specially created “rural police.”⁵² Historians like Joan Dayan have been quick to point out its dubitable qualities, which “reduced most Haitians...to essentially slave status.”⁵³ Kingsley’s enterprise depended on such a notion.

The Rural Code made laborers of Haiti’s citizens but shrinking population numbers and the masses tried to ignore it, which constrained its effectiveness.⁵⁴ “Over the years, an independent Haitian peasantry had emerged,” writes Frank Moya Pons, “but Boyer and his elite seemed to have lost sight of this phenomenon.” These peasants, like their counterparts on the eastern side of the island, wanted only “a comfortable subsistence.”⁵⁵ Boyer believed black emigration to the island from the United States might provide a crucial labor source instead. According to Leon D. Pamphile, the Haitian Revolution and all of “its implications began to color their [African Americans’] attitudes and to shape their behavior as well. They came to perceive Haiti as the guardian of liberty.”⁵⁶ Racism and prejudice helped to collapse much of the legal space for free blacks

⁵¹ *The Rural Code of Haiti; in French and English, with a prefatory letter to the Right Hon. The Earl Bathurst, K.G.* (London: B. McMillan, 1827), 2.

⁵² The full terms are detailed in Law No. III, Chapter I., Provision 46 of the Rural Code in Kingsley’s translation of the pamphlet. [Z. Kingsley, ed.] *The Rural Code of Haiti, Literally Translated from a Publication by the Government Press; Together with Letters from that Country, Concerning Its Present Condition, By a Southern Planter* (Granville, Middletown, NJ: George H. Evans, 1837), 10.

⁵³ Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 14.

⁵⁴ Haitian law contained a strong gender component linking masculinity and nationalism to citizenship through avenues closed to women, such as military service. Therefore, as Diana Paton and Pamela Scully argue, “All Haitian citizens were defined as black, but not all black Haitians were citizens.” Paton and Scully, “Introduction: Gender and Slave Emancipation in Comparative Perspective,” in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, eds. Scully and Paton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 10.

⁵⁵ Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New Rochelle, NY: Hispaniola Books, 1995), 132.

⁵⁶ Leon D. Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 8.

across the U.S. South in the 1820s, making Haiti even more of an attractive prospect. Colonies established at Sierra Leone and Liberia garnered some interest from northern black communities to resettle in Africa, though opposition at home and bad news from abroad left most reluctant to leave the United States.⁵⁷ The free black majority still preferred the idea of *freely* emigrating to the Caribbean over Africa, largely because the latter destination was sponsored by the ACS, a white organization trusted by few.⁵⁸ This led Boyer in December 1823 to extend invitations to blacks in the U.S. to come to Haiti “to cultivate with their own hands the public lands...”⁵⁹ He believed blacks in America might offset the dominant Catholic presence in Haiti, populate much of the excellent lands then largely vacant in the former Spanish lands in Santo Domingo (eastern Hispaniola), and serve to pressure the American government to formally recognize Haitian independence. Although the project went into effect, none of the objectives were realized.⁶⁰

Emigrants to Haiti first left the United States from Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore in 1824. Paid for by the Haitian government, at least 6,000 free blacks settled in the black republic before Boyer stopped the policy in May 1825 because the demand for agricultural workers never materialized. Another 7,000 blacks still emigrated after that point throughout the

⁵⁷ Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*, 21-53, 54-90; Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 15-24, especially 21.

⁵⁸ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Institution*, 34-56; Egerton, “Averting a Crisis: The Proslavery Critique of the American Colonization Society,” in *Rebels, Reformers, & Revolutionaries*, 150-51; Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*, 74-76.

⁵⁹ Jean-Pierre Boyer to Loring D. Dewey, Port-au-Prince, 30 April 1824 and Boyer, “Circular,” 24 December 1823, both reprinted in Dewey, *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour in the United States* (New York: Mahlon Day, 1824), 12, 6-8.

⁶⁰ Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*, 74-75; Dixon, *African America and Haiti*, 35-36, 43-46; Dennis R. Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola: First Free Black Emigration and Settlements in Hispaniola,” (PhD Dissertation, Central Michigan University, 2003), 78-79, 82-83, 96, 104.

decade, whose numbers included manumitted slaves as well.⁶¹ In reality, many prosperous free blacks in America with little if any agricultural skills left for Haiti for a host of reasons. Issues of racism, economics, religion, or the prospect of a civilizing mission appear to be more common factors. One Philadelphia couple departed for Hispaniola in 1824 appears to be typical. “Our land was beautiful and rich,” a Mrs. D said, “but oh me! My heart sunk when I come to look at what we had to do.” Hope turned to despair and frustration. “My husband,” she later recalled in 1843, “was ambitious, and worked too hard to get the place in order quick.” As was the case with many others, the couple had no agricultural experience, making life miserable. “I never thought t’was the climate, so much as carelessness, and fretting at the strangeness of everything,—but he died. Ah! the bare home-sickness killed abundance. The boys did the best they could, and I took the hoe too. But dear me! We ought to have thought more of the things we were like to find than we did,” she lamented.⁶² It was a difficult existence for most. Those who were largely successful, such as a more isolated group of “Americanos” based at the Samána Peninsula, were the exception and not the rule.⁶³ Familiar tropes hampered all emigration efforts: diffi-

⁶¹ Leslie M. Alexander, “‘The Black Republic’: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Northern Black Political Consciousness,” in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*, eds. Maurice Jackson and Jacqueline Bacon (New York: Routledge, 2010), 62-64; Julie Winch, “‘To Reunite the Great Family’: Free Blacks and Haitian Emigration,” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, St. Louis, Missouri, April 6, 1989), 10-13; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African-American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 229.

⁶² “Condition of the People of Color—Emigration,” *Liberator*, 1 September 1843 (Boston, MA). The settlers’ names are represented with dashes and any distinguishing factors omitted by the newspaper. While I am aware that the *Liberator* printed negative depictions of the emigrant experience generally, the experiences chronicled in its pages are similar to the experiences of many other individuals as well. More to the point, the few primary sources regarding the settlers at Cabaret make the accounts particularly valuable.

⁶³ Harry Hoetink, “‘Americans’ in Samána,” *Caribbean Studies* 2 (1962): 3-22; E. Valerie Smith, “A Merging of Two Cultures: The Afro-Hispanic Immigrants of Samána, Dominican Republic,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 8 (1989): 9-14. The Samánese have long fascinated scholars because of their strong Protestant beliefs, use of the English language, and naming practices decidedly at odds in Catholic Spanish Dominican Republic. For more on the group see Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola.” Firsthand experiences of some of the original settlers and oral testimony of their children are recounted in the “Statement of Witnesses” in the 1871 study sponsored by the U.S. Government entitled *Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1871), 209-85.

culty in acquiring land, the persistence of cultural and religious clashes, and the profound disillusionment of agricultural work led to bad publicity and the eventual out-migration of many black settlers.⁶⁴ For all parties concerned, Haitian emigration was generally an unsatisfactory solution.⁶⁵

By the early 1830s Zephaniah Kingsley himself had rejected all previous colonization efforts to date as entirely flawed. His most consistent target of scorn was the idea of African colonization for free blacks, which he argued placed them in “a condition worse than slavery...⁶⁶ Canada too proved less than satisfactory. Its provincial status uncertain in the realm of racial laws, coupled with “the extreme coldness of the climate, so uncongenial to the feelings of the colored people,” in reality “argues strongly against the growth of a colored settlement in Canada.”⁶⁷ Haiti was different. As early as 1826 he saw great promise in colonizing Haitian Santo Domingo, though this was very much opposed by the majority of the northern black community at the time. They had rejected the idea of emigrating to the island entirely.⁶⁸ “Very likely,” suggests Floyd Miller, “the frustrations and disillusionment engendered by the failure of the Haitian movement awakened an intense opposition to colonization in all forms and to all lo-

⁶⁴ David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 120-39; Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*, 167-70; Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola,” 100, 104-07; Dixon, *African America and Haiti*, 39-46.

⁶⁵ Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*, 80-82.

⁶⁶ Zephaniah Kingsley, “Address to the Legislative Council of Florida,” and *Treatise* (Second Edition, 1829), both in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 33-34, 54 (quote), 55.

⁶⁷ “Circular in the *Working Man's Advocate* (New York, 1 October 1831),” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 78-79. While the unnamed author refers to himself as “colored,” Stowell notes that “The content and language of the circular suggests either that Zephaniah Kingsley wrote it or that he heavily influenced its content. If Zephaniah Kingsley did not write the circular, George Kingsley, his mulatto son, then twenty-four years old, was likely its author” (p. 76n1). Indeed, the *Circular* features identical (or nearly so) phrases taken from Zephaniah's *Treatise*. See particularly pages 54, 57, 58, 63.

⁶⁸ Kingsley, “Address to the Legislative Council of Florida,” 33-34, and *Treatise* (Second Edition, 1829), 54 (quote), 55, both in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell.

cales.”⁶⁹ At the same time black demand for U.S. recognition of Haiti’s independence also increased. Despite public opinions against emigrating to the island, Haiti continued to be a potent symbol of black pride. Perhaps confusing the black popular will on this point, this led the Florida slaveholder to offer what he considered his own well-timed scheme as well.⁷⁰

A year following Britain’s emancipation of its West Indian slave populations, the specter of transatlantic abolitionist designs against southern slaveholders hung uneasily over much of the Lowcountry. Despite professing a dizzying set of remedies for the ills of the American slave system alongside calls for reforming laws that discriminated against free blacks, Zephaniah Kingsley remained at bottom, in Jennifer L. Anderson’s words, “ruthlessly proslavery.”⁷¹ In the face of these challenges his ultimate concern was of permanently retaining his large slave force that labored on his Florida lands. How to juggle this with black familial obligations was his life’s obsession, which his proslavery writings over the previous decade clearly demonstrate.⁷²

For example, in drafting the “Memorial to Congress by Citizens of the Territory of Florida,” Kingsley complained as recently as 1833 of local laws “calculated materially to disturb the peace and happiness” of citizens like himself, and of their threat to property rights in general. Coupled with this, the planter blasted efforts that he said had effectively robbed free blacks of their political rights previously afforded to them by Spain and had now criminalized both real

⁶⁹ Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*, 89.

⁷⁰ Alexander, “The Black Republic,” 64-67; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government’s Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111-18. It is important to stress that black communities in the Americas were not *uniformly* pro-Haitian, and their relationships are best characterized as “ambiguous.” See Geggus, “The Sounds and Echoes of Freedom: The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on Latin America,” in *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Darien J. Davis (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 24-25.

⁷¹ Anderson, *Mahogany*, 267.

⁷² Smith, “Persistent Borderland,” 255-56.

and suspected sexual interracial liaisons. Such laws served “to break up all those paternal obligations and ties of natural affection which have existed for years past,” Kingsley’s memorial argued.⁷³ Florida’s Legislative Council, the territorial body responsible for passing the laws, continued to implement legislation that Kingsley regarded as obnoxious and threatening to his diverse interests. According to an 1832 advertisement in the *Florida Herald*, he had even unsuccessfully “offer[ed] to sell his property consisting of slaves, and valuable Plantations cheap for cash or a short credit as he wishe[d] to leave the Territory.”⁷⁴ Having failed to persuade southern slaveholders to reform slavery from within, the awkward position in which Kingsley now found himself was clearly responsible for his willingness—desperation even—to find an alternate means of preserving his power.⁷⁵ In this regard colonization always remained a viable option. His published writings had earlier revealed a great deal of ambiguity about the subject, but the situation and his vantage point had changed. Never content with stagnation or with a limited worldview, he looked abroad. Faced with the sudden prospects of fighting a political game with few allies, the challenge of colonization backed by “enlightened” precedent now energized the planter.⁷⁶

⁷³ Zephaniah Kingsley, “Memorial to Congress by Citizens of the Territory of Florida (1833),” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 82-83.

⁷⁴ Notice in *Florida Herald*, 9 August 1832 (St. Augustine, FL).

⁷⁵ Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 222. By this point, as Young argues, “The need for a unified stance on slavery had begun to outweigh the individual southerner’s right to express his or her own political opinions.” “The manic proslavery atmosphere of the 1830s,” says the author, “encouraged southerners to police one another’s ideas about slavery not just in public but within domestic circles as well” (p. 223).

⁷⁶ O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 960, 963. According to John Saillant, colonization “served as one bridge to a modern way of thinking about society and race, since it began in the Revolutionary era with sentimentalist assumptions, but by the 1820s it was based on a liberal conception of black men.” Saillant discusses a shared “commercial impulse” between black emigrants and white Americans that mutually elevated both sides. Kingsley likewise believed that such a thing would serve to overcome much of the racial prejudice that prevented the southern U.S. from reaping the financial rewards. Saillant, “The American Enlightenment in Africa: Jefferson’s Colonizationism and Black Virginians’ Migration to Liberia, 1776-1840,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 (1998): 262.

Haiti had long served as something of a muse for the planter. He knew the country well from a lengthy residence there as a coffee merchant at Jérémie during the Haitian Revolution. Business at that time took him through much of the Southern Province, then occupied by the British army (1793-1798), with frequent stops at Les Cayes, Petit-Goâve, Léogane, and Jacmel. Although much of the region was difficult terrain through which to pass, Kingsley claimed to have done so both unhindered and seemingly unfazed by the “large groups of armed negroes in the woods” whom he “frequently” encountered along the way.⁷⁷ Decades later he continued to recall these earlier times with nothing but fondness, and appeared eager to return there once again.⁷⁸

In August 1835 Kingsley was in New York City preparing to travel to Haiti for an extended period of time. His purpose was to see firsthand whether or not Hispaniola could offer a suitable home for his own proposed settlement. Before leaving mid-month he informed publisher George H. Evans of the *Working Man's Advocate* newspaper of his plans, promising to write Evans “a true description of what I saw in my progress through this Island of Liberty,” particularly so that the paper’s subscribers might learn of its importance and ultimate potential.⁷⁹ Arriving at Puerto Plata on 4 September, Kingsley found it a “scattered-looking small town of one story houses,” its harbor lined with “logs of mahogany, in which, and tobacco in bales, most of its

⁷⁷ Kingsley, *Treatise*, 64 (quotes); David Patrick Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 230-52 *passim*; Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 21, 35-38.

⁷⁸ Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, Puerto de Plata, Haiti, 13th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 87. This letter, the first of three from Haiti, was subsequently published in the *Working Man's Advocate* in its edition of 17 October 1835.

⁷⁹ Charlton W. Yingling, “No One Who Reads the History of Hayti Can Doubt the Capacity of Colored Men: Racial Formation and Atlantic Rehabilitation in New York City’s Early Black Press, 1827-1841,” *Early American Studies* 11 (Spring 2013): 338.

export consists.” He found the town’s “poor appearance” remedied in part “by the rich verdure of the waving cocoa nut and majestic palm trees” that littered the town and surrounding areas.⁸⁰

The planter-turned-sightseer spent two days there “occupied in walking about the town, and gardens in its vicinity, and in cultivating the acquaintance of its inhabitants,” he told Evans. Puerto Plata he estimated at about two miles in length, built upon a “beautiful and rich” plain that gradually ascended to the mountains (Isabel de Torres) behind it. Beyond the town and gardens he found “some small farms” that grew a variety of crops. He noted that the inhabitants in this area grew “sugar cane, coffee, oranges, mangoes, corn, yams, potatoes, cassava, and all kinds of fancy produce, to suit the market, and for the supply of the town.” In the nearby low-lying areas he found sugarcane and plantains in infinite supply, the rustle of coconut and palm trees “with their waving tops,” and “countless numbers of wild hogs, cattle... [and] wild guinea fowls” all “very abundant.”⁸¹

The following morning was Sunday in Puerto Plata. Kingsley attended Catholic mass at “a very large church of one story” in the morning and that evening “went to hear an old style [M]ethodist sermon, by an English missionary,” attended by many “poor American colored emigrants” drawn to Haiti by Boyer’s failed schemes years before. He was greatly impressed with the people he encountered thus far on his journey. In a short time he had “closely examined the country on horseback, twelve leagues of coast and three leagues inland,” and was met with “all possible kindness” and generosity. Kingsley found this especially true of the peasant families outside of Puerto Plata who lived in small, isolated, single family farms “scattered within the rich, uncut forests” outside town. Although their lives were of “simple abundance,” he found

⁸⁰ Kingsley to Evans, Puerto de Plata, Haiti, 13th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 87-88.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

them to be a class composed of good moral character and otherwise fine examples of an orderly society.⁸²

Kingsley was enamored with his surroundings. “To gain information where every thing is new, I have reposed but little in the shade since my arrival,” he wrote on 13 September. From Puerto Plata he showed no signs of idleness, and proposed heading west to Cap-Haïtien from where he would then turn south to Port-au-Prince.⁸³ More than two weeks passed between letters Kingsley sent to Evans. At Cap-Haïtien on 29 September he recounted leaving Puerto Plata “with one person and a guide” by horseback, riding “a distance of two hundred miles or more, chiefly within a few miles of the coast, through an uninterrupted scenery of the most romantic order...” Prairies with grazing cattle “mixed here and there with flocks of sheep and goats, and every where abounding with wild guinea fowls” were common sights. This coastal trail took the travelers through “a rich alluvial valley” marked by “mountainous ridges” and landscape well suited to agriculture. The lands boasted of abundant forests “thickly interspersed with the elegant royal palm,” the likes of which “covered a deep soil of incomparable richness and fertility,” he later recalled.⁸⁴

Along the way the group “found no tavern or public house” between Puerto Plata and Cap-Haïtien in which to sleep, resting instead “wherever circumstances rendered it most convenient to stop.” Kingsley discovered small farms holdings on the route composed “of one family each, all living in careless abundance.” The peasant houses featured “the most simple construction,” usually fashioned out of nearby palm trees. These houses were generally “wattled or en-

⁸² *Ibid.*, 88-89; Yingling, “No One Who Reads the History of Hayti,” 314-15.

⁸³ Kingsley to Evans, Puerto de Plata, Haiti, 13th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 90.

⁸⁴ Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, Cape Haitien, 29th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 91. Kingsley’s second letter appeared in the 31 October 1835 edition of the *Working Man’s Advocate*.

closed with palm-tree clapboards, and generally covered with the same,” he carefully noted. Built for the tropical elements these rudimentary houses were, on the whole, comfortable year round and allowed for at least some ventilation. In such a place as Haiti, he suggested to readers of the *Working Man’s Advocate* that he believed the climate coupled with some quite sensible living habits would promote a healthy population. Thus far the message was indeed clear: plentiful land, inexpensive housing, food in abundance, and no rampant illnesses, the country could be a reality for many black emigrants if they were only willing to come.⁸⁵

The party crossed over the shallow Massacre River near the town of Laxavon (present day Dajabón), which had previously served to divide the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo from French Saint-Domingue. An earlier traveler, Charles Mackenzie, the British Consul to Haiti, thought the crossing area “a place formerly of some importance” on account of its proximity to the French side, “but from the unproductiveness of the soil, it was never much resorted to.”⁸⁶ Kingsley, on the other hand, thought it “a flourishing and romantic little town” when he passed through about a decade later.⁸⁷ The former French lands, unlike those of the Spanish side, still contained traces of the opulence for which they were once known. Between Laxavon and Cap-Haïtien, a distance of about thirty-five miles, the landscape housed what lingered of the grand sugar plantation estates of old. Kingsley noted the “massy remains of extensive stone buildings” in particular.⁸⁸ Some were apparently operational at this time. Mackenzie’s inquiry found “that

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸⁶ Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti, Made During a Residence in That Republic*, 2 Vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 1: 200-01. Because Mackenzie was effectively completing the same trip taken by Kingsley only in reverse, the two texts provide very interesting parallel narratives. The texts have similar observations but frequently disagree also on a number of key points.

⁸⁷ Kingsley to Evans, Cape Haïtien, 29th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 91.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

now they yield little or nothing.”⁸⁹ “Many old plantations are still more or less under the cultivation of sugar,” Kingsley discovered in early October 1835,” but the extreme scarcity of hands to hire, renders the extensive cultivation of that staple at present impracticable.”⁹⁰

The small group consisting of the planter and his two unnamed traveling companions (one of whom was a “colored attendant”) continued west and south to Gonaïves, a town on the western coast of northern Haiti. The scars of the past, of revolution, of destruction, of the fall of the former French master class stalked Kingsley’s journey south. More “ruins of extensive mason work, and old plantations, now but little cultivated” were well within view. They passed, for example, the awesome spectacle of Sans Souci, the deserted fortress/palace ruins of the late King Christophe (d. 1820) high atop its mountain perch.⁹¹ Visible for miles the massive structure was breathtaking, mysterious, and ominous in appearance. Assembled from the skeletal remains of plantation residences by forced Haitian labor, four decades after its construction it was an impressive reminder of black freedom, independence, and resiliency.⁹² The message could not have been lost on the Florida slaveholder.⁹³

⁸⁹ Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, 1: 199.

⁹⁰ Kingsley to Evans, Cape Haïtien, 29th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 92; Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 131-32.

⁹¹ Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 94, 93n12. The date of the third and final Haitian letter as 12 October 1835 cannot be correct in so far as all of its contents are concerned. Kingsley’s lengthy account of his time in the capital, for example, includes details of a meeting with President Jean Pierre Boyer on 17 October as well as a general summary of his travels dated 26 October. The letter was subsequently published in the 21 November 1835 edition of the *Working Man’s Advocate*.

⁹² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 31-69; Dubois, *Haiti*, 52-88, 53.

⁹³ Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 286-87. Jacques de Cauna has located about 300 sites that are still visible today in rural Haiti of the more than 8,500 estimated plantations before the revolution. Factors such as time, warfare, the tropical environment, and natural disasters have all contributed to erase much more of the built landscape that would have been evident in Kingsley’s era. See Cauna, “Vestiges of the Built Landscape of Pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue,” in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, eds. David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 21-48.

Riding southwest through the Artibonite Plain, Kingsley crossed again and again the meandering Limbé River. Lush forests covered much of the valley around them. It was here that the region was “thickly settled with small coffee farms of one family each” near present day Camp Coq. On his travels throughout Haiti, Kingsley never failed notice or to mention these small holders. For obvious reasons the repetition of these observations is easy to understand. The island was vast, open, and promising for his vision. It was perhaps easy to be seduced by any land in which one could see, as he had, “an interesting picture of substantial plenty amid tropical ease and fecundity.” Once more ascending and descending the large river valley that opened before Gonaïves on the coast, the group fittingly trampled through the last of the rural landscape and the “many massy remains of cotton and sugar plantations, whose costly mason work indicated the intrinsic value of the soil for the cultivation of which they had been erected.”⁹⁴

Kingsley boarded a “small coaster” at Gonaïves only a short time after arriving there late afternoon on 8 October. From that place he planned to go to Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital, where he landed on Sunday. The short voyage he thought “crowded” but the Haitians on board made for an interesting sight. The sexes displayed admirable, though different qualities. Females, for example, “seemed perfectly at their ease” and “full of laughter and good humor.” Their male counterparts Kingsley found “more musical,” frequently interrupting “stories of wars and battles” with plentiful song to help pass the time. At Port-au-Prince the coaster sailed into harbor, where the appearance of “15 or 20 foreign square rigged vessels” at port he believed a

⁹⁴ Kingsley to Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 94.

common spectacle. It was a busy market day in the city, the seat of Haitian governmental power.⁹⁵

Amidst the hustle and bustle, Kingsley found the capital easy to navigate. “Its streets are broad and regularly laid out with side walks, mostly under cover of piazas [sic],” and lined with “numerous shops of various wares,” he told readers. Other areas that attracted visitors included “three large market squares, embellished with fountains, &c.,” where black men and women sold a “superabundant variety of provisions of every description...” They were all well dressed, clean in appearance, and possessed good manners. The scene and others like it convinced the planter that Haiti offered the essentials of a simple life filled with much joy and few cares.⁹⁶

Thus far Kingsley’s route had taken him from the northern coastline and across some of the mountains and valleys of Haiti’s vast hinterlands. What he had seen convinced the slave-owner of the country’s many merits. “I must now have travelled by land more than 300 miles through the interior, and mostly in company with a genteel dress man of color,” he told Evans.⁹⁷ Never bothered or inconvenienced on account of his whiteness or nationality, Kingsley was impressed by the kindness and civility of the population at large. He wasted little time at the capital, drafting two letters to President Boyer shortly after his arrival “regarding the introduction into this republic of some people of African descent, who propose emigrating from the United

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 94-97. Although it deals with a different time period under different circumstances, see the useful essay by David Geggus, “The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue in the Later Eighteenth Century,” in *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, eds. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 87-116. A massive fire had swept through the city in 1820 causing much damage. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2 Vols. (Philadelphia, PA: William Marshall and Co., 1837), 2: 236-37.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-95, 97; Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, 271-72.

⁹⁷ Kingsley to Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 95.

States of America, where they now inhabit.”⁹⁸ Boyer quickly received the correspondence and agreed to meet the Florida planter on 17 October.⁹⁹

How a white slaveholder from the United States ended up in the high political quarters of the president of the Republic of Haiti, himself a person of color, is an interesting turn of events. In spite of his faults, Kingsley had certainly gone on record many times for his admiration of Boyer’s republic and knew intimately the island’s revolutionary past. Perhaps the issue of race provided something of a common point as well. Kingsley’s own children were mixed-race, as was Boyer himself. Thus far his travels to Haiti had ultimately been about them, or so he told Evans. Moreover, both men shared a common goal: to increase agricultural production through labor discipline. The meeting was a success from the planter’s view. “This day I had a long and familiar interview with President Boyer,” remembered Kingsley, thinking the Haitian leader “a very intelligent and sensible man, and I think of great integrity and patriotism.” Surrounded by “many of his generals and military officers,” the president conducted review of the Haitian military regiments in the capital. Consisting of “seven regiments of regular troops, besides some cavalry,” Kingsley found “the officers, men, their clothing, arms, and discipline, &c., all excellent in a military point of view,” though lamented the drill because the government feared the threat of a foreign invasion.¹⁰⁰ A contemporary critic blasted Boyer’s strategy after visiting Haiti in the mid-1830s. “No attempts are made to fortify the towns upon the sea-coast,” he told readers in 1837, “and the government trusts in all cases of foreign invasion to flight into the interior,

⁹⁸ The dates of both letters and contents were revealed in Kingsley’s later letter printed in New York citing an enclosed response from Boyer’s secretary. Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, New York, 13th Nov. 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 98.

⁹⁹ Kingsley to Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 95.

¹⁰⁰ Baur, “Mulatto Machiavelli,” 308-09; Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 261-65, 268; Kingsley to Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 96.

leaving the towns and the whole tract behind them a waste of ashes.” It was a policy ill-suited to present circumstances, amounting to little more than “a suicidal system of defence,” said Jonathan Brown, a doctor then visiting from Philadelphia.¹⁰¹

Kingsley revealed no details of his discussion with the president that day, though it is highly likely that the contents of his original inquiries were covered at length. He was concerned most about the particulars of labor contracts and their “guaranteed” standing with the Haitian government. Boyer too shared these same concerns. The Rural Code of Haiti—the body of labor laws that he presided over—dealt with these matters in great detail.¹⁰² Most of the questions asked of the president thus pertained to legal particulars, such as contract length and the conditions allowed under the law; the age of consent to enter into a labor agreement; and who could bind children to labor and until what age they might do so. Other aspects related to potential black emigrants and their rights as citizens under the law. Kingsley inquired of Boyer about import duties, acquiring land and other property, if freedom of movement to and from Haiti was permitted by law, and whether or not laborers had militia obligations. He was evidently very pleased with the president’s answers.¹⁰³

Circumstances in the Haitian republic at the time were, contrary to Kingsley’s views, politically and economically shaky. Opposition to Boyer’s regime intensified daily within regions that Boyer had historically retained greater support. Political factions had not emerged over-

¹⁰¹ Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 270.

¹⁰² Jean-Claude Gerlus, “Revolution and Nation-State Formation: The Economic Origins of the Haitian Military,” *Caribbean Studies* 29 (1996): 248; Baur, “Mulatto Machiavelli,” 333-34.

¹⁰³ Kingsley to Evans, New York, 13th Nov. 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 98-101, citing Boyer’s answers to Kingsley’s letters for publication in the *Working Man’s Advocate*. The answers provided by the Haitian government were in the hand of Boyer’s secretary general Joseph Balthazar Ingenac, who provided further information for each of the nine questions taken in the same order as they were asked. A contemporary view of the secretary thought him very intelligent and ambitious but “possesses the reputation of being subtle, designing, and treacherous.” Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 262-63.

night, but in the Haitian Congress they continued to pick up steam. National currency depreciated rapidly. This caused rampant inflation, an overall decline in commerce, and generally hurt import totals. The president's supporters blamed the currency problem on counterfeiting practices and other abuses by the strong merchant class whose actions had rendered it worthless and, in the process, caused innumerable social ills.¹⁰⁴

Larger problems threatened the tenuous hold that Boyer's government held over the former Spanish territory in eastern Hispaniola. Comprised of two-thirds of the island, the thinly settled region long operated under different traditional conceptions of land tenure that could never be remedied to the satisfaction of all parties. Instead, Boyer's proposed reforms threatened to divest a sizeable portion of the settlers of their property, making them eligible for confiscation and redistribution. Pressure from these quarters combined with the practical limits of the president's power and resources meant that the issue smoldered rather than exploded. The problem nonetheless was a serious one. Boyer needed friends and allies there, and had few of either.¹⁰⁵

The president may have seen Kingsley as a potentially valuable ally at this interesting juncture. In the case before him, a wealthy slaveholder—even one who may have talked of liberating his bondmen for the good of humanity—spoke earnestly of investing in Haiti's eastern lands, of bringing a labor force, conducting large scale agriculture, and promising to impose order and stability to the far reaches of what he likely envisioned to be a large domain. One supposed that much about these details was no doubt discussed that Sunday in Port-au-Prince. In the long run both parties chose to believe their own realities. Boyer perhaps saw, or wanted to see, a philanthropic owner of men at something of a crucial moral crossroads looking to begin again. Power, influence, and wealth still counted for much in Haiti, even when benevolence was

¹⁰⁴ Dubois, *Haiti*, 115-21; Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 136.

¹⁰⁵ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 135-36.

lacking.¹⁰⁶ Kingsley, in kind, claimed to see the Haitian republic in terms unabashedly utopic. From happy peasants gorging themselves abundantly on tropical produce, to a blissful island thriving on the fruits of social harmony, the paternalistic vision for his future “colonization experiments” had little room for stern realities to the contrary.¹⁰⁷

The planter was smitten with his time in Haiti. Over the course of three months, he traveled west and south from Puerto Plata, a small former Spanish port on Haiti’s northern coast, stopping at Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, and finally at Port-au-Prince to meet with President Boyer. In that time he had come to learn much about what he consistently called the Island of Liberty. To readers of Evans’s *Working Man’s Advocate* he pointed to Haiti’s opportunities as virtually limitless. Starved for capital, it offered choice properties and fertile lands at prices that were “extremely low,” and grand estates for “a small part of what the improvements alone would cost.” “In short it is a most salubrious place of residence,” he concluded.¹⁰⁸ Kingsley’s time in Haiti had, for the time being, come to a close. At month’s end from Port-au-Prince he boarded the *Chantelier*, a brig captained by Samuel Moore bound for New York.¹⁰⁹ Carrying with him a copy of Haiti’s Rural Code given to him by President Boyer, he arrived at his destination with much yet to do.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Baur, “Mulatto Machiavelli,” 343-45.

¹⁰⁷ See the letter of Zephaniah Kingsley to Ralph Gurley, Hayti, June 30, 1838, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 102. See the assessment of Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 288.

¹⁰⁸ Kingsley to Evans, Port-au-Prince, Oct, 12th, 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 98; Yingling, “No One Who Reads the History of Hayti,” 338-39.

¹⁰⁹ Kingsley arrived 10 November 1835 from Port-au-Prince. Details of the vessel and voyage are in *New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*, M237_28, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (microfilm).

¹¹⁰ See Kingsley to Evans, New York, 13th Nov. 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 99.

After his extended absence Zephaniah Kingsley returned from Haiti consumed by matters of colonization. Among his first tasks was to complete a translation of the Haitian Rural Code from the original French for publication. It would be critical to get word of his plans out to the public at large. In its completed pamphlet form it would conveniently feature the full text of the labor laws, his letters to Evans from Haiti, and a detailed map done in Kingsley's own hand in its later editions. The Rural Code formed the backbone for Kingsley's plan to commence shifting part of his large slave force to Haiti, which began in October 1836.¹¹¹

He arrived along Haiti's northern coast at Puerto Plata to acquire land and prepare it for an extensive plantation settlement. Kingsley "rented some good land near the sea" totaling 35,000 acres at a site he called Cabaret, a located he estimated about twenty-seven miles east of Puerto Plata.¹¹² As his massive Florida plantations required his presence, the planter could not oversee the day-to-day operations in Haiti, particularly in the infant phase. His mixed-race son George was the settlement's manager in Zephaniah's absence, and the two sent frequent letters back and forth pertaining to the son's progress. George and "six prime African men" newly freed by Kingsley "for that express purpose" prepared the grounds by clearing land and planting

¹¹¹ The finished pamphlet later appeared in three separate editions from 1837 to 1839 and contained letters Kingsley sent from Haiti in 1835 to George H. Evans, editor of the local *Working Man's Advocate*. Evans ran the letters in two of the paper's October issues and another in late November. Incidentally, Evans also published a few editions of Kingsley's proslavery *Treatise* as well from his New Jersey residence.

¹¹² George's portion of the Cabaret settlement was issued to him as sole recipient by Zephaniah as an act of primogeniture known as the *mayorazgo* (or entailed estate) in Castilian law. The appeal of the concept was that subsequent legal actions were determined by the "will of the founder" and passed through male members of the family. As a legal institution it had fallen out of favor and was largely abolished in the early nineteenth-century. Kingsley's late usage was certainly far from common at that date. Note that the actual distance between the locales is a bit less than Kingsley's approximation. My understanding of changes to the laws of entails or *mayorazgos* is from M. C. Mirow, *Latin American Law: A History of Private Law and Institutions in Spanish America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 63-65, 88, 103, 151, 153.

food crops at a breakneck pace, all with a ruthless efficiency that characterized the bulk of the planter's efforts.¹¹³

The Cabaret complex sat at the opening of northern Hispaniola's and fertile river valley called the Cibao. The region was linked to Puerto Plata commercially, which served as a port for international markets; however, overland travel was difficult, often hazardous, and "roads" along the way a later observer suggested were almost impassable. The valley was home to extensive tobacco cultivation for Haitian markets and sparsely settled peasant families scattered throughout the Cibao region, though Cabaret would in time best be known for sugar.¹¹⁴ For Kingsley conditions there were promising. Within the first few months George had informed his father that the small labor force had made great progress at the settlement.¹¹⁵ Between January and April, for example, they had cleared enough land to plant crops for sustenance and for market. When the laborers were not busy toiling Kingsley's lands, they each built dwellings and maintained their own crops of five to six acres to support their own families who were soon to arrive.¹¹⁶

The first group sent to Cabaret arrived with Zephaniah Kingsley in October 1837. From the port at St. Marys, Georgia, his ship carried George's wife, children, and some of his son's slaves along with only two black families that Kingsley himself manumitted "for the express purpose of transportation to Haiti..." He chose a pro-colonization newspaper in which to instruct the public at large about his progress. In a letter to the editor of the *Christian Statesman*, Zephaniah prefaced his report by explaining that because of his dependence upon slave labor and

¹¹³ Kingsley to Gurley, Hayti, June 30, 1838, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 103; Fountain, "The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley," 41.

¹¹⁴ Michiel Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco in the Dominican Republic, 1870-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 12, 14-15; idem., "The Origins of Capitalist Agriculture in the Dominican Republic," *Latin American Research Review* 22 (1987): 136-37.

¹¹⁵ Kingsley to Gurley, 30 June 1838, Hayti, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 103-04.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

his familial situation, “motives of necessity and self-preservation” prompted him to embark on what he referred to as his “colonization experiments.” As to the settlement, Kingsley said its progress was encouraging. “I found everything in the most flattering and prosperous condition,” he wrote to its editor, Ralph R. Gurley, who was also acting secretary of the ACS.¹¹⁷ The settlers “all enjoyed good health” and “were overflowing with the most delicious variety and abundance of fruits and provisions,” living in “good comfortable log houses all nicely white-washed...” Reports then circulating about the poor health of the settlers, their unwillingness to work, and their frustrations with their circumstances in Haiti apparently bothered Kingsley enough that his ultimate purpose in the letter was to dispel such notions. “My son reported that his people had all enjoyed excellent health, and had labored just as steadily as they formerly did in Florida, and were well satisfied with their situation, and the advantageous exchange of circumstances they had made. They all enjoyed the friendship of the neighboring inhabitants, and the entire confidence of the Haitien [sic] government.” Not surprisingly, Kingsley celebrated the colonization effort as an unqualified success.¹¹⁸

More than a year after George arrived at Cabaret with the freed Africans he was now eligible to purchase under Haitian law the lands that his father had rented him from the government.¹¹⁹ Kingsley stated that he himself “obtained a favourable answer” from President Boyer regarding George’s petition for title to the 35,000 acre settlement. The land “was ordered to be surveyed to him [George], and valued, and not expected to exceed the sum of three thousand dol-

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102, 102n22; Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, 23-24.

¹¹⁸ Kingsley to Gurley, 30 June 1838, Hayti, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 103-05.

¹¹⁹ Article 12 of Haiti’s constitution, unveiled in 1805, forbade whites from owning land: “No white person, of whatever nationality, shall set foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor nor, in the future, acquire property here.” Boyer was unsuccessful in repealing the provision. Lacerte suggests that this sentiment went further, which “reached the ludicrous point of not allowing whites to be buried in Haitian soil less this act should constitute a precedent for owing land.” Lacerte, “Xenophobia in Haiti,” 512.

lars.”¹²⁰ Zephaniah then left for Florida in February but returned by June 1838, when he wrote his lengthy account to the *Christian Statesman*. Kingsley urged Gurley’s readers (northern free blacks and white supporters of black colonization) to pressure Washington to capitalize on the advantageous economic situation in Haiti, which would benefit the U.S. by strengthening the ties of its own black community across the Atlantic while keeping the black republic in check. He offered his own settlement as a shining example of a workable solution to the problem of race in the United States. Appealing particularly to “the industrious and most respectable part of our free colored population, especially the agricultural part” of Gurley’s readers, Kingsley “assure[d] them of a good reception” at Cabaret, “where they find plenty of good land to cultivate, which they may either rent or buy upon the most liberal terms; and that six months’ labor as agriculturists, will render them entirely independent of all future want of provision.”¹²¹

On 19 March 1838 Britain decided formally to bring a premature end to the apprenticeship period in its West Indian colonies on 1 August 1838. Britain’s colonies followed in kind between March and July formally completing the transition from slavery to freedom.¹²² Precisely what would happen next, no one knew. That Kingsley advertised his colonization effort at this time is not surprising. Full emancipation’s uncertain prospects coupled with dismal economic prospects in the U.S. encouraged renewed attention to emigration schemes.¹²³ Intense debate in the circum-Atlantic continued to arouse the suspicions of slaveholders, abolitionists, and philan-

¹²⁰ In adherence with Law No. 2, Article 15 of the Haitian Rural Code; Kingsley to Gurley, 30 June 1838, Hayti, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 103, 105.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 105-06.

¹²² Izhak Gross, “Parliament and the Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship, 1835-1838,” *English Historical Review* 96 (1981): 566; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (New York: Verso, 1988), 460.

¹²³ Michael Craton, “Reshuffling the Pack: The Transition from Slavery to Other Forms of Labour in the British Caribbean, 1780-1890,” in his *Empire, Enslavement, and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), 374-75; Phillips, *Freedom’s Port*, 215, 220.

thropists alike. All sides closely scrutinized the somewhat tortured path to free labor in the Caribbean, but each group had competing interests and drew different conclusions from the unfolding events. By 1839 critics of Britain's emancipation experiment dubbed it a colossal failure from several angles. Proslaveryites complained that sinking export total could not meet sugar demands, while horrified British abolitionists implemented humanitarian reforms under the so called 1838 Code, largely in response to the ongoing abuses of immigrant indentured laborers recently brought into the West Indies after emancipation primarily from China and India. The overriding concern of many reformers was how easily it had been for both unknowing and unwilling emigrants to fall victim to conditions almost indistinguishable from slavery. A better solution, so Kingsley's Haitian venture promised, was destined to have a highly receptive audience.¹²⁴

Another departure of Kingsley's black emigrants in August 1839 attracted notice from several newspapers from as far away as Massachusetts and Vermont.

Emigration to Hayti.—The brig *America*, Kingsley, sailed 20th of July from St. John's [sic] River, East Florida, having on board nearly 100 free colored and some white passengers of that neighborhood for Hayti. They were mostly of the useful and laborious classes of this community, such as agriculture, assorted with blacksmiths and carpenters, together with some first rate ship builders and other mechanics, intending to settle near Port au Plate [Puerto Plata], under the patronage of Mr. Kingsley, a Florida planter, who wishes to transfer their industry in his own fertile lands in Hayti.¹²⁵

Kingsley's project had finally reached the nation's attention. Garrison's *Liberator* newspaper, for example, noted that Kingsley's ship *America* arrived safely at Puerto Plata in early Ju-

¹²⁴ J. R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 28-38; Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 52-53; Sara E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes: Transcolonial Collaboration in the Revolutionary Americas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 175-77; Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, 154-61; Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism*, 120-21; Guterl, *American Mediterranean*, 166-67.

¹²⁵ *Boston Recorder*, 9 August 1839 (Boston, MA); *Vermont Chronicle*, 7 August 1839 (Bellow Falls, VT).

ly. The *New-York Spectator* of 9 September printed the emigrants' arrival in Haiti. The lush tropical landscape and "the rich verdure of the waving cocoa nut and majestic palm trees" accented the cascading mountain range behind the town of Puerto Plata, the sight of which no doubt contributed to the fleeting moment of joy emigrants felt upon reaching shore. "It was," an unnamed observer said, "an affecting sight to see so many young, lively, and decent looking people cordially welcomed with every manifestation of pleasure from a joyous community among whom they were to reside."¹²⁶

At least two white planters approved of Kingsley's reports and were ready to act. Jacob Wood, a rice planter from Georgia, drafted a January 1844 will ordering that upon his death, his executors should send his entire slave force to a separate settlement "near the residence of Mr. George Kingsley."¹²⁷ Although he directed Zephaniah himself to oversee the emigration, the Floridian had died the previous September. In the years that followed the idea lost its appeal. After Wood's death his former bondmen, "a sensible, orderly, and industrious people," left Savannah for Liberia in February 1850.¹²⁸

Another Florida slaveowner with ties to Kingsley, Francis Richard, Jr. (1776-1839) did send some of his mixed-race children to Haiti before his death, but the circumstances were dif-

¹²⁶ Quoted in *New-York Spectator*, 9 September 1839 (New York, NY).

¹²⁷ "Last Will & Testament of Jacob Wood," reproduced as part of *Robert and Wife v. West and Reid* (1854) in *Reports of Cases in Law and Equity, Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Georgia, from Macon Term to Americus Term, 1854, Inclusive*, ed. Thomas R. R. Cobb (Athens, GA: Reynolds & Bros., 1855), 128; Mart A. Stewart, "What Nature Suffers to Groe": *Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, reprint 2002), 126; Buddy Sullivan, "Ecology as History in the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve," *Occasional Papers of the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve* (2008): 9, 11.

¹²⁸ *The African Repository, and Colonial Journal, Volume XXV* (Washington, DC: C. Alexander, 1849), 315 (quote); *The African Repository and Colonial Journal, Volume XXVI* (Washington, DC: C. Alexander, 1850), 107-110, contains the full list of 154 former slaves sent to Sinou, Liberia, on board the barque *Chieftain* on 14 February 1850. For some legal issues with slaveholders' wills and sending slaves to Liberia see Huffman, *Mississippi in Africa*, 57-70.

ferent than those of Kingsley's venture. Born the son of a white sugar planter in Saint-Domingue, Richard fled the island with his family for Florida because of the slave uprising that engulfed the colony in 1791. He later had one white son (also named Francis) and sent his free black mistress, Teresa (Gobie), and their children to Puerto Plata in 1836.¹²⁹ His mulatto son, Fortune Richard, had previously gone to Haiti at or about the same time as Kingsley presumably to aid the passage. It is unknown if the two men met or even traveled together while there, but they both returned to the U.S. one day apart.¹³⁰ Baptismal records show that Teresa gave birth to Francis Richard's daughter, Maria Francisca, en route from Florida to Haiti and subsequently resided in the San Marcos area of Puerto Plata.¹³¹

In his will Richard stated: "It is probable that my colored children before mentioned will soon all reside in the Island of Hayti in the West Indies, it is my wish and desire, and I hereby direct, that in case my son Francis aforesaid should die leaving no heirs, the slaves and the income thereof herein mentioned as given and bequeathed to him be divided in specific property as nearly as can be among my colored children before mentioned and shipped to them in the said Island of Hayti."¹³² In addition to the children of Teresa it appears that at least a few others ultimately went to Haiti. Naturally, Richard shared many of the same concerns with Kingsley. Both signed the 1833 "Memorial to Congress by Citizens of the Territory of Florida," which alleged that Florida's governing body continued to pass laws the signers deemed "cruel and unjust" as

¹²⁹ Biographical data in Smith, "Persistent Borderland," 206-07; Schafer, "A Class of People Neither Free-men nor Slaves," 595, 605n33-34; and idem., *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 31.

¹³⁰ Fortune Richard from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 9 November 1835, in *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1800-1882*, Roll 50, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (NARA). Kingsley's references to traveling with "a colored gentleman" could possibly refer to Fortune.

¹³¹ Baptismal records and information for Teresa are found in Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos*, 80-81, 117-18.

¹³² The will of Francis Richard, Jr., is in Probate File #1756, Estate of Francis Richard, Probate Department, Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, Florida.

well as “the most tyrannical and the most repugnant to the free institutions of our republican government and perfect novelties in modern legislation.”¹³³ Members of the Richard and Kingsley families shared many ties well beyond the lives of the two men.¹³⁴

Apart from his own bondmen, attracting willing emigrants to Kingsley’s Haitian settlement had otherwise proved troublesome.¹³⁵ The overall contemporary consensus that Haitian emigration failed in the 1820s still resonated loudly within the United States, and among the northern black population in particular. Moreover, a strong labor need in the British West Indies steered many willing emigrants away from repeating old mistakes. The British Bahamas, for example, for decades had proven to be an attractive locale for slaves in Florida because of their close proximity to the U.S., liberal attitudes toward runaways, and symbolic equation with freedom.¹³⁶ For an extended, secure labor arrangement, this was disastrous to Kingsley’s plan. Some of his own workers faced a stark choice between enslavement in Florida or passage to Cabaret where they would remain indentured. No other possible location, *even in Haiti*, did the

¹³³ Kingsley, “Memorial to Congress by Citizens of the Territory of Florida,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 82-85.

¹³⁴ Smith, “Persistent Borderland,” 207; Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 92. See the testimony of Francis Richard in Account No. 88415, Zephaniah Kingsley, Settled Miscellaneous Accounts, Office of the First Auditor, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA.

¹³⁵ For example, Randall Erwin, a free person of color of mixed-race then residing in St. Augustine, found himself embroiled in legal troubles, narrowly avoiding a charge of inciting a slave revolt in 1838. He sailed to Haiti aboard Kingsley’s ship in July that same year but seems to have returned to Florida within a window of about four years. Marotti, *Heaven’s Soldiers*, 68-71.

¹³⁶ Irvin D. S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, “Florida Slaves, the ‘Saltwater Railroad’ to the Bahamas, and Anglo-American Diplomacy,” *Journal of Southern History* 74 (February 2013): 53-54, 56; Rosalyn Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 30-33, 44-48; Larry Eugene Rivers, *Rebels and Runaways: Slave Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 63, 64. Kingsley himself believed two of his slaves had runaway to the Bahamas and filed a claim to recover them from Indian agent Gad Humphreys in a letter dated 19 February 1827. The affair lasted several months, but the slaves in question, Teneks and Sally, were both recovered by Marshal Waters Smith and returned to Kingsley’s ownership. See Alex Adair to Waters Smith (1829) and Affidavit of Waters Smith, 19 February 1829, both in Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, M234, R_800, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

planter allow.¹³⁷ This was a particular problem that many critics had in distinguishing between emigration and the uncertain motives of whites. “Emigration, to be legitimate, must be voluntary and free,” wrote Lewis Woodson in the New York *Colored American*. “The benefit of the emigrants and their posterity must be its sole object. The mode, time, and place, of emigration must be left wholly to their choice.”¹³⁸ In the case of Kingsley’s former slaves these details were missing. As the public would soon discover, the explanations behind his grand design were more somewhat baffling.¹³⁹

In a lengthy appeal published in a November 1840 issue of New York’s *The Sun*, Kingsley addressed the “[v]arious inducements” and “talented persuasion” used to attract potential free black emigrants throughout the Atlantic World. Despite generous incentives colonization in Africa had been a splendid failure for all concerned, he lectured. He was most concerned about black emigration to the British West Indian colonies, “where passage and provisions are offered to them gratis, and employment after they arrive, together with a good government and civilized society, speaking their native language.” Admitting the rewards were many, Kingsley nonetheless suggested that social mobility and, most importantly, land near accessible markets were available only for “the trouble of settling.” Those wanting to go to the British islands he believed mistaken, though not for humanitarian concerns. The islands, he said, were already “thickly settled” and the “good lands conveniently situated for market, being owned by rich people, have acquired a great value, and are as much beyond the reach of a poor man as the lands

¹³⁷ Note that under Haitian law this would have been allowed if Kingsley’s main objective was to liberate his slaves. As Boyer’s authorized response to Kingsley in October 1835 suggested, “The descendants of African emigrants may locate themselves with the Republic, any where they may judge most suitable to their interests...” Kingsley to Evans, New York, 13th Nov., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, 100-01.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Miller, *Search for Black Nationality*, 100.

¹³⁹ Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, 157, 160; Kingsley, “Emigration to Haiti.” The piece was dated 3 October 1840 from New York City but appeared in the 11 November issue.

about New York are.” While Jamaica and Trinidad did offer cheap land, he argued that they lacked “good roads,” which meant that the cost of transporting them to market left them all but worthless.¹⁴⁰

Not all observers agreed with Kingsley’s assessment. Some popular contemporary reports spoke in glowing terms, claiming there was ample opportunity for all blacks, particularly in labor-starved British Guiana and Trinidad.¹⁴¹ A recently published pamphlet sponsored by Baltimore emigrationists reported that in British Guiana “[t]he land is flat, with canals running throughout the cultivated portion of the colony” which serves “as means of transportation for the canes from the fields to the works, and from the works to the shipping; hence, there is an immense saving in animal labour in bringing the produce to market.”¹⁴² The authors did prefer that prospective settlers choose British Guiana over Trinidad, especially given the intense labor needs in the colony. Others, not surprisingly, could and did take opposing positions on what seemed to be every point.¹⁴³

Contrasting portraits aside, the planter argued that Haiti far exceeded any other locale in resources and opportunities with less competition. Those skeptics dismissive of the Haitian situ-

¹⁴⁰ Kingsley, “Emigration to Haiti.”

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Phillips, *Freedom’s Port*, 215. Reports in black newspapers such as the *Colored American* were quite conflicting about Trinidad in particular. It is no surprise that readers would be confused and distrustful of almost any foreign location to emigrate. See Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*, 176-79.

¹⁴² *Report of Messrs. Peck and Price: Who Were appointed at a Meeting of the Free Colored People of Baltimore, Held on the 25th November, 1839, Delegates to Visit British Guiana, and the Island of Trinidad; for the Purpose of Ascertaining the Advantages to be Derived by Colored People Migrating to Those Places* (Baltimore, MD: Woods & Crane, 1840), 7, 14, 18.

¹⁴³ George Truman, John Jackson, and Thomas B. Longstreth, *Narrative of a Visit to the West Indies* (Originally published Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, 1844; reprinted Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 84-112. The authors take the exact opposite view of Peck and Price and speak of Trinidad in glowing terms.

Trinidad, however, was always regarded by the British as a “test case” for postslavery arrangements and was atypical from other British colonies. See Claudius Fergus, “The *Siete Partidas*: A Framework for Philanthropy and Coercion during the Amelioration Experiment in Trinidad, 1823-34,” *Caribbean Studies* 36 (2008): 75-99; and Rosanne Adderley, “*New Negroes from Africa*”: *Slave Trade Abolition and Free African Settlement in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 63-91.

ation “as mere speculation or romance” he invited to inquire with an emigration agent. Kingsley earnestly appealed to “agriculturalists or to industrious farmers who are not afraid of work” to emigrate to Cabaret, “which is owned by George Kingsley, now residing on the premises, who will confirm his title to the land.”¹⁴⁴ It was a difficult sell. Just what Kingsley was doing in Haiti seemed to generate more questions than answers. Rumors apparently filled abolitionist circles with tidbits of growing concern over the colony.¹⁴⁵ The public would have to wait for confirmation of the other, more troubling side to Zephaniah’s Atlantic venture, but they would not have to wait long.

An opportunity appeared in late June 1842 that afforded Kingsley a wider audience for his colonization efforts. “It has been my fortune, in the course of a changing life, to meet with many strange characters,” wrote Lydia Maria Child in the 7 July 1842 issue of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, “but I never, till lately, met with one altogether unaccountable.” Her subject was none other than Zephaniah Kingsley. She recalled reading the second edition of his “very odd” proslavery *Treatise* “[s]ome six or eight years ago,” an excerpt of which appeared in her 1836 collection *The Evils of Slavery*.¹⁴⁶ Child recounted the pamphlet’s argument before noting a slightly embellished portrait of Kingsley’s domestic situation, which was undoubtedly drawn from a September 1837 issue of the *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, entitled “The Rich Mr. K. with His Black Consort and Offspring.” She heard rumors of Kingsley’s Haitian colony, “established for the advantage of his own mulatto sons,” complete with its labor force held “in a

¹⁴⁴ Kingsley, “Emigration to Haiti.”

¹⁴⁵ Lydia Maria Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 108, 110. The letter is dated 7 July 1842 and appeared in New York’s *National Anti-Slavery Standard* newspaper.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 107-08; Lydia Maria Child, *The Evils of Slavery, and the Cure of Slavery: The First Proved by the Opinion of Southerners Themselves, the Last Shown by Historical Evidence* (Newburyport, MA: Charles Whipple, 1836), 10-11.

qualified kind of slavery, by consent of the government; and that he still held a large number of slaves in Florida.” The stories “had so much excited [her] curiosity” that she claimed to have “sought an interview” with the planter while he was in New York on regular business.¹⁴⁷

Their interview was bound to present complications for both parties. Although unknown for certain, Kingsley did in all likelihood know of Lydia Maria Child as an abolitionist from his extensive, overlapping networks and his many travels. As surviving sources suggest, Kingsley bragged of his own racial views to nearly anyone who would listen but did so while simultaneously frequenting abolitionist circles. To other slaveholders he once claimed to have said, “Hear George Thompson, and he’ll captivate you, in spite of your teeth.”¹⁴⁸ His planter neighbors mocked him in kind with the title of abolitionist, he told Child. “I tell them that they may do so, in welcome; for it is a pity they shouldn’t have one case of amalgamation to point at.”¹⁴⁹ He appeared covetous for praise, though in fact received very little. Given the high profile of some of his own contacts, it would be quite surprising if he did not know his audience.¹⁵⁰

Child is credited as a defining figure in the shift to radical abolitionism in the antebellum era. She had worked for William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator* newspaper and was inspired in 1830 to offer a comprehensive Atlantic view of slavery. *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, published in August 1833 to coincide with the passing of Britain’s Act of Abolition, was her defining work.¹⁵¹ The *Appeal* offered a comparative analysis of na-

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁴⁸ Kingsley quoted in Child, “Letters from New-York, Number 33,” in *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*, ed. Carolyn L. Karcher (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 235-36.

¹⁴⁹ Child, “Letter from New York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 111-12.

¹⁵⁰ E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North American, from April, 1833 to October, 1834* (London: John Murray, 1835), 2:64, 2:71, 2:232, 3:348; C. Duncan Rice, “The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834-1835,” *Journal of American Studies* 2 (1968): 13-31.

tional slave systems and a nuanced, highly influential history of African Americans as well. More importantly, it gave readers a thorough history of emancipation to date and concluded that the abolition of slavery did not encourage but in fact *discouraged* the violence of insurrection. Remarkably, Child concluded that Haitian history had proven this fact by bringing peace and an end to revolution there. Emancipation in Saint-Domingue, she argued, would have prevented its slave revolution there in the first place. Inspired by Child's *Appeal*, influential pieces such as William Jay's *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society* (1835) later espoused this view as well.¹⁵²

Kingsley proved to be a difficult interview for the abolitionist because of his complicated and irreconcilable views on slavery, freedom, and race. "I found his conversation entertaining," she said, "but marked by the same incongruity, that characterizes his writings and his practice. His head is a peculiar one; it would, I think, prove as great a puzzle to phrenologists, as he himself is to moralists and philosophers." It seems that Kingsley used the opportunity to say something substantial about his supposed philanthropic endeavors in Haiti, gain more attention for his plan, and to win over an influential figure to those ends. In glowing terms Kingsley declared the settlement an unqualified success. "You *ought* to go," he told Child, "to see how happy the human race can be." In his telling Cabaret was a veritable utopia. The complex, he said, is "heavily timbered with mahogany all around; well watered; flowers so beautiful: fruits in abundance, so delicious you could not refrain from stopping to eat, till you could eat no more. My son has

¹⁵¹ Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (Boston, MA: Allen and Ticknor, 1833).

¹⁵² Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*, 156; Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*, 133-36, 145, 160-65; John Ernest, *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 162; Jay, *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society*.

laid out good roads, and built bridges and mills; the people are improving, and everything is prosperous.”¹⁵³

The abolitionist was unmoved by the portrait. She thought Kingsley’s motives were anything but certain. “I have heard that you hold your labourers in a sort of qualified slavery,” Child told her subject, “and some friends of the coloured race have apprehensions that you may sell them again.” “My labourers in Haiti are not slaves. They are a kind of indented [indentured] apprentices,” he told Child elusively. “I give them land, and they bind themselves to work for me. I have no power to take them away from that island; and you know very well that I could not sell them there.”¹⁵⁴ In denying the allegation in this manner, Kingsley’s repeated emphasis of his own involvement did affirm Child’s suspicion that *he* was in fact very much in control of the settlement, *not* George. However, he did so by referencing what was essentially the veiled power of the labor contract to prove his point. This was an important rhetorical move for Kingsley, as contemporary debates commonly “agreed that contract marked the line between freedom and bondage.”¹⁵⁵ While he ultimately believed that the future of slavery was limited, by essen-

¹⁵³ Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 109-10. This portrait of Haiti as a virtual Eden is quite evident in the 1820s emigration period as well. On this point see Sarah Connors Fanning, “Haiti and the U.S.: African American Emigration and the Recognition Debate,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2008), 121.

¹⁵⁴ Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 110. In the original *National Anti-Slavery Standard* version Child related to Kingsley a story of a fugitive slave that she met the previous year. She had considered Kingsley’s Haitian colony as a refuge for the desperate man, but feared the planter’s power when dealing with slaves. Kingsley responded jovially, “You need not have been afraid, ma’am. I should be the last man on earth to give up a runaway. If my own were to run away, I wouldn’t go after them, I think.” The slave perhaps belonged to one of the Palfrey brothers of Louisiana. See Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 162.

¹⁵⁵ Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bandage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17-55, 19 (quote); Thomas C. Holt, “The Essence of the Contract: The Articulation of Race, Gender, and Political Economy in British Emancipation Policy, 1838-1866,” in *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, by Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, Rebecca J. Scott (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 33-59.

tially limiting his slaves to continued bondage or indentured servitude, Kingsley had quickly arrived at a different solution to the postslavery problem altogether.¹⁵⁶

From the abolitionist's perspective, Child found one problem more worrisome than all of Kingsley's slippery answers and visions of tranquility in Haiti. By 1842 approximately sixty of Kingsley's former slaves resided in Haiti, freed upon the express condition that they emigrate to Cabaret under his guardianship, while upwards of 100 slaves still remained in bondage in Florida.¹⁵⁷ Child pressed him on the matter. With his typical paternalism the elderly planter paused, responding:

I have thought that subject all over, ma'am; and I have settled it in my own mind. All we can do in this world is to balance evils. I want to do great things for Haiti; and in order to do them, I must have money. If I have no negroes to cultivate my Florida lands, they will run to waste; and then I can raise no money from them for the benefit of Haiti. I do all I can do to make them comfortable, and they love me like a father. They would do any thing on earth to please me.

Vexed, she prodded him further. Again, Kingsley responded with his need to "balance evils," and suggested that he would "do more good by keeping them in slavery a few years more." It was evident that the planter had rationalized this glaring inconsistency in his quest to educate the public on his colony in Haiti, but he seemed not to have been pressed much on the matter or declined to concoct a better defense. Child then scolded his circuitous reasoning: "But you do not balance wisely. Remember that all the descendants of your slaves, through all coming time, will be affected by your decisions." Kingsley stated emphatically, "So will all in Haiti be affected, through all coming time, if I can carry out my plans. To do good in the world, we

¹⁵⁶ Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 231.

¹⁵⁷ Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 67-68; Kingsley, "Last Will and Testament (1843)," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 119n14.

must have money.” Seeing the line of questioning as a worthless endeavor, Child ended the matter there.¹⁵⁸

For what in the end would be a very public and quite personal view of Zephaniah Kingsley as self-deceiving slaveholder, self-proclaimed philanthropist, and troubled moral philosopher, Child found herself deeply conflicted about her subject. Taken together, she thought Kingsley’s qualities disconcerting. She concluded that “it was altogether vain to argue with him about fixed principles of right and wrong; one might as well fire small shot at the hide of a rhinoceros. Yet were there admirable points about him,” Child admitted, “perseverance, that would conquer the world; an heroic candour, that avowed all things, creditable and discreditable; and kindly sympathies, too—though it must be confessed that they go groping and floundering about in the strangest fashion.” Kingsley could only partially account for his moral dilemmas. “I have known the Malay and the African, the North American Indian, and the European,” he told Child, “and the more I’ve seen of the world, the less I understand it. It’s a queer place; that’s a fact.”¹⁵⁹ The same might be said for Kingsley himself, as far as the public was concerned. Much was indeed changing across the landscape of Atlantic slavery and America’s place within that world. Precisely how Caribbean creatures like Zephaniah Kingsley and their colonization schemes fit into the larger whole remained to be seen.¹⁶⁰

Above all, it was the “continued enslavement” of Kingsley’s slaves in Florida that was deeply disturbing to critics of his professed doctrines. Notwithstanding Zephaniah Kingsley’s charades, the public it seems knew better. One observer who had visited the Haitian settlement, in fact, concluded: “But after all is said, I doubt if the superiority is great enough to justify,—

¹⁵⁸ Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 111.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

¹⁶⁰ Guterl, *American Mediterranean*, 7, 47-49.

even on friend Kingsley's principle of 'balancing evils,'—the continued enslavement of their former fellow bondmen, in order to sustain the enterprise, which is to better their state."¹⁶¹ There was a larger plan at work. For decades the Florida planter and patriarch of a large slaveholding empire had built his handsome fortune by incredible energy, the use of force, and by anticipating and adapting to prevailing trends in the circum-Atlantic World. Read across that same landscape it was perhaps easier for Kingsley to see that in the long term the transition away from slave labor was inevitable. Nevertheless, like many of his Caribbean counterparts, Kingsley too seemed to recognize the many rewards in controlling and delaying the process of emancipation for immediate gains.¹⁶²

The key to his plans is outlined in his proslavery *Treatise*. By liberating only a portion of his bondmen to send to Haiti through what he called "the door of liberty," the slaveowner wielded a powerful disciplinary tool of social control that transcended national boundaries. For the foreseeable future the scheme would bind both slave and indentured laborer in a tighter web of dependence, providing stability to the whole of his plantation empire. The ideal laborer within Kingsley's plan is a creation or finished product within that system. While in his own words "few" of his slaves would actually receive freedom (or better stated as the ability to be sent to Cabaret as an indentured servant), Kingsley understood that "hope creates a spirit of economy, industry, and emulation to obtain merit by good behavior, which has a general and beneficial ef-

¹⁶¹ "Kingsley's Plantation," *Emancipator and Free American*, 1 September 1842 (Boston, MA).

¹⁶² Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 123. For later examples see Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1868-1895* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); and Luis A. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). This historiography is covered extensively in an essay to which I am heavily indebted by Francisco A. Scarano, "Slavery and Emancipation in Caribbean History," in *General History of the Caribbean, Volume VI: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, ed. B. W. Higman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 233-82.

fect.”¹⁶³ The promise of freedom became, in essence, a labor incentive. Most laborers, theoretically at least, would have remained highly productive within the Kingsley scheme. In the meantime, the wealth accrued from his Florida plantations would continue to supply Kingsley with his material comforts in life, and the wealth with which to retain power and prestige for his black family long after his death.¹⁶⁴

The process from which a slave became an indentured laborer within Kingsley’s own colonization experiment had Caribbean roots. As Matt D. Childs has shown, “the employment of manumission, rewards, and privileges by slaveowners to discipline and fashion labour regimes by rewarding certain types of behaviour, and thereby punishing others, constituted a fundamental element of slavery in the Americas.”¹⁶⁵ The very act of emancipation still bound the freeman to his former master. Freedom was a condition given by Kingsley himself from master to his slave, as he often pointed out.¹⁶⁶ This process, asserts Laurent Dubois, “helped to define the larger social web that bound slaves to masters.” This was done, he says, by “the master, who renewed his power as he relinquished it. The documents that granted freedom defined the continuing relationship between ex-slave and ex-master by presenting emancipation as a reward bestowed by the master in return for good services on the part of the slave.” The problem was acute for Kingsley’s slaves-turned-laborers. A precious few were manumitted only to enter indentured

¹⁶³ Kingsley, *Treatise*, 44.

¹⁶⁴ This is perfectly in line with his *Treatise* in which Kingsley argued that, “A patriarchal feeling of affection is due to every slave from his owner, who should consider the slave as a member of his own family, whose happiness and protection is identified with that of his own family, of which his slave constitutes a part, according to his scale of condition. This affection creates confidence which becomes reciprocal, and is attended with the most beneficial consequences to both. It certainly is humiliating to a proud master to reflect, that he depends on his slave even for bread to eat. But such is the fact.” Kingsley, *Treatise*, 74. See also Christopher Morris, “The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered,” *Journal of American History* 85 (1998): 982-1007.

¹⁶⁵ Matt D. Childs, “Master-Slave Rituals of Power at a Gold Mine in Nineteenth-Century Brazil,” *History Workshop Journal* 53 (Spring 2002): 46.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Kingsley’s thirteenth footnote of his *Treatise*.

servitude at his Haitian settlement for terms up to nine-years under significant obligation. For the majority of his slaves left to toil in Florida plantation slavery, freedom given to a small few probably compounded the misery of bondage. In both cases release from bondage, as a real or potential condition, presented something of a mess for future power dynamics. This “freedom awarded to exceptional individuals,” Dubois argues, really only served to “[reinforce] the larger legitimacy of slavery” itself.¹⁶⁷ For Kingsley that was entirely the point.

Kingsley’s settlers were not alone in their frustration with land matters. Their arrival could have only further complicated tenuous relations between the local peasantry in the east and the weakening Haitian state. For years Boyer’s plans for land reform sought to do away with the confusing practice of collective landownership known as *terrenos comuneros*.¹⁶⁸ These communal lands housed significant numbers of peasants that engaged in subsistence farming and cattle raising, and otherwise shared access to resources. The practice naturally impeded the government’s plans for a plantation economy in the former Spanish lands. Boyer in turn confiscated a significant portion of the lands from individuals and the Catholic Church alike, redistributing them to both peasants and former Spanish slaves in return for growing cash crops. The overall effect of Boyer’s land legislation meant that he had inadvertently weakened Haiti’s hold on the eastern side of the island. A large portion of the inhabitants had no desire to depart from their

¹⁶⁷ Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 75-76; Marcus Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom: Atlantic Slavery and the Representation of Emancipation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 19. In the context of wider Atlantic representations of slave manumission, this troubling portrait of black freedom as a gift given by whites—in fact, by abolitionists and slaveholders alike—has proven enduring down to the present. For example, Wood argues that the literal and figurative image of the freed slave without the chains of bondage “is still imprisoned within the posture and gestures that the abolitionists invented and that white society considered the most acceptable official icon of the Atlantic slave. The black slave has been given a strange form of freedom, and is now frozen forever within a gratitude that imprisons him.”

¹⁶⁸ Marlin D. Clausner states that these “were defined as undivided tracts of land owned or claimed to be owned by two or more persons, the interest of each being represented by shares (*acciones*) or pesos or other units which had reference to value or proportionate rights, rather than to area of land owned or claimed by them.” Clausner, *Rural Santo Domingo: Settled, Unsettled, and Resettled* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1973), 121.

communal way of life. The government required large landowners as well to receive new titles to their properties or forfeit them entirely. Haitian policy on this particular matter translated into widespread fraud and confusion, which reigned for about two decades. By 1838 these circumstances gave rise to *La Trinitaria*, the secret organization whose “goals were to organize Dominican resistance to separate the eastern part of the island from Haiti.”¹⁶⁹ Frustrated with his inability to effect change in the east, Boyer at last capitulated to traditional landholding practices, but did so entirely too late. Both sides of the island were soon in full rebellion in a war between two different peoples.¹⁷⁰

The timing could not have been worse. Zephaniah Kingsley died in New York City on 13 September 1843 at the age of seventy-seven while making preparations for a short stay in Haiti.¹⁷¹ In his will drafted on 20 July, he left a sizeable portion of his massive estate to his family then in Haiti.¹⁷² However, Kingsley’s white sister and some other extended family members challenged the estate, which was subsequently riddled with fraud and peculiar circumstances that hindered payment to the legatees.¹⁷³ He left a slave force appraised in 1844 at more than

¹⁶⁹ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 138.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Lee Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 44-51; Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 105-09; Clausner, *Rural Santo Domingo*, 84-86, 114-15; Pons, “The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo,” 181-214; idem., *The Dominican Republic*, 138-41.

¹⁷¹ Schafer, “Family Ties that Bind,” 9; Zephaniah Kingsley to General Joseph M. Hernandez, San Jose, St. Johns River, East Florida, 12 August 1843, Probate Record for Zephaniah Kingsley, #1203, Duval County Courthouse, Probate Department, Jacksonville, Florida. Obituaries for Kingsley are in *New-York Spectator*, 20 September 1843 (New York, NY), *Boston Investigator*, 27 September 1843 (Boston, MA), and *St. Augustine News*, 30 September 1843 (St. Augustine, FL).

¹⁷² Zephaniah Kingsley, “Last Will and Testament, 20 July 1843,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 117-18, 120.

¹⁷³ Petition of Martha McNeill, et. al to Judge Farquhar Bethune, 30 November 1844, Papers Concerning the Will of Zephaniah Kingsley, M87-20, State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee. Such challenges are not surprising, as Kingsley himself wrote in his *Treatise*, 59: “Query. Has any property left by will to any colored person, ever been honestly and fairly administered by any white person? Answer. Such instances might possibly

\$30,000, but recommended that any slave not able to purchase themselves at one-half their appraised worth should be sold “on consideration of their migrating to Hayti, if they cannot be allowed to stay as free in this [Florida] Territory.” But as Florida law stipulated that no free blacks could reside within its jurisdiction without a white benefactor, Kingsley’s hollow clause—not to mention a hefty purchase price—effectively meant few if any slaves could meet such requirements. Predictably, most were sold at auction.¹⁷⁴

The future looked decidedly bleak with the planter’s death. The fate of the Haitian settlement relied upon the domineering figure of Zephaniah Kingsley and the income generated from his properties in Florida. Legal matters were disturbing and the deceased patriarch’s imprint was difficult to overcome. Surviving evidence indicates that George acquired his property in Florida and Haiti only through his father. Such qualities permeated all facets of Kingsley’s dealings. In the long run this proved quite problematic for the eldest son, who by all accounts was liked and generally referred to as intelligent and well-mannered. However, when he does appear in the historical record, George is most commonly the passive recipient of his father’s goodwill. When acting on his own behalf, George Kingsley seems to have been somewhat

have happened, but never to my knowledge.” Kingsley himself seems to have dealt suspiciously, to say the least, with the estate of fellow Floridian John Fraser, who died in 1813 during the Patriot War in East Florida. Daniel Alan Livesay, “Children of Uncertain Fortune: Mixed-Race Migration from the West Indies to Britain, 1750-1820,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010), 199-208; Schafer, “Family Ties that Bind,” 3, 12.

Other notable individuals like Kingsley dealt with their wills in a stronger matter than he did to ensure the provisions were met and their families secure, including a careful selection of witnesses and executors. An excellent treatment is Livesay, “Children of Uncertain Fortune.” See also Bernie D. Jones, *Fathers of Conscience: Mixed-Race Inheritance in the Antebellum South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Kent Anderson Leslie, *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson, 1849-1893* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 76-104; Cynthia Kennedy-Haflett, “‘Moral Marriage’: A Mixed Race Relationship in Nineteenth-Century Charleston, South Carolina,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 97 (1996): 206-226.

¹⁷⁴ Kingsley, “Last Will and Testament, 20 July 1843,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 119-20, 119n14; Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 87. The community of Kingsley’s slaves appear to have been routinely disrupted by being moved under his dominion. See *Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and His Journal of 1840-1843*, ed. Jacqueline K. Fretwell (St. Augustine, FL: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1984), 28, 30.

overwhelmed and otherwise frustrated with his situation. This was particularly the case in the short time left of his life.¹⁷⁵

A series of legal problems over the terms of Zephaniah Kingsley's will tied up the planter's assets in the Florida courts for years. George Kingsley returned temporarily to the United States in order to stay better informed about the complicated proceedings. In February 1846, while en route to the U.S. from Puerto Plata, he died in a shipwreck at sea, leaving behind a sizeable estate as well. His own property in Florida included approximately forty slaves and over 3,000 acres of land, not counting the Cabaret plantation in the Dominican Republic. It was valued at \$16,167.31.¹⁷⁶ A large portion of his holdings depended on his inheritance from the unsettled terms of his father's will, from which George's estate would receive more than eighty additional slaves. As far as the Kingsley family was concerned, the large holdings on paper owned by Zephaniah and George did not translate into the cash or credit that they desperately needed at that time to survive. Money had stopped coming into Cabaret. This in turn prompted George's mother, Anna Madgigine Jai, to return to Florida permanently. Her youngest son, John Maxwell Kingsley, stayed behind but fared no better at operating the skeletal remains of the Cabaret plan-

¹⁷⁵ Portions of two letters on legal matters written by George are in James Johnson, "History of Zephaniah Kingsley and Family," Federal Editors' Project (Negro Writers' Unit), January 4, 1937, unpublished MS, State Library of Florida, Tallahassee. The files were originally in probate file in Duval County Courthouse but long since missing; Kingsley's legal transactions in Florida for George are in Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 63, 70, 145n15. Particularly telling are the transactions in Haiti found in Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos*, 40, 91; and Kingsley to Gurley, 30 June 1838, Hayti, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed., Stowell, 103, 105.

¹⁷⁶ Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1860* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 112-13; Johnson, "History of Zephaniah Kingsley and Family," 11. Kingsley Beatty Gibbs, "Inventory of the Real and Personal Estate of the Late George Kingsley," 1844., and, idem., "Negroes Claimed by George Kingsley with their valuations in the appointment of the Estate of Zephh. Kingsley dec'd," n.d., both in Probate Record for George Kingsley, #1205, Probate Department, Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, Florida.

tation. He later married and chose to remain in the Dominican Republic, later receiving a portion of his father's estate, as did his mother and sisters then residing in Florida.¹⁷⁷

Most of the Atlantic master class came to fear the prospects of a world after slavery. Poised on the rim of the Caribbean closest to Britain's colonies where the system had been outlawed, East Florida's own planter class perhaps felt the anxieties of the age more so than its slaveholding neighbors. Zephaniah Kingsley had long resided in Florida and had frequented the West Indies even longer. He had seen the warning signs and alerted Floridians for years that there would be a time when the slave system would collapse without drastic reforms, though this was to no avail. From his vantage point challenges to slaveholders everywhere were many and would soon overwhelm them. Contrary to opinions held by most of white society in the Atlantic world, Kingsley chose to meet his fears head on by creating an escape hatch for his massive holdings in independent Haiti. And while he loudly proclaimed the success of his own efforts, the swift downfall of his enterprise at the hands of his former bondmen speaks much louder. For these reasons as this chapter has argued, we must be sensitive to the fact that in the Age of Emancipation such benevolent posturing is one of the myriad ways in which slaveholders adopted proslavery fictions in order to distort and disguise their attempts to retain mastery against the overwhelming experience of history and the abolitionary tide.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Kingsley, "Last Will and Testament," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 117, 118, 120; Schaffer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 69-74, 90, 94.

¹⁷⁸ Franklin W. Knight, "The Disintegration of the Caribbean Slave Systems, 1772-1886," in *General History of the Caribbean Volume III: The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, ed. Franklin W. Knight (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 338-39; Karen Fog Olwig, "Introduction: Emancipation and Its Consequences," in *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, ed. Karen Fog Olwig (Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co., 1995), 5-7; Stanley Engerman, "Pricing Freedom: Evaluating the Costs of Emancipation and of Manumission," in *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom: Perspectives from the Caribbean, Africa and the African Diaspora*, ed. Verene A. Shepherd (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 278-80; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 20-27.

CHAPTER THREE:
FROM FLORIDA TO HISPANIOLA: CABARET AS AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

In early August 1839 the brig *America* arrived at Puerto Plata on the northern coast of Haiti after two weeks at sea. On board the approximately “100 free colored” passengers, many of which were ex-slaves from East Florida, cheered the end of their long journey from slavery to freedom. According to one observer the scene “[was] overwhelming to the feelings of humanity. It was an affecting sight to see so many young, lively, and decent looking people cordially welcomed with every manifestation of pleasure from a joyous community among whom they were to reside.”¹ Beneath the veneer championed here as a benevolent act lay a vastly more complicated scenario. In an era when much of the Atlantic master class came to worry about what came after slavery, planters like Zephaniah Kingsley took a much more active role in their attempts to control the structure, pace, and overall circumstances of labor organization beyond what he perceived to be the rather sudden limits of traditional enslavement.²

Planters in the British Caribbean faced the prospects of emancipation sooner than the rest of the Atlantic’s plantocracy, and largely did so by generally reconfiguring basic arrangements of the master-slave relationship by slight modification of longstanding practices. These arrangements varied across time and space, with elements such as garden plots, housing, and work ex-

¹ “Emigration to Hayti,” *Boston Recorder*, 9 August 1839; “Colonization in Hayti,” *New-York Spectator*, 9 September 1839. Note that the latter source indicates 101 emigrants. The chapter title is indebted to Dennis Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola: First Free Black Emigration and Settlements in Hispaniola,” (PhD Dissertation, Central Michigan University, 2003).

² Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 7, 9; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 115-40; David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17-22. A recent essay on the major works related to this topic is Christer Petley, “Rethinking the Fall of the Planter Class,” *Atlantic Studies* 9 (March 2012): 1-17.

pectations all used as bargaining chips for both parties. Examples abound of these protracted struggles to control labor. Nonetheless, Kingsley's own arrangement is, however, altogether different from much of what prevailed in the Age of Emancipation. In physically removing slaves who labored under a legally recognized regime of bondage to a land that recognized no law in slavery, the planter theorized that his labor force would be made *more* secure by a combination of Haitian law, coercion in its varied forms, and his own personal safeguards to such effect. In so doing these former slaves became pieces crucial to the expansion of Kingsley's slave empire, though the experiment was short lived. While the previous chapter demonstrated that Zephaniah Kingsley championed his colonization effort as a success, the present chapter argues that his laborers, on the whole, collectively held a very different view of their own situations tremendously at odds with that suggested by their former master. It is the story of the common laborer. In fleeing from Cabaret, the planter's former bondmen crafted an intensely powerful counternarrative to that advanced by Zephaniah Kingsley himself. The story challenges his ultimate legacy. The following pages situate the indentured experience of Kingsley's laborers at Cabaret within the tumultuous era that witnessed the overthrow of the Haitian government and creation of the Dominican Republic.

On at least three separate occasions groups of Kingsley's slaves came to Haiti's northern coast from Florida as part of his "experiments" in free labor. They first disembarked at Puerto Plata, at the time a port of some economic and political importance for the republic (and later center for most of the region's tobacco exports).³ Home to the coast's lone customs house as well as the regional administrative center, the town was an essential component in maintaining

³ José Augusto Puig Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos a Puerto Plata en la primera mitad del siglo XIX: la Iglesia Metodista Wesleyana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 1978), 32, 106-07.

good relations between landowner and laborer. Before they could reach the new settlement at Cabaret, practical legal matters here awaited all new arrivals once in Haiti.⁴

All ships to Puerto Plata faced a rather difficult port of entry, to which a contemporary observer argued “render[ed] the discharging and loading of vessels very tedious.”⁵ Given its narrowness and often shallow water, it took considerable time once at port simply to reach dry land. Ships typically docked no closer than about a quarter-mile from shore, from which goods were taken by “lighters” (or flat-bottomed barges) and then transferred to ox-driven carts on land to their final destination. The surrounding town of Puerto Plata at the time contained about 300 houses with roughly 2,000 inhabitants engaged in occupations ranging from agricultural labor and logging to a host of trades associated with a maritime export economy. There was a particular need in the town for blacksmiths, mechanics, and shipbuilders, though the Haitian government’s previous efforts were unable to remedy the deficiency of skilled labor. The town did, however, prove to be a draw for frustrated and exploited rural laborers who fled to the anonymity afforded by Puerto Plata’s more urban locale, which was something that no plantation owner was immune.⁶

Under Haitian President Jean Pierre Boyer’s plan for agricultural and economic renewal, codified in the Rural Code (1826), all Haitians occupied one of two classes in society. Haitian laws made the categorization compulsory for residency and citizenship. Of the approximately 700,000 citizens of the republic most, like the Kingsley laborers, were immediately designated

⁴ Emelio Betances, *State and Society in the Dominican Republic* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 13-16.

⁵ Sir Robert H. Schomburgh, “Remarks on the Principal Ports and Anchoring Places Along the Coast of the Dominican Republic,” *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle* (July 1853): 345.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 345-46; J. Dennis Harris, *A Summer on the Borders of the Caribbean Sea* (New York: A.B. Burdick, 1860), 22.

“cultivators” of the nation. Those not otherwise engaged in agriculture made up the military class, stated by the president himself to be 45,000 strong, portrayed as the foundation of the nation’s existence.⁷ While inadequately maintained and increasingly decentralized throughout his rule, the army provided both real and perceived muscle for Boyer’s energetic schemes of economic resurgence. Contemporary observers of the Haitian situation frequently noted that the masses lacked any compulsion to work beyond mere subsistence levels, rendering the economic reality dismal and its example frightening to nations approaching the formal end of slavery in the West Indies. “The industry of the population of Haiti,” one writer baldly stated to Britain’s Henry Bathurst (3rd Earl Bathurst), “is found to require the stimulous [sic] of the bayonet.”⁸ Such views in the period were far from unique.⁹

In all between fifty-five and sixty Kingsley slaves contracted with the Kingsley family between 1837 and 1841.¹⁰ The Kingsley laborers exited enslavement in Florida and promptly entered a different kind of bondage under the terms of the Haitian Rural Code. Much was expected of the new arrivals under Haitian law and from their former masters. Each arriving slave-turned-laborer entered into a binding contract with George Kingsley (at least nominally speaking) which stipulated the number of years they were required to labor and the total monetary debt

⁷ James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo,) with Remarks on Its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, etc. etc.* (London: John Murray, 1828), 267-68. A more numerous force called the National Guard consisted of some 113,000 militarized individuals, “mostly mulattoes,” who harbored intense class identities and racial prejudices. According to Brown, when Boyer dissolved the group it created considerable lasting opposition to his regime, particularly from the provinces of southern Haiti. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia: William Marshall and Co., 1837), 269-70.

⁸ [Anonymous,] *The Rural Code of Haiti; in French and English, with a Prefatory Letter to the Right Hon. the Early Bathurst, K.G.* (London: B. McMillan, 1827), v.

⁹ Gelian Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolition Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 174-79; Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 103.

¹⁰ The totals are difficult to assess with absolute certainty because Kingsley stated 60 and Anna Madgigine Jai gave the figure of 55. Surviving evidence can only account for a total of 49 common laborers. Six “prime Africans” sent by Zephaniah in 1836, 24 in 1837, 15 in 1839, and 4 in 1841.

owed on their labor contracts. Such terms were read aloud for the respective parties, explained by a government interpreter in English, and signed by two notary publics. An example of a contract made on 10 August 1839 for the ex-slave Ellaibo is instructive:

Por ante nos Jose Leandro Garcia, Notario Publico de Puerto Plata y Pedro Eugenio Pelletier, Notario Publico de la residencia de Santiago, ambos del resorte de este Tribunal Civil, abajo firmados...

Comparecieron el ciudadano George Kingsley, propietario y domiciliado en esta comun y Ellaibo Kingsley, procedente de los Estados Unidos y oriundo del Africa, el cual, en idioma ingles, ha declarado por el órgano del Interprete de este puerto, Pedro Eduardo Dubocq, que contrataba, signalamaticamente a trabajar como cultivador en los terrenos o habitaciones pertenecientes al primero por nueve anos de termino de esta fecha en adelante, a lo cuarta parte de beneficio y sin otra condicion que la de observar ambas partes el Codigo Rural de Haiti, en lo que les concierna, segun la calidad del contrato...

Declarando tambien de descontar de la cuota parte de beneficio que le corresponda al segundo la suma de novecientos pesos fuertes, la cual, por acta autentica otorgada por el, a favor del padre del primero en los Estados Unidos, recibio prestada para sus urgencias, mantencion y costos de trasportes a esta isla y que se debe contar como por avance hecho sobre su trabajo hasta su afectiva satisfaccion, ya sea en el termino dicho o en el demas que se secesite y Dan acto...

Hecho y pasado en Puerto Plata, hoy el diez de Agosto de mil ochocientos treinta y nueve, ano treinta y seis de la Independencia. Se leyo primeramente y despues se tradujo u esplico [sic] en ingles por el Interprete, delante de las partes, que dijeron estar conformes y requeridas a firmar, declaro el segundo no saberlo hacer. Firmo el primer con el Interprete y los Notarios.

P. E. Dubocq
Interprete

George Kingsley
P.E. Pelletier
Jose Leandro Garcia¹¹

¹¹ A summary of the contract excerpt gives the names and titles of the Haitian authorities present for the proceedings. Ellaibo was listed as a native of Africa by way of the United States contracted to work as a farm laborer for a term of indenture to last nine years in accordance to the Rural Code. He owed 900\$ piastres stemming from the cost of transport and upkeep. Note that Ellaibo and most of the other laborers were assigned the Kingsley surname as a matter of clerical convenience. I have quoted the full excerpt given the scarcity of primary materials of the proceedings and made no corrections to the quote. Contract of Indenture for Ellaibo (Kingsley), 10 August 1839, in Rafael A. Brugal Paiewonsky, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda," 46-47, unpublished TS, in possession of the author. Many thanks to Dr. John Williman for supplying Brugal's essay and for answering extensive questions about the locale.

Details of forty-three contracts in Table 1.1 (see p. 111) reveal that George and Zephaniah Kingsley bound their laborers for the maximum term of nine years allowed under the Haitian Rural Code. The lone minor on the list, Tuddy, was bound “until his coming of age” at twenty-one. Slightly more than half were male. Additionally, the new workers found themselves indebted to the Kingsley family in amounts ranging from 500\$ to 2,500\$ piastres (the average being \$468) owed for what was essentially the cost of self-purchase (*coartación*), transportation, maintenance, and tools supplied by Zephaniah Kingsley.¹²

The massive 35,000 acre tract that would be home to the Kingsley laborers came into being only through tremendous effort, carved from what was previously “a perfect wilderness.”¹³ Located on the northern coast of Haiti on what was formerly the Spanish side, the Kingsley settlement at Cabaret was approximately two dozen miles from Puerto Plata by overland route but quite remote and difficult to access except by boat. The former Spanish lands comprised approximately two-thirds of the entire island of Hispaniola, with the Republic of Haiti occupying the western third. Despite their vast size differences, the eastern lands lagged far behind western Haiti economically and in population. For centuries the Spanish had essentially ignored Santo Domingo, which became heavily dependent on trading with its French neighbor of Saint-Domingue and neighboring islands like Jamaica, Cuba, and the Turks and Caicos. Its economy hinged largely upon cattle ranching, where thousands of heads roamed on large tracts of open grasslands or savannas. Plantations were few but limited more to the areas surrounding Santo Domingo City, home to much of the eastern population.¹⁴

¹² *Ibid.*, 48-49.

¹³ “Kingsley’s Plantation,” *Emancipator and Free American*, 1 September 1842 (Boston, MA).

¹⁴ Graham T. Nessler, “A Failed Emancipation? The Struggle for Freedom in Hispaniola during the Haitian Revolution, 1789-1809,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2011); Frank Moya Pons, “The Haitian Revo-

Settlement along the northern coast was virtually nonexistent.¹⁵ Sir Robert Schomburgh, for example, reported that it was “almost a desert and only at great distances, as under, inhabited by people.”¹⁶ This is unsurprising as northern cities such as Puerto Plata, Santiago, and Samaná provided better opportunities for employment. In the southeastern region outside of Santo Domingo City, only Santiago in the northern country attained considerable size. Located about thirty miles inland from Cabaret, it was a center of trade for the fertile Cibao region that sent people and products by mules to Puerto Plata in the north and Santo Domingo City to the south.¹⁷

Table 1. List of Known Slaves Sent to Haiti by Zephaniah Kingsley.

Table from Rafael A. Brugal Paiewonsky, “Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda,” pp. 48-49.

No.	NAME	YEARS OF CONTRACT	AMOUNT DUE FROM
01	John, son of Juno	9	600.00
02	Richard	9	
03	Mary	9	
04	Camella	9	2,500.00
05	Castina	9	
06	Sybila	9	
07	Deino	9	1,000.00
08	Kesiah	9	

lution in Santo Domingo (1789-1804),” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 28 (1991): 125-62.

¹⁵ Alan L. Karras, “Transgressive Exchange: Circumventing Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Commercial Relations, or The Discount of Monte Christi,” in *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, eds. Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Karen Wigen (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 123-24.

¹⁶ Schomburgh, “Remarks on the Principal Ports and Anchoring Places,” 345.

¹⁷ Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New Rochelle, NY: Hispaniola Books, 1995), 186-87; Michiel Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco in the Dominican Republic, 1870-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 12-15.

09	Dorchas	9	
10	Adolfo	9	1,800.00
11	Angela	9	
12	Douglas	9	
13	Tiena	9	
14	Juno	9	
15	Affy	9	1,000.00
16	Flora	9	
17	S. Carney, son of Juno	9	
18	Jeny	9	
19	Lucy	9	1,200.00
20	Mery	9	
21	Polly	9	
22	Jacobo	9	1,800.00
23	Pheilipe	9	
24	Ned	9	
25	Stepeny	9	
26	Salina	9	2,000.00
27	Napoleon	9	
28	Anna	9	
29	Susannah	9	
30	Murphy	9	
31	Chenna	9	
32	Segui	9	2,000.00
33	Tuddy	until he comes of age (21)	

34	Edward Dodge	9	600.00
35	Catalina	9	500.00
36	Nancy	9	500.00
37	Larey	9	500.00
38	Ellaibo	9	500.00
39	Emeline Darby	9	500.00
40	Friday	9	500.00
41	Mookeeto	9	500.00
42	Sophia	9	500.00
43	Diana	9	500.00

Poised at it was on the coast and close to a commercial port, Zephaniah Kingsley selected the land that would comprise Cabaret for all of its fine qualities located “on the harbor of Cabaret and navigable part of the [Yásica] River.”¹⁸ Its fertile soil, pleasant climate, luxurious vegetation, abundant timber, numerous streams, and close natural harbor combined to make it an excellent agricultural site. Notwithstanding its natural advantages, making a life there for the new laborers was not easy. The Rural Code dictated that most of the individual’s time would be spent working exclusively for the benefit of Kingsley’s settlement, which he or she could not leave without permission under penalty of law. Most would have been grouped into the so called “principal branch of cultivation,” or that deemed as agricultural work which specifically included “the raising of plants and trees yielding produce for exportation to foreign countries, grain of all

¹⁸ [Zephaniah Kingsley,] “Emigration to Haiti,” *The Sun*, 11 November 1840 (Baltimore, MD and New York, NY).

descriptions, and all kinds of foods and roots designed for the subsistence of the population.”¹⁹ Such a designation meant that all laborers “shall commence on Monday morning, not to cease until Friday evening, (legal holidays excepted). But in extraordinary cases, when the interest of the cultivators as well as of the proprietors requires it, work shall be continued until Saturday.” The workday began at dawn and ended at sunset, with a thirty minute breakfast taken in the fields at midday. Kingsley’s laborers were to be obedient and enthusiastic in their duties, and careful in their dealings with their former masters. According to Article 189, “Every act of disobedience or insult on the part of a workman commanded to do any work, to which he is subjected, shall be punished by imprisonment, according to the exigency of the case, in the discretion of the justice of the peace of the commune.”²⁰ Harassment from the Haitian Rural Police or even violent correction from Kingsley or his subordinates always remained possible threats as well.²¹

As agricultural laborers for the Cabaret settlement Kingsley’s former slaves obtained plots of land from the Kingsley family which, by the planter’s own estimation, measured about six and one-half acres per family (twenty *tareas*) on which to grow their own food for subsistence and/or market if they so chose to do. As in slavery, any necessary agricultural work could only be done by the laborers in the limited hours of Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting of course, provided that their services were not otherwise required by the settlement or the state at large. According to Kingsley most came to have “good comfortable log house all nicely white-washed” surrounded by about five to six cleared acres of fenced land on which to work. This

¹⁹ Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, New York, 13th Nov., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley*, ed. Daniel W. Stowell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 99-100n18; [Z. Kingsley, ed.] *The Rural Code of Haiti, Literally Translated from a Publication by the Government Press Together with Letters from that Country, Concerning its Present Condition* (Granville, Middletown, NJ: George H. Evans, 1837), 8.

²⁰ Kingsley, *The Rural Code of Haiti*, 31.

²¹ Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, 333-34.

basic arrangement, so typical of subsistence peasantry generally throughout the region, did exhibit some variations, but was recognizable even comprised of as little as one to several acres per family.²²

The arrangement did preserve the cohesion of community, although the divisions of small acreage plots did also extend the settlement's reach beyond a small coastal enclave. Land was plentiful across the sprawling estate, but the demands of cash crop agriculture and the anticipation of more emigrants led Zephaniah to acquire more property. By mid-1838 he had taken possession of holdings inland up the Yásica River near today's Sabaneta de Yásica.²³ The Kingsleys called the property El Batey or simply Batey (always misspelled as "Batty"). The "heavily timbered" area at the time was considered a "rich river valley," surrounded by accessible mahogany and cedar both abundant and extremely valuable. It contained early at least two nearby mills and a road that connected them to the settlement's center and to Cabaret Harbor, a distance of about five miles. A separate road also connected Batey with the important trading town of Santiago some twenty-five miles to the southwestern interior as well as to the mouth of the Yásica and Atlantic Ocean to the northward. Adjacent properties acquired in the late 1830s of one Madame Garside south of Batey included well-placed dwellings and outbuildings along the Yásica, while a stock plantation that occupied a large swath of savannah south of Cabaret Island, bought of a Mr. S. Figueroa, further enlarged the already massive, self-contained estate.²⁴

Life in Haiti featured two basic seasons that greatly affected labor expectations and realities. Situated in Hispaniola's fertile northern valley (known as the Cibao), the lands at Cabaret

²² Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco*, 56.

²³ Puig Ortiz, *Emigracion de libertos norteamericanos*, 106-07.

²⁴ See the inventory of George Kingsley's estate reproduced in Brugal, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda," 34.

were favorable for agriculture. The Cibao is considerably less humid than the island's southern region and has roughly two periods from July to September and December to January when more rainfall is expected. The summer temperatures are warm, though not stifling, and the air Kingsley himself spoke of in the most favorable terms.²⁵ The wet season generally commenced with rainfall more pronounced in about October or November, lasting until April or May before slightly higher temperatures and drier weather appeared. There was no certainty that the calendar or Mother Nature would cooperate in this regard, but each season brought longer periods of consistent weather patterns and only small differences in overall temperatures with Haiti's tropical climate.²⁶

Agricultural strategies implemented by the Kingsley family sought to maximize the potential of the lengthy growing seasons and fertile lands. If first planted about a month before the start of the so called "dry season," corn, sweet potatoes, yams, and cassava typically produced from three to four abundant crops per year thanks to milder weather, and the added protection afforded by moisture rich soil crucial for overcoming prolonged drought conditions.²⁷ George Kingsley noted in a letter to his father that by January 1837 the infant colony had made excellent strides, with the proud patriarch noting "eight acres of corn planted, and as soon as circumstances would allow, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, rice, beans, peas, plantains, oranges, and all sorts of fruit trees were planted in succession."²⁸ In April the group planted cash crops in cotton and

²⁵ William M. Gabb, "On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 15 (1873): 60; Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, Puerto de Plata, 13th Sept., 1835, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 90; Kingsley, "Emigration to Haiti."

²⁶ William Davies Durland, "The Forests of the Dominican Republic," *Geographical Review* 12 (April 1922): 207, 210.

²⁷ Kingsley, "Emigration to Haiti"; [Anonymous,] *Life in Santo Domingo*, ed. Richard B. Kimball (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1873), 44.

rice followed by sweet oranges in May. These initial crops would sustain the settlement with its basic nutritional needs and could provide some extra income for those laborers willing or able to devote the time. Kingsley himself remarked that some “had become traders in rice, corn, potatoes, sugar cane, fowls, peas, beans, in short every thing to sell on their own account, and had already laid up thirty or forty dollars apiece.”²⁹

Most agricultural pursuits of the period were labor intensive, using only basic tools such as a hoe, pickaxe, rake, and the ubiquitous machete to extract plentiful rewards from the abundant and fertile lands.³⁰ Although accustomed to the myriad demands of a tropical locale, Kingsley’s laborers faced a difficult set of obstacles in order to make their lives over again in Haiti. Grounds first needed to be cleared of trees, stumps, brush, and rocks, in what was the most laborious and difficult stage. Felled trees were then used to build houses, fences, consumed as fuel, and/or exported for sale. Some local homes were even built almost entirely of local mahogany, such as the elusive “Casa de Caoba,” the main Kingsley residence at Sabaneta de Yásica.³¹ Fences too were an especially critical component of agricultural life in Haiti, although they were time consuming to construct and required constant maintenance in the unforgiving tropical weather. Nonetheless, they served important functions not only to delineate the boundaries of one farm from another but protected vital crops from being damaged by wandering livestock and horses.³²

²⁸ Zephaniah Kingsley to the Editor of the *Christian Statesman*, Hayti, 30 June 1838, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell 103-04.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁰ Anon., *Life in Santo Domingo*, 46.

³¹ A partial description of the residence barely standing many decades ago is found in Brugal, “Una Leyenda,” 30-31.

³² *Ibid.*, 56, 70.

Kingsley's former slaves came to build their own farm plots (*estancias*) based on a more familiar local Haitian arrangement that consisted of a small hut (*bohío*) set in the middle of a cleared, fenced yard that typically contained fruit bearing trees and sometimes housed pigs, chickens, and goats. Local parlance called the arrangement a "*conuco*," a term that has come to have different meanings since that time.³³ Cleared tracts of land near the dwelling house, which were usually fenced, contained most of the individual family's basic food crops. It was here that the common laborer worked alongside family members most Saturdays and Sundays to provide for the household's sustenance. Orchards of fruit trees included varieties of oranges, apples, lemons, and limes. Lush plantain walks also required careful attention. Regular pruning and occasional grafting in the waning days of the dry season were essential techniques to achieving healthy results but required patience, diligence, and proper timing.³⁴

The *estancia* and its improvements represented a total familial investment. The result of countless hours spent forging and maintaining these plots meant that such homesteads were the foundation and identity of the laboring family unit. It served as a place of refuge, a source of family food, and as a site of production; but it was also a visible, if imperfect, reminder of a type of freedom held dear by its inhabitants.³⁵ This conception of the *estancia* as an investment had significant consequences for the laborers and the Kingsleys as landowners. As the slave quarters and household functioned largely to keep the enslaved bound to the plantation through human obligations and affections, so it was reasoned that in servitude these small plots would serve to keep the laborers immobile should other mechanisms fail. Households at Cabaret were thus part

³³ On this point compare the accounts of Harris, *A Summer on the Borders of the Caribbean Sea*, 39, and Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco*, 56-57.

³⁴ Anon., *Life in Santo Domingo*, 76-77, 84.

³⁵ Bonham C. Richardson, *The Caribbean in the Wider World, 1492-1992: A Regional Geography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 188-89.

of the strategies planters used to control black lives and labor through the manipulation of “spatialities.”³⁶ In assigning the laborers to agreements of indenture for nine years, the expectation that a collective community would remain long after such terms expired was entirely reasonable. Building relationships and kinship ties to a region functioned on one level, while time often contributed to giving emigrants a sense of place and permanence. Few would be expected to discard these aspects to start over yet again, provided the theoretical arms of the law did not work to prevent their leaving.³⁷

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the hyperbolic reports about the Haitian settlement from the pens of both Zephaniah and George Kingsley only tell part of the story of Cabaret. In addition to being personally and economically wedded to the fate of the settlement, Kingsley could ill afford to see his relocation efforts amount to personal failures. Since publicly embracing Haitian colonization in the United States he had become socially and politically ostracized. The former slaves had been taken illegally out of Florida and could not very well be returned to the United States as anything but freemen. Moreover, they could not legally be removed from Haiti except with their own approval, which realistically meant that Kingsley’s options to change tactics had narrowed considerably. Not one to admit defeat easily, it is also unlikely that he would or could acknowledge the more dubious aspects of the labor arrangement at Cabaret, par-

³⁶ Efforts of planters to control the lives of their laborers both during and after slavery are discussed in James A. Delle, *An Archaeology of Social Space: Analyzing Coffee Plantations in Jamaica’s Blue Mountains* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 155; B. W. Higman, “The Spatial Economy of Jamaican Sugar Plantations: Cartographic Evidence from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 13 (1987): 17-39; Theresa A. Singleton, “Slavery and Spatial Dialectics on Cuban Coffee Plantations,” *World Archaeology* 33 (2001): 98-111; Francisco A. Scarano, “Labor and Society in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Modern Caribbean*, eds. Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 64-67; Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 107. See also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (New York: Blackwell, 1991).

³⁷ David Watts, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development, Culture and Environmental Change since 1492* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 508; Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 4-5; Dubois, *Haiti*, 104. See Law No. 1, Article 4 of the Rural Code in Kingsley, *The Rural Code of Haiti*, 3-4.

ticularly given that much of the current discussion and portraits of postslavery situations in the Caribbean were quite murky and varied.³⁸ From Kingsley's perspective it was certainly much easier to play with what he regarded as minor details, or to perhaps misrepresent the situation to suit his own ends, rather than concede anything on the matter.

The appearance of Lydia Maria Child's July 1842 piece highlighting her interview with Zephaniah Kingsley in New York City illustrated in microcosm the ambiguity of the labor problem in the Age of Emancipation. Ongoing transatlantic debates over what labor organization might look like in the long term after slavery only fueled the raging fires between the diverging camps of abolitionists and proslaveryites.³⁹ Child's piece did little to help the cause of either, but it did compel at least one of its readers to offer some additional thoughts on Kingsley's endeavors and to provide some clarity to the situation. The results brought firsthand, if dated, information but little else. Given the dizzying combination of Kingsley's own troubled logic, coupled with the legal vagaries of the period and place, it is little wonder that the author could not make much sense of the arrangement.⁴⁰

An anonymous reader of Boston's *Emancipator and Free American* of 1 September 1842 weighed in on the settlement at Cabaret after reading Child's exchange with Kingsley in New York. Titled "Kingsley's Plantation," the observer recounted an impromptu visit to Haiti in late

³⁸ Some contemporary discussions surrounding the conflicting expectations of the postslavery era are in Gale L. Kenny, *Contentious Liberties: American Abolitionists in Post-Emancipation Jamaica, 1834-1866* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 46-68.

³⁹ James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery, Revised Edition* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996), 96, 100-07; Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 159-89; Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 204-10.

⁴⁰ Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2: 257-58, 2: 263, 2: 267-68; Franklin, *Present State of Hayti*, 383-86; Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 133-38.

1837-1838 to escape the harsh New England winter.⁴¹ Cabaret, he said, “was then in its infancy, it being only a year and a half since ground was first broken for it, in what had till then been a perfect wilderness.” The landscape was indeed lush. On that point, said the author, “I feel no hesitation in receiving the statements of Kingsley...as entirely free from exaggeration.” Apart from that detail, the author felt compelled to note that in reality the whole affair was something other than Kingsley would have Child believe. During the course of his visit to the author met George Kingsley, whom he considered “a good-looking, apparently intelligent mulatto,” that treated his visitor “with a frank and liberal hospitality, which would have done no discredit to any son of the ‘generous South.’” As a whole the “new settlement in the wilderness didn’t afford so many of the elegancies and refinements of hospitality” found in the estates of the planter elite elsewhere, but the author certainly praised its “lavish abundance of all the substantial of ‘good living’ ...”⁴²

The visitors no doubt enjoyed the tropical locale and welcome respite from the bleak American winter. George “appeared eager to show us his crops, his cultivation, his improvements made or planned, and to talk of his prospects and purposes,” the author remembered. All told the observer suggested that from such beginnings, he was “quite inclined to believe that the prosecution of those purposes will confer no small benefit on Haiti, and will place his laborers in a condition much better than the chattel slavery of Florida” at some future point. Something was problematic with the entire scheme. For “after all is said,” the author reasoned, “I doubt if the superiority is great enough to justify,—even on friend Kingsley’s principle of ‘balancing evils,’—the continued enslavement of their former fellow bondmen, in order to sustain the enter-

⁴¹ The reference is to Zephaniah Kingsley, not George Kingsley. This is explicitly stated when he suggested that the elderly planter was not there on the grounds during the author’s visit “Kingsley’s Plantation.”

⁴² “Kingsley’s Plantation.”

prise, which is to better their state.” As did Child before him, the visitor found Cabaret’s realities to be highly ambiguous, particularly as it concerned the status of the laborers. Their situation was uneasy.

Much as their servitude is preferable to slavery, it still does not come up to a Yankee laborer’s notion of freedom. We thought it evident that their employer had learned his notion of the rights, duties and standing of laborers, in no such school as the New England farm, where the owner and his hardy sons and his hired man—the son perhaps of his most respected neighbor—toil together through the day, and together at night sit down to their plain repast at the same table;—that those notions were rather what were to be looked for in a slave-holder’s son, reared in Florida, than what could be wished by men brought up to think labor the true source of respectability and independence.

George’s failure to distinguish between indentured servitude and free labor they granted a problem stemming more so from the father’s example than the son’s intelligence.⁴³

Issues notwithstanding, the author did not want to leave readers with an entirely slanted view of Cabaret. “. . . [L]et it be understood, Geo[rge]. Kingsley was not a slaveholder, nor his workmen slaves,” he told readers.⁴⁴ Early in the piece he claimed to be unable to attest to “the contentment and happiness of the laborers,” because he had not “see[n] enough of them to speak on that point,” other than they were “not chattels, or legally liable to sale. . .” However, at that early stage he was privy to a good deal of tension between George as manager and “some of his hands about the terms of their contract, a while before.” From the beginning the indentured themselves appeared willing to appeal beyond the confines of Cabaret if necessary. While some resorted to flight, this group in question exercised their rights by first calling for state interven-

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; David L. Lightner and Alexander M. Ragan, “Were African American Slaveholders Benevolent or Exploitative? A Quantitative Approach,” *Journal of Southern History* 71 (2005): 535-55. George and his mother, Anna Madgigine Jai, were both black slaveowners in Florida before their removal to Haiti, but neither counted family members within their chattel numbers. Each was particularly keen on profit throughout their experience with slavery. See Larry Koger, *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1985), 80-101; Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

tion. “Unable to settle it to mutual satisfaction, appeal had been made to the authorities of the island,” said the visitor, “not to the summary decision of the cart whip.” On this occasion the commandant at Puerto Plata had “ridden with his retinue, to bear and adjust the difficulty.”⁴⁵ It was a difficult venture over treacherous ground for the lawman to make, prompting the author to assert that “It would be a long day before the mayor of a Southern city would take the trouble to decide a matter between a master and his slaves, or a master would ask for his interference to convince his slaves that they ought to do his bidding.”⁴⁶

Readers would have found little remarkable in this incident, which was in fact quite common with postslavery labor arrangements in the Atlantic.⁴⁷ Enough contemporary observers and laborers themselves acknowledged that although arrangements might function, or appear to function, in ways different from enslavement, they did not necessarily equate to decidedly “better” realities for the laborers themselves.⁴⁸ Ambiguous labels only serve to detract from the exploitation inherent in the arrangement. Regardless of the visitor’s assessment, Cabaret was emblematic of what the late Philip D. Curtin called “old wine in new bottles.” Indentured servitude

⁴⁵ In accordance with Law No. 4, Articles 81-85 of the Rural Code.

⁴⁶ “Kingsley’s Plantation.” Notwithstanding the problems of analogy, the example did capture the sense that the reality of the labor arrangement in Haiti was, at least in that regard that the “Yankee” observer saw it, in some ways different than the *popular image* of slave labor patterns in the U.S. While whipping was illegal in Haiti, it must be remembered the threat always persisted. Most of the laborers were formerly owned by Zephaniah, George, or Anna Kingsley in Florida. Incidents of whipping managed to occur throughout the island of Haiti regardless of law.

⁴⁷ Gad Heuman, “From Slavery to Freedom: Blacks in the Nineteenth-Century British West Indies,” in *Black Experience and the Empire*, eds. Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 158; Demetrius L. Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 16; Woodville K. Marshall, “The Post-Slavery Labour Problem Revisited,” in *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean History*, eds. Brian L. Moore, et. al (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), 123-25.

⁴⁸ For example, see Laird W. Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33-63; Brian Dyde, *Out of the Crowded Vagueness: A History of the Islands of St Kitts, Nevis & Anguilla* (New York: Macmillan Caribbean, 2005), 153-69, 168-81; Karen Fog Olwig, *Global Culture, Island Identity: Continuity and Change in the Afro-Caribbean Community of Nevis* (Philadelphia, PA: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993), 93-96.

was “not identical” to slavery, he suggests, but “the other conditions of slavery were all present—except the permanence of the servitude.”⁴⁹ It was a status vulnerable to what O. Nigel Bolland calls the “changing structures of domination.”⁵⁰ Paternalist slaveowners seized upon this and other aspects to paint abolitionists as immoral hypocrites. They argued that the arrangement was basically slavery, but minus the so called “benevolence” found in the southern variant.⁵¹

Expectations of the Kingsley emigrants and the Kingsley family were, unsurprisingly, contradictory. The ultimate goal of servitude was to provide the latter group with a secure labor force. However, older problems of labor transplantation resurfaced under supposedly new arrangements, under the pretext of “improving” the former bondmen. To most of Kingsley’s slaves-turned-emigrants, the Haitian settlement at Cabaret was a far cry from freedom, and hardly the picture of domestic bliss.⁵² As far as many of the laborers were concerned, from the beginning conditions there could be, and often were, little different than what they knew in slavery. For starters the power structure was essentially unchanged. Even worse, the slaveowner continued to hold friends and relatives of his laborers in bondage, while his mixed-race family remained atop the settlement’s hierarchy.

⁴⁹ Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, 175-78.

⁵⁰ O. Nigel Bolland, “Systems of Dominations after Slavery: The Control of Land and Labor in the British West Indies after 1838,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (October 1981): 616. See Claire Anderson, “Convicts and Coolies: Rethinking Indentured Labour in the Nineteenth Century,” *Slavery & Abolition* 30 (2009): 93-109; and Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot, “Atlantic and Pacific Crossings: Race, Empire, and ‘the Labor Problem’ in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Radical History Review* 91 (2005): 40-61.

⁵¹ Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*, 201-02, 206; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 264-65.

⁵² Frank Marotti, *Heaven's Soldiers: Free People of Color and the Spanish Legacy in Antebellum Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 71.

Coercion, broadly defined, was also a daily part of labor relations.⁵³ For example, all emigrants were limited to the plantation settlement itself. Younger males typically engaged in the extensive mahogany and cedar logging done for export, while others grew food and cash crops for the Kingsley family. Some tended to the fields and stockyard. Others fished, served as blacksmiths and mechanics, or occupied multiple roles as they had under slavery. For women, who possessed little to no meaningful legal rights of their own, Haiti offered even less hope for advancement outside of the family unit. Spaces of freedom were remarkably few.⁵⁴ Additional problems made laborer life in Haiti difficult. Cultural, economic, and political confrontations between emigrants and locals were part of daily life. Sickness and disease as well could prove ruinous.⁵⁵

Acquiring land titles proved to be among the most troublesome problems that many of the Kingsley laborers faced. Across the Atlantic world, land represented tangible proof of freedom from a precarious life in bondage.⁵⁶ “More than an attachment to landscape,” writes historian Ira Berlin, “the concept of *place* spoke to relationships, often deeply personal, and the institutions that emerged from those relationships.”⁵⁷ This point was no trivial matter. Many of the settlement’s laborers grew increasingly dissatisfied with local conditions. A former settler at Cabaret, known only as “Mrs. ----- [sic],” suggested that obtaining clear land titles was a

⁵³ Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 98-100.

⁵⁴ David Brion Davis, “Declaring Equality: Sisterhood and Slavery,” in *Women’s Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*, eds. Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 4-5; Diana Paton and Pamela Scully, “Gender and Slave Emancipation in Comparative Perspective,” in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, eds. Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 11.

⁵⁵ Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism*, 127-28; Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola,” 198-200.

⁵⁶ Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation*, 15.

⁵⁷ Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), 25.

chronic problem. “Twas a good country,” she told a visitor in 1843. “But people that come, ought to look out to get a good title to their [sic] lands, *and that’s more than George Kingsley [sic] can give them*, for I know he *has not* got a deed of his land yet, and maybe never will. He was down to Port-au-Prince, the other day about it, to see the President, and he did’nt [sic] get to see the President, either.”⁵⁸ It would appear from her telling that in addition to legal penalties for fleeing, many who wanted to leave the settlement at one time might have been unable to do so without losing the fruits obtained by the sweat of their own brows. In light of this situation, George Kingsley perhaps refused to issue the documents, lest his primogeniture suffer any further.⁵⁹

The fate of two Kingsley laborers at Cabaret illustrates problems of the economic uncertainty and immobility that many laborers initially faced.⁶⁰ Two brothers, John and Richard, once resided at the Kingsley settlement. Each had signed indenture agreements with the Kingsleys, though John appears to have personally owed a debt of 600\$ piastres in addition to his lengthy tenure. They “have got a counouque [sic] up at Cabaret,” their mother Juno reported, “but see how they will be, when somebody wants to buy it of George Kingsley [sic]? All their little trees, and houses and improvements, all comfortable just to their minds, can’t be taken up and carried to another counouque.”⁶¹ Starting over was risky. Flight from the settlement was punishable by

⁵⁸ “Condition of People of Color. Emigration.,” *Liberator*, 1 September 1843 (Boston, MA) (emphasis in original).

⁵⁹ Zephaniah Kingsley himself claimed he had completed the title process for George as early as February 1838 and stated in the *Sun* article of November 1840 that George had title in his possession. Perhaps George was owed the certificate or Zephaniah assumed it had been delivered, but in fact never arrived. As the matter relates to the stated incident, it is unclear what happened at the time. George eventually came to own his properties, which were divided and sold in the years after his death in 1846. Kingsley to the Editor of the *Christian Statesman*, 30 June 1838, Hayti, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 105; “Kingsley, “Emigration to Haiti.”

⁶⁰ Berlin, *The Making of African America*, 30.

⁶¹ Quoted in “Condition of People of Color. Emigration.,” Names and indentured terms cited in Brugal, “Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda,” 48. The confusion over obtaining titles is a likely indicator of the turmoil

legal action and the unpredictable arm of the rural police. In spite of these obstacles, her family seized an opportunity to leave Cabaret and did so. To her the situation was less a tale of personal triumph and instead a frustrating fact of life there. Emigrant existence was necessarily “uneasy, tentative, and often probationary” for such reasons.⁶²

Kingsley’s settlers were not alone in their frustration with land matters. Their arrival could have only further complicated tenuous relations between the local peasantry in the east and the weakening Haitian state. For years Boyer’s plans for land reform sought to do away with the confusing practice of collective landownership known as *terrenos comuneros*.⁶³ These communal lands housed significant numbers of peasants that engaged in subsistence farming and cattle raising, and otherwise shared access to resources. The practice naturally impeded the government’s plans for a plantation economy in the former Spanish lands. Boyer in turn confiscated a significant portion of these lands from individuals and the Catholic Church alike, redistributing them to both peasants and former Spanish slaves in return for growing cash crops. The general effect of Boyer’s land legislation had inadvertently weakened Haiti’s hold on the eastern side of the island even further. A large portion of the inhabitants had no desire to depart from their communal way of life. The government required large landowners as well to receive new titles to their properties or forfeit them entirely. Haitian policy on this particular matter translated into widespread fraud and confusion, which reigned for about two decades. By 1838 these circum-

mounting under President Boyer’s reign and the problems stemming from the unstable political environment. An 1842 revolution in Les Cayes, in Haiti’s southern province, occupied considerable time and resources as it took some 20,000 soldiers sent by Boyer to end the insurgency, at least temporarily. This was but a part of the overall dissatisfaction with Boyer’s regime. John Edward Baur, “Mulatto Machiavelli, Jean Pierre Boyer, and the Haiti of His Day,” *Journal of Negro History* 32 (July 1947): 345-47; Robert K. Lacerte, “Xenophobia and Economic Decline: The Haitian Case, 1820-1843,” *The Americas* 37 (April 1981): 511-14.

⁶² Berlin, *The Making of African America*, 30.

⁶³ Martin D. Clausner, *Rural Santo Domingo: Settled, Unsettled, and Resettled* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1973), 121, states that these “were defined as undivided tracts of land owned or claimed to be owned by two or more persons, the interest of each being represented by shares (*acciones*) or pesos or other units which had reference to value or proportionate rights, rather than to area of land owned or claimed by them.”

stances gave rise to *La Trinitaria*, the secret organization whose “goals were to organize Dominican resistance to separate the eastern part of the island from Haiti.”⁶⁴ Frustrated with his inability to effect change in the east, Boyer at last capitulated to the traditional Spanish landholding practices, but did so entirely too late. Nearly all of Hispaniola was soon in full rebellion in a war between two different peoples.⁶⁵

The experience in Haiti was a bitter pill for many settlers to swallow. For most of King-ley’s laborers the freedom to move for themselves trumped all else.⁶⁶ A large portion of the laborers felt sufficiently dissatisfied with their situations and used the disruption of war to flee Cabaret in hopes of realizing their own definitions of freedom, particularly in urban port centers like Puerto Plata and Samána, or scattering throughout the island’s heavily wooded countryside.⁶⁷ Still, in the short term the colony did prove successful for the planter, but signs of decay rendered Cabaret’s long term prospects questionable at best.

A horrific earthquake in late 1842 caused severe destruction across the island, destroying many houses, ruining the few crops that would grow in a lengthy draught, and accelerating the problem of rapid deforestation in the region.⁶⁸ Consequently, the Haitian government lost vital

⁶⁴ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 138.

⁶⁵ Richard Lee Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 44-51; Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 105-09; Clausner, *Rural Santo Domingo*, 84-86, 114-15; Frank Moya Pons, “The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo,” in *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Manuel Moreno Fragnals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 1985), 181-214; Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 138-41.

⁶⁶ Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery*, 92-93; Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Emancipation*, 127.

⁶⁷ Gabb, “On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo,” 68; R. Stuart, “Haiti or Hispaniola,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 48 (1878): 246.

⁶⁸ The most extensive piece which was widely reprinted across the Atlantic world is *The North American and Daily Advertiser*, 13 June 1842 (Philadelphia, Pa.); *Daily National Intelligencer*, 31 May 1842 (Washington, DC); P. Tredwell, “The Earthquake in Haiti: Extract of a Letter from Port Plata, Haiti,” *Liberator*, 15 July 1842. A later summary of the destruction is in *Liberator*, 16 January 1846.

political face with its lackluster response to the disaster. Years of mounting disaffection from Haiti's east to west exploded with vengeance. From late January to mid-March revolution engulfed Haiti's southern province and spread northward, led by the disaffected mulatto bourgeois. Some 8,000 troops marched to Port-au-Prince where President Boyer abdicated on 19 March 1843. A new Haitian government brought a strong anti-foreign political stance, but another revolt in April 1844 headed by the black masses overthrew Charles-Rivi re H rard, Boyer's successor, massacring mulattoes and expelling foreign influences. The chaos of war surrounded the emigrant settlement. Meanwhile, pro-Spanish sentiment in the eastern part of the island took advantage of the unstable Haitian government and declared itself the Dominican Republic in 1844, starting a long and complicated cycle of revolution on the island.⁶⁹

As revolution enveloped the northern countryside, the settlement at Cabaret was not immune from its impact.⁷⁰ Political infighting left Dominican authorities struggling to regain control of the divided province throughout much of 1844. There was little to inspire confidence in the new country's future, least of all economically.⁷¹ In spite of the glum outlook, many foreign merchants were still drawn to the northern coast during these troubling times.⁷²

⁶⁹ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 140-41; Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, "Haitian Social Thought in the Nineteenth Century: Class Formation and Westernization," *Caribbean Studies* 20 (1980): 20-21; Luis Martinez-Fernandez, *Torn Between Empires: Economy, Society, and Patterns of Political Thought in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1840-1878* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 18-19; Luis Alvarez-Lopez, *The Dominican Republic and the Beginning of a Revolutionary Cycle in the Spanish Caribbean, 1861-1898* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), 1, 3; Samuel Hazard, *Santo Domingo: Past and Present, with a Glance at Hayti* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873), 423-40; Lacerte, "Xenophobia and Economic Decline," 5; Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery*, 112-28.

⁷⁰ Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 72.

⁷¹ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 188-89.

⁷² Schomburgh, "Remarks on the Principal Ports and Anchoring Places," 346.

Captain Henry Franklin Baker (1815-1898), the young Philadelphia-born master of the brig *Huntress*, was one such enterprising individual.⁷³ The son of a merchant mariner and part owner of the vessel in which Baker commandeered, the captain frequented several ports throughout the Caribbean including stops at Cienfuegos, Cuba; Port of Spain, Trinidad; Demerara, British Guiana; Santo Domingo City; and Puerto Plata.⁷⁴ It was Baker's uncle, Francis Harrison (1800-1847), who encouraged his nephew to come to the Dominican Republic. Harrison had cultivated extensive business and personal connections there over many years, owning at least two stores located in Santo Domingo City and Puerto Plata by the mid-1840s.⁷⁵ A businessman of his esteem and affluence was a critical component of the lucrative West Indies trade.

Two surviving logbooks that cover most of the years 1841 to 1845 establish that much of Baker's frequent stops involved a routine from which he rarely departed. To the Caribbean he usually carried "provisions, building materials and machinery," according to John B. Williman, his vessels "returning laden with mahogany." For the return voyage home to Philadelphia, the captain frequently "secured sugar cane, coffee, and tropical fruits," for which Williman suggests served as "speculative cargo."⁷⁶ Although markets in Philadelphia and New York at the time craved most of the food products for which the West Indies thrived, little could rival the early nineteenth-century global demand for Hispaniolan mahogany.⁷⁷ Contemporary accounts spoke

⁷³ In am extremely indebted to Dr. John Williman for supplying biographical details and personal papers of his great-great-grandfather, Henry Franklin Baker, currently in his possession. John Baker Williman, "Henry Franklin Baker (1815-1898), 19th Century Mariner, Merchant, and Citizen of Charleston, 1846-1898," January 2013, unpublished TS, in possession of the author.

⁷⁴ Henry Franklin Baker, Master, "Log of the Brig HUNTRESS, 1844-1845," unpublished MS, in possession of Dr. John B. Williman, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. He graciously provided copies of the logbook for this project.

⁷⁵ Williman, "Henry Franklin Baker," 8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

uniformly in this regard. The island was blessed with an overabundance of the wood, so the story went, that the rivers and pathways leading to the coast were marked everywhere with the rotting timber strewn about the landscape.⁷⁸ With few roads and little labor willing or able to cut and haul the precious commodity to port, observers all noted that mahogany was there simply for the taking.⁷⁹

Leaving Philadelphia in late April 1845, Baker and the *Huntress* originally intended to make stops at Demerara and Puerto Plata before acquiring a sufficient load of tobacco for which to deliver in Bremen, one of two emerging German financial centers that increasingly pulled the northern region of the Dominican Republic and its people into the nineteenth century world market economy.⁸⁰ A month at sea found Baker at Demerara after his voyage had commenced with some unpredictably bad weather. His arrival, however, brought the ship's crew few comforts. Baker disappointingly confided to his logbook on 26 May, "The place is entirely destitute of any place of public amusement."⁸¹ The weather complicated his task of unloading the ship's cargo and frequently prevented him from conducted both business and recreation on land. Most days Baker usually noted the predictable rains were "heavy," and the warm temperatures as "exces-

⁷⁷ Jennifer L. Anderson, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), particularly 271-92.

⁷⁸ Haitian President Boyer's efforts to monopolize the mahogany industry before 1830 made the cutting and felling of trees illegal even by owners of private lands. He ended the law in 1830, though kept government involvement with the industry thereafter. However, these efforts did little to ever stop the timber extraction on the former Spanish side of the island. In spite of the years of essentially uninterrupted cutting, the island's northern coast (in present day Dominican Republic) contained a massive amount of mahogany before mid-century. Such was not the case, however, at the time in Haiti. Moya Pons, "The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo," 193-94.

⁷⁹ Franklin, *Present State of Hayti*, 300; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti, Made During a Residence in That Republic*, 2 Vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 1: 293, 1: 321; Zephaniah Kingsley to George H. Evans, Puerto de Plata, 13th Sept., 1835," 87, and Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," 110, both in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell; David D. Porter, "Secret Missions to San Domingo," *North American Review* 128 (June 1879): 621, 622. Note that Porter's account and descriptions are based on his 1846 travel journals, though this piece was published much later.

⁸⁰ Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco*, 129; Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 256.

⁸¹ Baker, "Logbook," 28. Entry of 26 May 1845.

sively” or “exceedingly” so. “It was enough,” he said after a particularly bad day of weather conditions, “to season a fellow for purgatory.”⁸² Such conditions seemed to weigh heavily on the young captain. “The night sultry in the extreme, and the mosquitoes in clouds, destroying comfort, patience, resignation, and everything else,” he complained on 27 May.⁸³

Baker did not tarry long at Demerara, staying barely a week’s time before focusing his sights on the route to Puerto Plata. He scarcely completed his main objective of “discharging flour” at port before purchasing some “articles to take to Porto Plata” and outfitting the vessel for the following day’s leave.⁸⁴ At daylight on Saturday, 7 June the brig reached Puerto Plata, “[t]he heavy rain and haze concealing the mountains and all landmarks.” For the time being the weather prevented Baker from conducting his business affairs. Ship matters would have to wait until Monday. More pressing was the effect such inclement weather had had on the availability of local crops. “The season has been unusually wet,” he noted, “and the tobacco has not yet come in, in any marketable quantities.”⁸⁵

“Opportunity” defined Puerto Plata’s place in the burgeoning Atlantic economy. As a site of wealth and trade coming in from the Dominican hinterlands, the port city held great promise for skilled workers, rural farmers, and the displaced alike. Linked to the wider world economy, Puerto Plata drew heavily on its connections to the fertile La Vega province and important interior towns like Santiago (Santiago de los Caballeros) and Moca, centers of the tobacco trade,

⁸² *Ibid.* Entry of 23 May 1845.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 30. Entry of 27 May 1845.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Entries of 28 and 29 May 1845.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 31. Entry of 7 June 1845.

as well as scattered settlements throughout the northern region that all depended upon the port's position for their livelihoods. Baker had come there time and again to reap his reward.⁸⁶

When he arrived at Puerto Plata in June 1845, Captain Baker had hoped for a rather quick stay in the Dominican Republic. This in turn would yield the young merchant a handsome payday, something that the newlywed could use to support his new family. Dining nightly with his uncle, Francis Harrison, Baker was soon frustrated in his plans. "Nothing new to promise us a hasty departure," he confided to his journal on 16 June.⁸⁷ Notoriously slow and unreliable, the overland shipments of packed tobacco or *serones* from Santiago that he anxiously awaited had yet to materialize. These were carried by so called "muleteers," those enterprising individuals who outfitted herds of pack mules (*recuas*) with cargo bound for port. Travel was both slow and dangerous, particularly so given the often unpredictable conditions of the region and utter lack of roadways.⁸⁸ Travelers frequently lamented the pitiable state of the topography, noting how everything from the peaks and valleys and frequent waterways routinely took their toll on man and beast alike. Compounding these troubles were the problems of warfare and banditry, both of which plagued the countryside in particular for much of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. All of these factors combined to make the merchant's tasks often exceedingly difficult.⁸⁹

Several days passed at Puerto Plata with no word of the tobacco "cargo" coming from Santiago. Nearly two weeks had elapsed since arriving were spent simply waiting what seemed in vain. In that time Baker effectively lost another opportunity to go to Bremen, a place he had

⁸⁶ Williman, "Henry Franklin Baker (1815-1898)," 7-9.

⁸⁷ Baker, "Logbook," 32. Entry of 16 June 1845. Marriage is in Williman, "Henry Franklin Baker (1815-1898)," 7-8.

⁸⁸ Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco*, 24-25.

⁸⁹ On the practical difficulty of traveling in the Dominican Republic during this period see Hidalgo, "From North America to Hispaniola," 154-55. Decades later the problems remained the same. See the 1871 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1871), 12, 123-24.

hoped would salvage what was turning out to be by late June a costly stay in the Dominican Republic. As he had on several occasions during his layover in Puerto Plata, Henry Baker dined at his uncle's home on 22 June, a "pleasant" Sunday evening. The uncertain fate of the *Huntress's* cargo seemed to weigh heavy on Baker and his host, prompting a change in course of action. As the *serones* were not forthcoming, both men knew that highly prized Dominican woods could still prove profitable in virtually any market outside of the Caribbean. A brief entry in the ship's logbook for the day noted, "Dined with Mr. H., with the usual company, and decided to go to Cabaret to load mahogany."⁹⁰ Harrison it seems was somewhat familiar with the settlement's existence. He charged his nephew with the task of contracting with the Kingsleys for a set amount of the richly valued timber, said in the past to cover the landscape there abundantly.⁹¹

Although travel by ship from Puerto Plata to Cabaret was typically less than a few days, Captain Baker and the *Huntress* had preparations to complete before leaving port. "Took in mahogany," he tersely jotted in the logbook on 24 June. The following day, Wednesday 25 June, Baker hoped to disembark for Cabaret after loading the brig with "some stone ballast & water for a start." "Got all ready in the evening," he explained, "but Capt Louis, the old pilot for Cabaret got drunk, and we had to remain."⁹² Time had not been kind to Baker's economic fortunes during this particular layover, and the incident served as something of a catalyst. His writings were now more anxious and preoccupied with righting his situation. Spending the night on the ship, Baker arose and "[w]ent on shore early for the pilot, but it being calm, concluded to wait until evening, Louis promising to keep sober." Returning to his vessel, the captain spent much of the day waiting for a favorable wind. It was early evening before it materialized. "At 8 PM, a little

⁹⁰ Baker, "Logbook," 33. Entries of 16, 17, 20, 21, June 1845. Entry of 22 June 1845 (quote).

⁹¹ Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 110.

⁹² Baker, "Logbook," 33. Entry of 24 June 1845.

land breeze springing up, we got underweigh [sic] and started for Cabaret.”⁹³ The night’s route eastward passed with little fanfare until late morning on Friday. There Baker found the *Huntress* “[b]eating to windward against a strong current.”⁹⁴ That afternoon near Sosúa, after a brief respite, he again caught the tradewinds and continued east, reaching Cabaret the following day.⁹⁵

Captain Baker had reason to be cautious about his intended approach. Entry to Cabaret Harbor was dangerous for incoming vessels, marked particularly by a dangerous reef that curves out and back into the Atlantic; a shallow, “sandy shoal” that sat to the reef’s north; and a narrow passageway formed by “a ledge of rocks with only 10 feet, between which and the outer reefs the vessel has to pass to her anchorage.”⁹⁶ Those wishing to enter the harbor typically did so after a pilot, if available, placed buoys at strategic places along the tumultuous reef, then anchoring at a distance “from one to two cable lengths from shore,” according to contemporary opinion. Observers similarly noted their distaste for the place as ill-suited for the purpose of anchorage, particularly during the colder months when winds caused vessels much slippage.⁹⁷

With the *Huntress* anchored, Captain Baker wasted little time in getting to business matters. “Made preparations for work of discharging some of our ballast,” he wrote on 28 June. Going ashore he first met a local merchant there, presumably to conclude his affairs before Sunday’s religious observance brought local business to a standstill. Adherents to Catholicism could

⁹³ *Ibid.* Entry of 26 June 1845.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Entry of 27 June 1845.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Entry of [28] June 1845. The port of Sosúa at the time was part of the massive Cabaret complex and only a handful of miles from Cabaret Harbor. The surrounding area later came to use the name Sosúa as well and is perhaps best known as a twentieth-century refuge during World War II, particularly for its large Jewish population.

⁹⁶ Schomburgh, “Remarks on the Principal Ports and Anchoring Places,” 345; Captain E. Barnett, comp., *The West India Pilot: The Caribbean Sea, from Barbados to Cuba; with the Bahamas and Bermuda islands and Florida Strait, Third Edition*, 2 Vols. (London: Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1876): 2: 218.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

still be found locally, but the ascent of Protestantism regionally owed much to the determination of the Rev. William Towler and the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries based at Puerto Plata. They had made some inroads with the indentured workers at Cabaret beginning only about five years before and never lost interest in continuing their missionary duties there.⁹⁸ Of his Sunday spent at the village Baker marveled, “Weather delightful, and all seemed so quiet and tranquil that it seemed the Sabbath indeed.”⁹⁹

Cabaret itself presented a rather different spectacle than Baker’s uncle led him to believe. In all probability Francis Harrison had a passing familiarity with the situation at Cabaret, as evinced by Captain Baker’s surprise at the rather depressing state of affairs there in the short time since Zephaniah Kingsley’s death. “The harbor presents a pretty appearance,” he later wrote in the *Huntress*’s logbook, “but there are but few signs of civilization or cultivation.” He saw few houses but noted especially those “now falling to decay serve to remind one that it has been visited by some one more refined than the natives of this country...” Mother Nature seems to have reclaimed much of the landscape, improvements, and passageways of which the Kingsleys had earlier boasted. As Baker explained, it was as if “the screaming of parrots, and the unbroken masses of forrest [sic] seem to bid defiance to any inroads on the natural state of the country.”¹⁰⁰ Now only small glimpses of the recent past remained.

From the village at Cabaret he traveled inland to what had once been the proverbial center of plantation operations operated by the Kingsley family at Cabaret Island. Once home to several outbuildings and an impressive array of crops, this portion of the estate was closest to the

⁹⁸ “Recent Miscellaneous Intelligence,” *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 19 (December 1840): 1054-55; *Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 12-13, 106-07, Hidalgo, “From North America to Hispaniola,” 154-86. See the September 1874 issue of *The Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Fourth Series, Volume VI* (London, UK: Wesleyan Mission House, 1874), 219.

⁹⁹ Baker, “Logbook,” 33. Entry of 29 June 1845.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Entry of 29 June 1845.

sea, and surrounded by remnants of the long and winding Yásica River that flowed inland and emptied into the Atlantic.¹⁰¹ Acquired piecemeal years earlier by Zephaniah Kingsley, other areas such as Batey, Guainamoca, Rincon (both east of Cabaret and upriver near present day Sabaneta de Yásica), and Sosúa (to the west) were at one time populated with his indentured laborers. Batey, for example, was once the site of the Kingsley family's "Casa de Caoba," (Mahogany House) an impressively built plantation home, handsomely decorated with mahogany trimmings and other fine luxuries. The Kingsley family appears to have alternated between it and Cabaret as they saw fit, or as business required.¹⁰²

Henry Baker carried with him to Cabaret a proposed contract for about 236 pieces of cut mahogany from the lands of George Kingsley. On Sunday 29 June Captain Baker found Anna Madgigine Jai, George's mother and one of the late Kingsley's mistresses, then in residence at Cabaret. During their exchange she confided to Baker the cause of the Kingsley family's recent misfortunes. "In the afternoon, saw Mrs. Kingsley, the black mother of several children of a Mr. Kingsley, who formerly lived in Jacksonville [Florida], who came to this country bringing 55 slaves with them, promising after a term to liberate them," Baker recalled. "The slaves, after a short time, finding that there was nothing to compel them to stay, beyond their own agreement, all left," he noted, "and all the improvements which the eldest son, George Kingsley had made, consisting of a cleared sugar plantation, a sugar grist, a saw mill, a vessel, and a number of houses, are rendered valueless, as he can not get hands to work." Baker commented further: "He employs his carts & oxen in hauling mahogany for Mr. Harrison, but beyond this, has no encour-

¹⁰¹ Cabaret Island was actually not an island at the time the plantation was founded. At one time it was surrounded by a channel of water but much of it had filled in with mud. The idea evoked in the name seems to be an effort to give the estate some prestige of location.

¹⁰² Brugal, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda," 30-31.

agement or reward for his labors.”¹⁰³ The captain’s prospects, which had been faltering to that point on his travels, now too looked grim.

The small crew of the *Huntress* began taking in mahogany the following day, wasting little time at Cabaret. Using George Kingsley’s oxen and timber wheels, Baker’s crew was able to haul the abundant mahogany before stacking it on rafts which they used to float the timber to the brig’s cargo hold. That Monday 30 June they readied twenty-nine pieces of timber to be loaded the next day. For five subsequent days Baker talked of little else beyond his daily efforts to load the vessel with mahogany. In that time he had acquired more than half of the contracted number, though local conditions did not make the job easy. The captain, for example, had gone to Anna Madgine Jai’s residence “to get some poultry for tomorrow, but found them scarce,” Baker wrote on 3 July.¹⁰⁴ Worse yet was the sickness he found rampantly running through the area. “This is a beautiful country in appearance,” a frustrated Baker noted, “but it does not seem healthy.”¹⁰⁵ Nearby he counted a merchant friend, Mr. Alexandre Villanueva, and a Mr. Johnson among the numbers afflicted.¹⁰⁶

Baker’s time in Cabaret was drawing to a close. During the early part of the days he and his crew continued to load rafts of mahogany. Little else occupied Baker’s thoughts, as he even recalled “dreaming a whole night of nothing but mahogany logs” to his logbook. After fulfilling the terms of the original contract made with the Kingsleys, Baker continued to take in additional mahogany, totaling about 300 pieces in all. He had persevered in spite of the pitiable local circumstances, filling the *Huntress* with an impressive quantity of the extraordinarily valuable

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 33-34. Entry of 29 June 1845.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 34. Entry of 3 July 1845.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Entry of 5 July 1845.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Entries of 3 and 5 July 1845.

commodity. Upon the open market, Hispaniolan mahogany would surely bring a handsome reward for his risks. Threatened by sickness and meager rations, compounded by the utter lack of locally available labor, Baker's crew narrowly triumphed in spite of the local situation.¹⁰⁷

While Henry Baker's seafaring career ended before year's close, he left behind a fascinating record of his travels that included an important stay at what lingered of the Cabaret complex. The perceptive young captain was fond of writing about those individuals he encountered at ports around much of the world, revealing no apparent bias in dealing with both elites and commoners alike. He routinely commented on local dress, cultural habits, and many other elements of daily life. During his extended stay at Cabaret, what emerges from the pages of Baker's daily entries is a portrait of a lush landscape largely devoid of the inhabitants that once tended their own gardens as supposedly dutiful former slaves, seemingly laboring in paradise for the family of an enlightened master. The inhabitants, on the whole, were simply gone. Beyond the isolated ferry operator near the mouth of the Yásica River, described as "an old Italian in a boat," in Baker's travels there were few locals at all of which to speak. Sickness, decay, and the stunning beauty of nature were all some inhabited the surroundings.¹⁰⁸

At the very heart of the plantation at Cabaret, the power structure had rapidly crumbled from factors both within and without. The collapse of the Haitian government and creation of the Dominican government in its stead legally made the terms of indenture null and void. With Zephaniah Kingsley's death in September 1843, the second major obstacle that Kingsley's former slaves had to contend with had suddenly vanished. Those laborers that had not already fled

¹⁰⁷ Williman, "Henry Franklin Baker (1815-1898)," 8. In retrospect the stop appears to have been something of a watershed in the captain's career at sea. The unpredictability of such a life coupled with his pressing priorities as a newlywed perhaps meant Baker was less willing to test his fate against what surely appeared as a dizzy set of unseen forces.

¹⁰⁸ Baker, "Logbook," 34. Entry of 6 July 1845.

Cabaret now had little, in a practical sense, to keep them from leaving. And so they did. Henry Baker arrived only about a year and a half after Kingsley's death and it was plainly evident that the planter's family was, in that short time, left powerless and close to penniless.¹⁰⁹ Prompted by the sudden death of her son George Kingsley, lost at sea in early 1846, Anna Madgigine Jai left Hispaniola for Florida a few months later. With her departure ended any semblance of the old power structure that once was.¹¹⁰

Following the virtual abandonment of the plantation at Cabaret, the region did not have much to offer the few prospective merchants drawn to the area to take what remained of the local mahogany and cedar. Cabaret Harbor continued to be dangerous for most commercial vessels, prompting some visitors to seek another spot from which to load their cargo. Less than four miles east of Cabaret, the "entirely exposed" mouth of the Yásica River initially made the position suitable for such a task. It was believed that rafts of timber would come down the Yásica and be put aboard waiting ships much more conveniently, though the idea was quickly scrapped. The influential Sir Robert Schomburgh argued that not only was the river mouth unhealthy for much of the time, but that it "was not a fit place for vessels to take in a load." Vessels there were loaded only with much difficulty. Timber that came from the Yásica, for example, he explained "usually" then had to be hauled "overland to Cabaret."¹¹¹ If labor there might be had, it was sure to be costly, time consuming, and altogether unattractive to a prospective party. Such were the dismal prospects that the region possessed.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34. Entries of 29 June and 3 July 1845.

¹¹⁰ Brugal, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Una Leyenda," 25-26, 32-38. Their youngest son John Maxwell Kingsley stayed behind but he appears to have left only a few limited property transactions registered in Puerto Plata up through the 1860s.

¹¹¹ Schomburgh, "Remarks on the Principal Ports and Anchoring Places," 345.

Portions of the country experienced economic expansion ushered in largely by the growth of peasant-produced tobacco in the more northern areas of the Dominican Republic and the sugar industry's rapid surge in the island's east and south regions. Production of these commodities required significant amounts of resources, including titled lands and a secure labor force.¹¹³ More Dominicans found themselves ensnared by mounting governmental regulations, prompting significant peasant migration in the process.¹¹⁴ Cabaret was likewise not immune from these larger processes, both gaining and losing inhabitants in the face of nineteenth-century social, political, and economic challenges. Essentially a sleepy coastal village littered with a sparsely settled subsistence peasantry in the hinterlands, Cabaret could boast of no economic importance. But land there was certainly abundant for a population experiencing significant late-century growth, eventually attracting a smattering of families as well that sought to better determine their own lives.¹¹⁵ What is known for certain is that some of these individuals were rightful descendants of the former Kingsley slaves brought to the island decades earlier. More importantly, local surname practices of the period offer no easy resolution of the matter. As it was generally attached to most of the original group of laborers by Haitian officials, the Kingsley surname and its corresponding identity in time might have proven to be a blessing or a curse depending on the context.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Emelio R. Betances, "Agrarian Transformation and Class Formation in the Dominican Republic, 1844-1930," *Latin American Perspectives* 37 & 38 (Spring/Summer 1983): 62-63.

¹¹³ Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, 255-63; Manuel Moreno Fraginals, "Plantations in the Caribbean: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Between Slavery and Free Labor*, eds. Moreno Fraginals, Moya Pons, and Engerman, 8-14. See Patrick Bryan, "The Question of Labor in the Sugar Industry of the Dominican Republic in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," *Social and Economic Studies*, 29 2/3 (June/September 1980): 275-91.

¹¹⁴ Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco*, 68-71.

¹¹⁵ Gabb, "On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo," 68-70.

¹¹⁶ Puig Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos*, 69.

Questions surrounding the proposed U.S. annexation of the Dominican Republic began shortly after the American Civil War. The Caribbean locale had attracted a number of foreign visitors to the country who attempted to offer an assessment of its natural resources, topography, the capabilities of the Dominican people, and a picture of its racial composition. Enthusiastic travelers and makeshift diplomats generally agreed that the land was blessed with a picturesque landscape, abundant resources, and a thinly-settled population who favored annexation by the United States. Although these observers argued on the whole that most Dominicans remained hopelessly subsistence peasants, their capabilities and overall intelligence as a population were topics covered extensively in the international print media. In this era which continued to harbor a fierce anti-Haitian sensibility, that Dominicans were frequently compared quite favorably with the blackness of their Haitian neighbors to the westward was hardly surprising.¹¹⁷

More than two decades after Zephaniah Kingsley's death, pro-annexation travelers to Hispaniola took special note of the so called "Kinsley [sic] boys," a settlement said then to be comprised of "American negroes and mulatoes [sic]" that was apparently well admired on the northern coast. One eager observer along the way heard that it was "a quiet, hard working community" that boasted lands "the best cultivated and the most productive in the whole island, the staple of produce being the sugar-cane, to which the soil is eminently congenial."¹¹⁸ The sur-

¹¹⁷ Nicholas Guyatt, "America's Conservatory: Race, Reconstruction, and the Santo Domingo Debate," *Journal of American History* 97 (March 2011): 980; Dennis Hidalgo, "Charles Sumner and the Annexation of the Dominican Republic," *Itinerario* 21 (1997): 51-66; *Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Stuart, "Haiti, or Hispaniola," 245-46; Gabb, "On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo," 68, 70; A. H. Keane, *Central and South America: Central America and West Indies* (London, UK: Edward Stanford, 1901), 341; Elisee Reclus, *The Earth and Its Inhabitants* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1893), 421. Today those claiming to be descended from the emigrants who still reside in this area of the Dominican Republic typically use the surname spelling of "Kinsley" rather than "Kingsley." The identification is interesting for a number of reasons, though I find the change in spelling highly symbolic of historical change, the end of mastery, and a clear indicator of group identity tied to a particular place and time across a distant past.

name had changed and with it his legacy. This was not the Cabaret of old.¹¹⁹ Emboldened by their condition, the indentured laborers had left Kingsley's colonization experiment in small numbers from their first days on the island. Out from under the yoke of bondage by another name they were thus determined to create their own realities and give substance to the ideas of Home, Family, and Community.¹²⁰ Within what Ira Berlin calls this "contrapuntal narrative" between movement and place, black life and sense of self were made and remade by emigration in the circum-Atlantic, in an understudied facet of the African Diaspora.¹²¹ Some of the settlers drifted, others gravitated, and still others returned to the area over the years, making and remaking a sense of community amidst the entanglements of "continuously fluctuating relationships."¹²² In due time, residents there created a rich and vibrant settlement for themselves, subsequently known in word and deed as "Kingsley's colony." It was, however, a place all their own.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Cabaret is part of the present town of Cabarete, Dominican Republic. Other portions of the massive settlement tract are near Sabaneta de Yásica, Guainamoca, Rincon, and Sosúa. The place names vary in usage according to local parlance.

¹²⁰ Gabb, "On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo," 68, 70; Stuart, "Haiti, or Hispaniola," 245-46; Keane, *Central and South America*, 341. A succinct treatment of these processes is in Sidney W. Mintz, "From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean," in *Caribbean Contours*, eds. Sidney W. Mintz and Sally Price (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985): 127-53.

¹²¹ Berlin, *The Making of African America*, 14-48; Dixon, *African America and Haiti*, ix.

¹²² J. H. Elliott, "Atlantic History: A Circumnavigation," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (Second Edition)*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 266 (quote); Bonham C. Richardson, "Caribbean Migrations, 1838-1985," in *The Modern Caribbean*, eds. Knight and Palmer, 203-04; Melvin Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s through the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 435-43. I continue to draw inspiration from Charles Joyner's classic work *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

¹²³ Stuart, "Haiti, or Hispaniola," 245-46; Gabb, "On the Topography and Geology of Santo Domingo," 68, 70; Keane, *Central and South America*, 341; Reclus, *The Earth and Its Inhabitants*, 421; *Kingsley v. Broward et als.* (1883) in *Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Florida During the Years 1882-3*, ed. George P. Raney (Tallahassee: Floridian Book and Job Office, 1883), 722-47, contains limited information on a few of Kingsley's sons that still resided in Hispaniola. James, William, and Osceola Kingsley unsuccessfully sought a parcel of land that Kingsley himself left to their mother, Flora.

The story of Kingsley's grand scheme thus serves to highlight some important themes. This return to the Caribbean—an understudied facet of the evolving African Diaspora model—is one of several strands of black emigration throughout the nineteenth century that created and reinforced ever-more complex connections to the larger Atlantic world, often binding and shaping locales in the process, though not always in predictable ways.¹²⁴ The fate of the Kingsley colony illustrates the highly ambiguous transition from slave to free labor in the Age of Emancipation. Until now the story of the Kingsley experiment has masqueraded largely as a heroic, one-sided transatlantic “tale of a father's concern for his children's welfare,” while obscuring the larger contexts of power and its human costs.¹²⁵ To that end this chapter highlights some of the efforts of the black emigrants to carve out precious spaces of freedom against tremendous historical forces and untold obstacles. This significant aspect is not simply the exhausted definition of agency, which often “reduce[s] historically and culturally situated acts of resistance to manifestations of a larger, abstract human capacity,” but instead demonstrates the highly complex processes of making and unmaking Future and Past in a tumultuous era in the Atlantic world.¹²⁶ The distinction and ultimate recognition are both long overdue.

¹²⁴ Kim D. Butler, “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” *Diaspora* 10 (2001): 189-216; Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 182-207.

¹²⁵ Daniel L. Fountain, “The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley,” *Southern Historian* 17 (Spring 1996): 41 (quote).

¹²⁶ Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37 (2003): 112-24, 116-17 (quote). A more recent treatment on the subject is found in his “Agency: A Ghost Story,” in Richard Follett, Eric Foner, and Walter Johnson, *Slavery's Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 8-30.

CHAPTER FOUR:
SELLING ZEPHANIAH KINGSLEY: PLANTATIONS, PATRIARCHS, AND MYTHS
OF THE OLD FLORIDA FRONTIER

For a time Zephaniah Kingsley sat atop much of East Florida society as a wealthy merchant-planter and short-lived representative for the region's newly created Territorial Council. Resigning his post in protest of the territory's new racial laws, Kingsley quickly fell from favor and was the subject of much gossip and public ridicule. His sometimes "strange" and supposedly "quixotic" views on slavery and race have earned him a place in history, if mostly for their titillating qualities, oft-repeated today.¹ North of Jacksonville on Fort George Island, thousands of visitors flock to see one of the plantations that he inhabited from 1814 to 1839. Owned and operated by the National Park Service since 1991, the Kingsley Plantation is a remarkable site of mastery, enslavement, and a great deal of mythmaking. In his day Zephaniah Kingsley helped to create several enduring versions of himself that continue to leave posterity confused, enthralled, and sometimes horrified. In the century following his 1843 death, told and retold as little more than bits of gossip for the curious listener, Kingsley's life and exploits reached legendary proportions. The image grew from the stuff of romanticized Florida legend to national myth, bought and sold to unsuspecting tourists down to the present day.²

¹ See his essential published collection of works found in Daniel W. Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judicially: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

² This chapter draws much inspiration particularly from the opening sentiments of Tracy J. Revels, Jay Bushnell, Jean B. Stephens, and Daniel L. Fountain. See Revels, *Sunshine Paradise: A History of Florida Tourism* (Gainesville: University Press, of Florida, 2011); Bushnell, "Northeast Florida Plantation Overview," *Florida Anthropologist* 56 (September 2003): 1; Stephens, "Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans," *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History*, 15 (1978): 71-76; and Daniel L. Fountain, "The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley," *Southern Historian* 17 (1996): 34-44. See also George R. Fairbanks, *Florida, Its History and Its Romance: The Oldest Settlement in the United States, Associated with the Most Romantic Events of American History*,

When Zephaniah Kingsley unexpectedly died in New York City on 13 September 1843, he did so at a time when his persona had already assumed the quality of a local shadow figure amidst an emerging romantic period in East Florida's history. Various stories about the man and his exploits had circulated for years, providing a basis for later tales.³ During his own lifetime distortions were very much part of the Kingsley story. For example, an 1840 Tallahassee newspaper reported:

Zepheniah [sic] Kingsley was the wealthiest man in East Florida; he was an avowed and open Abolitionist and Amalgamationist, and published a pamphlet in favor of both, and PRACTISED his principles, having a negro wife and several children by her—but was forced by the local legislation of the Territory, a few years since, to shift himself off to Hayti. It is said, he was, in early life a—slave trader! He now returns, once or twice a year, from the West Indies, to see to his property. He has many friends and connexions in the East.⁴

This sensationalized editorial had erred greatly. Kingsley never permanently left Florida. Although periodically visited Haiti, he continued to reside at his San Jose plantation in Jacksonville.⁵

These were anxious times in Florida. The long and destructive war with the Seminoles ravaged Florida between 1835 and 1842, disrupting nearly all facets of life in the process. Post-war optimism flourished. In the years that followed, East Florida experienced significant demographic and economic growth until the Civil War. A wartime land and building boom within St.

Under the Spanish, French, English, and American Flags, 1497-1901, Second Revised Edition (Jacksonville, FL: H. and W.B. Drew Company, 1901).

³ "For the Register and Observer. Notes of an Invalid.—No. 9" featured "The Rich Mr. K. with His Black Consort and Offspring," *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, 30 September 1837 (Boston, MA); *The Floridian*, 4 April 1840 (Tallahassee, FL); "'Vindex' on Abolitionism!: The Long Shot from Castle Hill," *The Crisis*, 18 April 1840 (New Orleans, LA); Lydia Maria Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," (7 July 1842) in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 107-12; "Kingsley's Plantation," *Emancipator and Free American*, 1 September 1842 (Boston, MA); *East Florida Herald and Southern Democrat*, 23 January 1843 (St. Augustine, FL).

⁴ *The Floridian*, 4 April 1840 (capitalization in original).

⁵ Zephaniah Kingsley to General Joseph M. Hernandez, San Jose, St. Johns River, E[ast] F[lorida], 12 August 1843, Probate File 1203 for Estate of Zephaniah Kingsley, Duval County Courthouse, Jacksonville, Florida.

Augustine gave way to a more dynamic regional growth after 1842. These flush times were built upon an economy propelled by a recovering agricultural industry in cotton, sugar, and citrus, while other avenues like transportation, banking, and a lucrative tourism industry now thrived.⁶

Nineteenth-century visitors came to East Florida from far and wide as they had in prewar years, according to George E. Buker, as “a haven for travelers seeking the unusual, and invalids seeking a healthy climate.”⁷ Some arrived by the steamships that now regularly cruised up and down the winding St. Johns River. These travelers often marveled at what many regarded as the exotic and more “foreign” elements left of Florida’s Spanish past. They sought out sites such as St. Augustine’s Castillo de San Marcos (then called Fort Marion), an “old” and impressive Spanish fortress dating from the late seventeenth-century, and the surrounding town laid out in narrow streets with its blending of architectural styles, varied peoples, and assorted tongues. Locals entertained these growing numbers with an infectious blend of truth and fiction from Florida’s long history, ripe with incredible tales of local characters at times romantic and mysterious, though sometimes of the more sinister variant.⁸

The Kingsley story did not simply appear overnight; it had to be made palatable for consumption. As historian Frank Marotti has perceptively demonstrated, the romanticized Spanish past emerged gradually during the long decade of warfare in East Florida that coincided with an ongoing process to rectify claims stemming from losses that former Spanish subjects suffered in

⁶ Revels, *Sunshine Paradise*, 12, 31, 48; Tim Hollis, *Glass Bottom Boats & Mermaid Tails: Florida’s Tourist Springs* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books); Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2 Vols. (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1933), 2: 733-34, 737.

⁷ George E. Buker, “The Americanization of St. Augustine, 1821-1865” in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Saga of Survival*, ed. Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine, FL: The St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 170-71, 171 (quote).

⁸ See the letters of George Bancroft reproduced in Patricia Clark, ed., “A Tale to Tell from Paradise Itself: George Bancroft’s Letters from Florida, March 1855,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 48 (January 1970): 264-78; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 348-52.

the Patriot War three decades before. It was a rebellion involving the armed occupation of East Florida by Georgia militia, U.S. soldiers, and frontier banditti. Much of the plantation landscape, including Kingsley's own lucrative properties, literally went up in flames when Spanish authorities involved loyal Seminole warriors in their attempts to end the ruinous conflict.⁹ Many white and black Floridians later came to glorify life in Spanish Florida before the conflict, with their stories bound together by what he calls a "memory-chain of suffering."¹⁰ The United States government, it was reasoned, represented a menace to that shared idealized vision and was the primary culprit of its demise. Fresh hostilities experienced in the Second Seminole War, says Marotti, clouded the way people remembered Spanish rule. Whites and blacks alike could turn that particular portrait into material gain, though only in collusion with the other. For example, both sides could testify for the other in court proceedings in order to bolster their respective claims for remuneration from the U.S. Courts.¹¹ White slaveowners advanced that slave mastery was somehow benign under Spain, which was an idea that proved an enduring selling point of the Spanish story down to the present.¹² To the postwar story told by former southern slaveholders,

⁹ Rembert Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Originally published 1954; reprint Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); J. C. A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Frank Marotti, *The Cana Sanctuary: History, Diplomacy, and Black Catholic Marriage in Antebellum St. Augustine, Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 46 (term), 50, 104-06. Patricia C. Griffin, ed., *The Odyssey of an African Slave, By Sitiki* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 120-43, notes another context as well, when former slave "Uncle Jack" Smith (or Sitiki, his given African name) remembered Spanish rule in East Florida more favorably at a time when the town had barely emerged from the ravages of the U.S. Civil War.

¹¹ This was possible under terms of the Adams-Onís Treaty signed in 1819 recognizing the rights of former Spanish subjects. Philip Coolidge Brooks, *Diplomacy and the Borderlands: The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970).

¹² This point is discussed in Alejandro de la Fuente and Ariela Gross, "Comparative Studies of Law, Slavery, and Race in the Americas," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 6 (2010): 469-85; and Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 92-95, 314. If the work of Frank Tannenbaum (*Slave and Citizen*, 1947) is relevant for East Florida, its broad thesis would be limited only to St. Augustine and not the plantations. Kingsley himself noted in his *Treatise* that he

East Florida's own variant actually complemented the notion of what Margaret Abruzzo calls a "proslavery humanitarianism" that fervently denied slavery's cruelty and sought to recast the basic master-slave relationship as "positively benign."¹³ Complicit in many cases throughout the antebellum era were black Floridians who could and did use slaveholding paternalism "as a weapon in order to evoke and attach themselves to whites' mental images of a Spanish golden age that wonderfully blended with the romanticism sweeping late-antebellum Florida."¹⁴ While it is certainly true that some black Floridians sought and gained important protections for their families, a persistent idea of white benevolence flourishing under Spanish rule came to identify and distinguish East Florida from its neighbors both in-state and out.¹⁵

These elements as well came to define the Kingsley Myth at least after the American Civil War and Reconstruction periods. All but ruined by warfare and Union occupation, East Florida lobbied vigorously to attract outside investors and boost local commerce by promising cheap land and a welcome respite from the cold northern winters. More unpleasant elements still lingered, however, with white violence and the intimidation of black Floridians now both routine and bad for business.¹⁶ In spite of these factors Jacksonville came to replace St. Augustine as a

diligently policed outside influences. Most plantation slaves would *not* have been "able to connect to the economy and institutions of a city such as St. Augustine." Likewise her assumption that "the paternal model of plantation management, even on the largest Florida plantation" (p.2) is not only dated (Genovese, circa 1974) but reflects a simplified understanding of slaveholding paternalism generally. The utter lack of talk about slave resistance on Kingsley's plantations is glaring and distorting. Antiquated definitions hinder reevaluation of Florida's plantation past. On these points I depart from the conclusions of Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 2.

¹³ Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 231-33; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 214-20.

¹⁴ Marotti, *Cana Sanctuary*, 163.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 150, 156-57.

¹⁶ Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 208, 286, 331, 454, 454, 457.

commercial and cultural center, representing something of a more “modern” space within an otherwise untamed frontier region. If East Florida’s enthusiastic embrace of northern capital was not enough, its local legends and colorful versions of the Florida past made the region attractive to newcomers and tourists who came in greater numbers than ever before. They were encouraged by a postwar print culture that “[sent] reporters to observe and report on this paradise.”¹⁷ The life and legend of Zephaniah Kingsley was one of the more well-known stories fed to these arrivals. Along with myriad artifacts and souvenirs that tourists took home with them, Kingsley’s allegedly wild exploits also made for titillating topics of conversation for the return trip.¹⁸

A writer from *Scribner’s Monthly Magazine*, Julia Dodge, was perhaps first to nationally publish much of what came to pass as the Kingsley Legend in September 1877. Meant to attract visitors to East Florida and to appeal to postwar sentiments about the Old South, Dodge’s piece referenced the late Kingsley’s one-time residence at Fort George Island. It was, she said, “as good a specimen of the old-time plantations of the better class as can be found in the South.” What most appealed to her was its link to “many a strange and romantic story.” There she found tales abound of “dark deeds and terrible calamities...handed down among the always superstitious negroes,” the likes of which still could then be found in the area. “Longer ago, however, than any of these people now living can remember, this old plantation was the scene of a strange romance.” The author wrote of “the lonely life” of a young, unnamed planter and slave trader

¹⁷ Jerrell H. Shofner, “Reconstruction and Renewal, 1865-1877,” in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Gannon, 257 (quote), 259.

¹⁸ Kingsley’s *Treatise* continued to be a source of criticism in northern antislavery publications up through the 1850s. See William Goodell, *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice: Its Distinctive Features Shown by its Statutes, Judicial Decisions, and Illustrative Facts, Second Edition* (New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), 370; William Jay, *Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1853), 53.

On Florida’s tourist strategy related to its slavery past see Kenneth Goings, “Aunt Jemima and Uncle Mose Travel the USA: The Marketing of Memory Through Tourist Souvenirs,” *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2 (2001): 131-61, especially 136-37.

“struck with the grace and beauty” of an African chief’s daughter, then “a child of ten years old.” The plantation owner was able to buy her, according to the legend, because the child’s “savage father” was “unable to resist the glitter of the white man’s gold...” Keeping within the limits of white patience in interracial matters (though clearly not bothered by a girl of ten years old bought by a man nearly four times her age), Dodge’s narrative recounted that the young African slave had, “according to tradition, with the exception of a dark skin, none of the usual negro characteristics.” Her behavior and presence were likewise in accordance with her royal upbringing. The so called “dusky princess” she said had been in charge of the plantation during the planter’s “long and frequent absences.” Dodge could only speak vaguely for much of the material, vaguely remembering:

One old negro, who died some time since, so old that no one could remember him as other than old, used to tell how he was brought over when young to this island, where he had lived ever since, and how he and others, sick and exhausted, were ministered to by the “missis” own hands, and how they all loved her and always prayed, “Lord bless Ma’am Hannah!” Every morning as she stood upon this very spot the field hands passed in review before her, each gang with its driver, going to their daily work. She inspected them all, picking out such as were unfit for labor and sending them to the hospital or to lighter tasks; and every night in the same spot she heard a report of the day, examined into all complaints, and with strict justice adjudged each offender’s punishment; and without her order not a lash could be given.

Conveniently, no one could verify the story, she informed readers. “Master, mistress and slaves all went to dust long ago,” Dodge concluded. A story filled with royalty and romance on a majestic island now awaited visitors to complete the picture.¹⁹

Fort George Island attracted intrigued tourists to the former grounds of the Kingsley family during these times. In a sweeping 1878 account of plantations littered along the Sea Islands

¹⁹ Julia Dodge, “An Island of the Sea,” *Scribner’s Monthly Magazine* 5 (September 1877): 659-60. An account of the sketches done by artist Thomas Moran to accompany Dodge’s article is in Thurman Wilkins and Caroline Lawson Hinkley, *Thomas Moran: Artist of the Mountains* (Second Edition: Revised and Expanded) (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 154-58. Julia Dodge is listed in many accounts also as Julia E. or Julia B. Dodge.

from South Carolina to Florida, author S. G. W. (Samuel Greene Wheeler) Benjamin of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* added to the basic story written in Dodge's article of the previous year, although apparently supplemented it in large part by the plantation's latest owners, the Rollins family, who purchased the property in 1869. The plantation changed hands several times since the late antebellum era, and the owners no doubt retained bits of tales from its revolving population of black tenant farmers. Recounting the plantation's early owners, Benjamin enticed his readers with the uniqueness of its past as "a sugar and cotton growing and negro-breeding island, and, isolated by their position, to a certain extent defied public opinion, if not the laws, and were, in deed, like feudal lords, clothed with a brief but undisputed authority." He offered his readers, who were mentally and physically very far removed from the American South, a view of the grounds, its impressive foliage, and reminders of slavery. According to tradition there were "several hundred slaves" buried on the property, said Benjamin, but their unsightly gravestones apparently irked Mrs. Rollins enough to cause their removal. The area at the time eerily yielded "heavy crops." Other sobering reminders of human suffering, however, were not so easily covered up. More than two dozen ivy-draped slave cabins lay nearby in various stages of decay, while the brute image of stockades could still be seen in the plantation's barn.²⁰

Like Dodge before her, Benjamin did not long dwell on the more unsettling facets of the plantation's past. Newspaper editors and a vibrant tourist industry did not hope to draw visitors with stories of the morbid variety. Romance was a much easier sell. Remade on something of a blank canvas and scrubbed of its discomfiting aspects, Zephaniah Kingsley's had undergone a thorough transformation. Gone were the criticisms that hounded him in life, replaced in death by generous praise for his individualism as "a man of marked originality and force of character, shrewd, canny, a law unto himself, a despot who combined the elemental traits of planter, slaver,

²⁰ S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 57 (November 1878): 844.

and buccaneer, but tempered at least by certain negative virtues; although he died thirty-six years ago, the name of the King of Fort George still survives, and will continue to pique curiosity and give rise to legends in that region for ages to come.” Many of Benjamin’s readers would have celebrated Kingsley’s said qualities in an age of rapid westward expansion and the conquering of frontier America by larger than life individuals cut from a similar cloth.²¹

Benjamin’s expose supplemented Dodge’s piece by introducing a hearty blend of fact and fiction to his romantic portrait of the plantation past. He correctly noted Kingsley’s prominent local role in the Atlantic slave trade, his later involvements in Haiti, and some important figures to the Kingsley story, such as Zephaniah’s son George, a black mistress named Flora, and a son-in-law named (John) Sammis. The existence of a large dowry in reference to Sammis seems to have been a part of local gossip about Kingsley’s evolving biography since it was discussed years earlier by the scandalous *Invalid* piece of 1837.²² How controversial aspects regarding his racial liaisons were retold in an age of virulent racism in Florida are, however, both more complicated and among the most enduring distortions in the Kingsley Myth.²³

“The central theme of the Zephaniah Kingsley story,” according to anthropologist Antoinette T. Jackson, “is his acknowledged spousal relationship with Anta Majigeen Ndiaye, a West African woman described as being of royal lineage from the country of Senegal.”²⁴ Known today as Anna Kingsley, beyond conjecture very little information is known of Anna Madgigine Jai as a historical figure. Kingsley said little of her to abolitionist Lydia Maria Child shortly be-

²¹ *Ibid.*, 845; Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1985). See also his classic work *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1973).

²² “The Rich Mr. K.”

²³ Stowell, “Introduction,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell 2n2, 4n5.

²⁴ Antoinette T. Jackson, *Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012), 115.

fore his death, her name not even reported by the latter. He did offer a heavily romanticized, and cryptic, version of their first meeting “On the coast of Africa” and subsequent path to partnership. “She was a new nigger, when I first saw her,” he told Child. “She was a fine, tall figure, black as jet, but very handsome.”²⁵ Available evidence suggests a more realistic turn of events. Kingsley almost certainly purchased her from a slave cargo in Havana in 1806, using his prerogative as slavemaster to impregnate the young girl soon after her purchase. While Kingsley was consistent in the few instances in which he specifically referenced Anna as his wife, he did use the term either affectionately or for sheer convenience for at least a handful of women with whom he had sexual relations and offspring.²⁶ When Dodge and Benjamin at last covered post-reconstruction Florida, Zephaniah Kingsley’s life and exploits had long been discussed long since his 1843 death. Their consistent references to a “Ma’am Hannah” in place of Anna Madgigine Jai, though, betray more than a hint of historical confusion at that place and time. Interestingly enough, the real Anna died near Jacksonville only as recently as 1870. While time had clearly served to cloud much of her story, the heights to which the Anna/Hannah legend had climbed made her simply unrecognizable through such a distorted lens.²⁷

Tourism required some finesse to make the exploits of Zephaniah Kingsley and Florida’s past much easier to embrace. In a complex, evolving racial environment such as the postbellum American South, sensitivity to interracial unions in public discourse remained high. While the

²⁵ Kingsley quoted in Lydia Maria Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 115.

²⁶ This is verified by Kingsley’s son-in-law John Sammis in the case of *Kingsley v. Broward*, which involved an unsuccessful property claim decided in 1882 brought by some of Kingsley’s mixed-race sons with Flora Hannahan. See *Kingsley v. Broward et. als.* in *Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Florida During the Years 1882-3*, ed. George P. Raney (Tallahassee: Floridian Book and Job Office), 727. His recollections are not reliable with exact years, but the broader details that require less precision appear to be accurate.

²⁷ Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Princess, Plantation Slave-owner* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 119.

romanticized and commoditized elements of the Spanish past were more of the nonthreatening variety, the image of the long-vanished Spanish “dons” with their black mistresses was an idea to which even northern visitors could not wholeheartedly warm themselves.²⁸ Local discussion about Anna’s racial origins coupled with Kingsley’s few statements about her as a very dark skinned African, “black as jet,”²⁹ seemed insurmountable barriers to nineteenth-century acceptability. Judged as decidedly bizarre by postbellum southern standards, Kingsley’s well-known published views on race and seemingly unorthodox behaviors might be excused as both less repugnant and “predatory” if Anna were on an equal footing.³⁰ While color could not be overcome, in this context royalty could serve in this context not only to bolster the idea of an interracial union of elites, but also to rescue Kingsley’s otherwise indefensible reputation in the process.³¹

Benjamin was correct in that Zephaniah Kingsley’s story continued to spawn further interest and legends. Such concern in the author’s own time prompted enough talk and speculation

²⁸ Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th-Century South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 198-207. Hodes notes that maintaining white dominance after slavery involved the so called “one-drop rule.” In order “to preserve racial hierarchy in the absence of slavery, white people had to guard the categories of ‘black’ and ‘white,’ entailing more vigilant surveillance of the mixture of European and African ancestry in order to be able to tell who belonged on which side of the color line. By this logic,” she states, “white men should have made sure that no black women bore their children, and some whites did worry tangentially about this phenomenon” (p. 199).

²⁹ Kingsley quoted in Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 109.

³⁰ Slaveholders as “predatory” comes from John Ashworth, *Slavery Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, Vol. 1: Commerce and Compromise, 1820-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 444; Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, & Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 31, 158; idem., “The Planter Class,” in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, eds. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (New York: Routledge, 2011), 196. Discussions of endemic racism are in David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 322; Hodes, *White Women, Black Men*, 198-207. The last, in particular, notes that maintaining white dominance after slavery involved the so called “one-drop rule.” In order “to preserve racial hierarchy in the absence of slavery, white people had to guard the categories of ‘black’ and ‘white,’ entailing more vigilant surveillance of the mixture of European and African ancestry in order to be able to tell who belonged on which side of the color line. By this logic,” she states, “white men should have made sure that no black women bore their children, and some whites did worry tangentially about this phenomenon” (p. 199).

³¹ Barry Weller, “The Royal Slave and the Prestige of Origins,” *Kenyon Review* 14 (Summer 1992): 65-72.

to assemble a tale worthy of attention. A few disparate sources then available tangentially linked to Kingsley featured the idea of a royal slave, a princess, though never in the character of his wife or mistress. English author E. S. Abdy, for example, spoke of a meeting arranged by Kingsley with an “Ebo” [Igbo] princess residing near poverty in Philadelphia in 1834. The Florida planter “had long been acquainted with her,” telling Abdy that she was a “good specimen of the race.”³² In no instance was it ever alleged (or revealed) that Anna Madgigine Jai, or any of his black mistresses, was of royal origins, even though both opportunity and reasons to do so were more than sufficient.

The popular idea of the royal slave was a later invention, or a “literary commonplace” in the view of literary scholar Barry Weller. Weller traces the idea of a royal slave whose identity is specifically black to at least the time of Shakespeare, though a noncolor variant of “[t]he conjunction of noble birth and social abjection” is plainly evident even in the work of Homer. At the most basic level, the author reasons that the image is “one of western culture’s most frequently told stories, of a man or woman whose fall from the pinnacle of prosperity or signal achievement presumably marks the instability of all human fortunes.” Readers could find similar ideas of privileged slaves sold into slavery only to find redemption in texts ranging from Aphra Behn’s fictional *Oroonoko* to Gustavus Vassa’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. These were firmly part of a lengthy European fascination with “high status” slaves. Their stories indicated, in Weller’s own words, “the easy commerce between historical narrative and fiction had blurred the putative boundaries between romance and history.” Audiences “were sufficiently persuaded that a slave could be royal to make fictions which exploited this premise ac-

³² Kingsley quoted in E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833, to October, 1834*, 3 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1835), 2: 346-48.

ceptable and even attractive.”³³ The timing of the concept’s posthumous attachment to the figure of Anna Madgigine Jai is crucial, making it a legitimate question worthy of interrogating historical memory.³⁴

Readers of *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* in November 1878 could find comfort in Benjamin’s tale of the slave trader of Fort George Island, “Captain Kingsley,” and the African princess. “He built and often commanded his own ships, and brought his slaves directly from the coast of Africa,” Benjamin wrote of his subject. “In one of his voyages an African princess twelve years of age was presented to him by her father. He brought her to America, gave her some little education, and took her to his bed and board without publication of the banns. At a later period, however, he carried her to Hayti and made her his legal wife. ‘Ma’am Hannah,’ as she was called, bore him several children.”³⁵ The whole affair of slave trading, so it seemed in this scenario, had found a happy end for both slave trader and slave. Based around the charming backdrop of Fort George Island, the romantic tale is most likely a corrupted version of an anti-slavery account entitled “The African Daughter: A True Tale,” which first appeared in 1830.³⁶

³³ Weller, “The Royal Slave and the Prestige of Origins,” 65-72.

³⁴ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 239-40; David Anderson, “Down Memory Lane: Nostalgia for the Old South in Post-Civil War Plantation Reminiscences,” *Journal of Southern History* 71 (February 2005): 107-08; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “No Deed but Memory,” in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 10-11. See also Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999).

Compare the two very different treatments of Anna intended for different audiences in Kathy Tilford, “A Free Woman,” *OAH Magazine of History* 12 (Fall 1997): 35-37, and Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*. The former is written by a former Kingsley Plantation Ranger for a national publication; the general format and citation practices reveal the latter as intended to appeal as local public history written by a local historian.

³⁵ Benjamin, “The Sea Islands,” 845. Note that about a year removed from Dodge’s article the age of the princess had changed from ten years to twelve. A small detail, to be sure, but I believe that it indicates just how flexible the story had become and the degree to which individuals added and subtracted from the telling.

³⁶ Mark N. Taylor, ed., “‘The African Daughter: A True Tale’: A New Edition,” *Slavery & Abolition* 23 (December 2002): 117-36.



THE AFRICAN DAUGHTER.

Published by William Pickering, Chancery Lane Oct. 1830.

Figure 2. “Ma’am Hannah, the African Daughter (1830)”

From “The African Daughter,” printed in *The Bijou: An Annual of Literature and the Arts* (London: William Pickering, 1830).

The anonymously-penned account is centered at the “romantic estate” of Fort George Island in winter 1809 under Spanish rule, owned at that time by planter John Houstoun McIntosh.³⁷ Sympathetic readers learned of the story of “Hannah,” McIntosh’s faithful domestic slave of “superior intelligence and merit,” who served her master with “the exceeding propriety of her unaffected manners, the elegance of her faultless form, and the placid dignity of her melancholy but animated countenance.”³⁸ To these qualities the author also spoke of her physical beauty, noting that the woman lacked the “deformity” of the African’s “regular features” (“the wide nostril and flat lip, the disagreeable look of apparent vulgar stupidity”) and carried herself with “features so expressively benignant and so decidedly indicative of a clear and well regulated intellect.”³⁹

Stolen from Africa and sent into slavery in Spanish Florida, Hannah is dramatically reunited with her father, an old Mandingo chieftain, who claimed to have been “treacherously entrapped” by a slave catcher. Purchased by McIntosh, under whose benevolent treatment the elder slave was given a life of leisure, the royal chieftain struggles to adjust to circumstances befitting his noble lineage. Plagued by “apathetic melancholy” and otherwise “subdued,” Hannah watches in horror as her father leaps to his death, choosing to drown himself rather than submit to even

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 121. McIntosh rented then sold the Fort George Island plantation to Zephaniah Kingsley in 1814. On this chain of ownership and brief biographies of the individuals, see Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve*, 38. “The African Daughter” went through minor changes between 1830 and 1831 during varied printings and reprinted in *The Bijou: An Annual of Literature and the Arts* (London: William Pickering, 1830), 18-32; *The Cameo; A Melange of Literature and the Arts, Selected from The Bijou* (London, UK: William Pickering, 1831), 258-72; and in Mrs. Catherine H. W. Esling, ed., *Friendship’s Offering, Volume 2* (Boston, MA and Philadelphia, PA, 1842), 148-61. All citations refer to Taylor’s edited edition of 2002.

³⁸ “The African Daughter,” 131.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 132.

a kind master. A critique of emerging proslavery doctrines, “The African Daughter” posits not too subtly that slavery in all of its varying degrees is wrong.⁴⁰

As the story gained a more national audience, the theme of royalty again came to play a significant role in excusing the interracial element of the story. An 1880 editorial in the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* spoke of Fort George Island as “the seat of empire” within Kingsley’s “Old Florida Kingdom.” “His wife, indeed, was a princess of royal African blood, as black as coal, but every inch a queen,” the author told the *Sentinel*’s readers. It seemed fitting that Benjamin’s “King of Fort George” could only have ruled with a princess (or a queen, in this instance) by his side.⁴¹

Writers had covered the Florida plantation paradise at Fort George Island and its African royalty connection extensively, but details about its most famous resident planter remained murky. Dodge wrote sparingly of Zephaniah Kingsley, leaving him little more than a contented shadow figure quietly ruling his slave kingdom from deep within the dense tropical foliage. Benjamin, however, went further in supplying a more detailed, though ultimately mistaken, description of the “King of Fort George” that endured well into the twentieth-century. According to Benjamin, “Captain Kingsley is described by one who knew him well as a small, spare man, who wore square-toed, silver-buckled shoes to the last, and was generally seen about the plantation sporting a Mexican poncho.”⁴² Whoever Benjamin’s source was did not know Kingsley after all. Benjamin’s source *had* accurately described a figure intimately tied to Fort George Is-

⁴⁰ Robin Dizard and Mark N. Taylor, “Introduction to ‘The African Daughter: A True Tale,’” *Slavery & Abolition* 23 (December 2002): 118. According to the timeline established within the work, the incident took place in about 1806 or 1807. The author claimed during his winter 1809 visit to the plantation that “[t]he sensitive Hannah had only imperfectly recovered from the consequences of this calamitous event two or three years after its occurrence, the period of my visit to Fort George” (p. 135).

⁴¹ “An Old Florida Kingdom,” *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 13 March 1880 (Milwaukee, WI). No name is given for the princess in this editorial.

⁴² Benjamin, “The Sea Islands,” 845.

land, although it was actually Kingsley's nephew and plantation overseer, Charles J. McNeill, who continued to serve in that capacity after Zephaniah's death.⁴³ Truth aside, Benjamin's portrait proved enduring and vastly influential in spite of itself.

Fort George Island had achieved a remarkable degree of national fame from persistent exposure in the postbellum era. The Rollins family, transplants from southern New Hampshire, had provided much of the island's history to visitors and reporters during the peak tourism years and beyond. As brother of U.S. Senator Edward H. Rollins, John F. Rollins sold his lucrative "drug business at Concord" and relocated to Florida shortly after the Civil War, purchasing the property in 1869 for the sum of \$5,500.⁴⁴ War and disruptions had not been kind to the landscape. Now with slavery's imprint receding into memory and the family's income dwindling, Rollins employed various strategies to make Fort George Island pay dividends. In partnership he built the Fort George Hotel in 1875, a short lived venture, and sold lots for winter residents to build upon. Orange trees brought both money and fame to the island from the 1880s until the dawn of the twentieth-century.⁴⁵ By 1887 an extensive pamphlet literature distributed by the Fort George Island Club enticed readers with detailed descriptions and engravings of its grounds,

⁴³ Journal of Kingsley Beatty Gibbs, 1 January 1840, *Kingsley Beatty Gibbs and His Journal of 1840-1843*, ed. Jacqueline K. Fretwell (St. Augustine, FL: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1984), 11; Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve*, 46.

Local Florida historian Dena Snodgrass wrote privately, "There is widespread talk that Kingsley was a dwarf or deformed. The Parks (Fla.) had a picture showing him about knee high to his great white horse. I personally traded the Parks out of this painting, executed by their artist, and personally clipped it to small bits." "His nephew, Charles McNeill, who rode with him over the fields, was a hunchback." Notes for Emilie Gibbs, 16 August 1995, Box 3, Dena Snodgrass Collection, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

⁴⁴ John B. Clarke, ed., *Sketches of Successful New Hampshire Men* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke, 1882), 220-21; Revels, *Sunshine Paradise*, 104, 108. See also Daniel W. Stowell and Kathy Tilford with Roger Clark, Carol S. Clark, and Betsy Tyrol, *Kingsley Plantation: A History of Fort George Island Plantation* (Jacksonville, FL: Eastern National, reprint 2007), 17, 19.

⁴⁵ Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve*, 62-63.

even boasting of its now “famous plantation.”⁴⁶ That same year in the November issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, author S.G.W. Benjamin once again wrote of the island’s “charms” as “widely and justly celebrated.” The pairing of Fort George Island with the Kingsley Myth proved to be an enduring draw for national commenters marveling of its exotic and storied past. With a long and storied history filled with “romance and blood,” he told readers that such ingredients “enriched this magical isle with the element of association and legend.”⁴⁷

Told in enticing bits and pieces, Zephaniah Kingsley’s fascinating folk legend had entered the mainstream American discussion about slavery as a distinct voice, though badly lacking proper historical context.⁴⁸ By the twentieth-century his racial and proslavery views, albeit in much oversimplified form, provided such prominent historians from Ulrich Bonnell Phillips to Carter G. Woodson with a “different” angle of the slavery experience.⁴⁹ These early scholarly examinations appear to have been disarmed by the popularity of the more recent Kingsley image, opting instead to let the planter’s positions stand uncontested. This proved to be another enduring quality of writings about Zephaniah Kingsley. He became well known in historical references, most commonly as a benevolent master who presided over a large slave empire with a happy, even contented labor force. Thus it was Kingsley himself, arguing in his proslavery pamphlet of the antebellum era, who told twentieth-century audiences that he was a kind master.

⁴⁶ The Fort George Island Company, “A Winter at Fort George,” (N.P., 1887), 5-6.

⁴⁷ S.G.W. Benjamin, “Historic Points at Fort George Island,” *Atlantic Monthly* 60 (November 1887): 699.

⁴⁸ “Deeds of Old Slave Days,” *Morning Oregonian*, 29 August 1897 (Portland, OR).

⁴⁹ Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (Originally published 1918; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, reprint 1969), 294-96; Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South, New Edition* (Originally published 1929; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, reprint 2007), 199n2; Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918), 75-77; William B. Hesseltine, “Some New Aspects of the Pro-Slavery Argument,” *Journal of Negro History* 21 (January 1936): 11-12. See Daniel Joseph Signal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 38, 40-51.

This bizarre, uncritical acceptance of the antebellum proslavery argument on this point continues almost universally to the present.⁵⁰

Floridians as well took a much more hands-on approach in documenting the Kingsley Legend. The story still had much appeal locally. In 1924 the *Florida Times-Union*, for example, printed “The Strange Will of Zephaniah Kingsley,” which was strange insofar as it proved to be only a portion of Kingsley’s *actual* will with an entirely fictitious, if more memorable, beginning. Crudely written and affixed to a portion of the original text, it conformed to the established Kingsley Legend as a true Florida pioneer full of bravado and rugged individualism.

Whereas I am of sound mind and disposing memory and know what I am doing, and whereas I know perfectly well that it is against the laws and conventions of life to marry a colored person, and whereas this is my property and it is not anybody’s damn business what I do with it, and whereas I have an African wife, and believe that the amalgamation of the white and colored races is to the best interests of America, and whereas I know that what I am about to do is going to bring down tremendous criticism, but I don’t give a damn...⁵¹

Going far beyond southern conventions about race, the portrait was both exciting and daring.

His determination to persevere against all comers is replete with romantic connotations and elements associated with the Old South’s culture of manliness and honor, though modern audiences could also connect with the piece as both exotic and somehow nonthreatening.⁵²

⁵⁰ William L. Van Deburg, *Slavery & Race in American Popular Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 72-74; John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865-1918* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 231-32.

The issue has been facilitated by Florida’s very small historiographical basis that tends to use frequent cross-citations to support each others’ claims, creating a “definitive account” in the process. In this particular case see the works of Daniel L. Schafer and Jane G. Landers, both of whom have written about the Kingsleys extensively. Repeated citations of Landers’s scholarship are more plentiful in Schafer’s earlier formation of the Kingsley story, such as his “A Class of People Neither Freedmen nor Slaves’: From Spanish to American Race Relations in Florida, 1821-1861,” *Journal of Social History* 26 (Spring 1993): 587-609. For Landers, she refers to Schafer’s work very frequently in her *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (1999) and *Atlantic Creoles* (2010). Cross-citations supporting a scholarship basis also generally inform Larry Eugene Rivers, *Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

⁵¹ “The Strange Will of Zephaniah Kingsley,” excerpt originally printed in the *Florida Times-Union*, quoted in Stetson Kennedy, *Palmetto Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), 80-81.

Other writers turned their attention and research interests to the Kingsley story with mixed results. Pleasant Daniel Gold's 1929 *History of Duval County*, for one, repeated older themes and local gossip but offered little clarification to the story. Admitting that "facts" about Kingsley were scarce, the author bypassed talk of his domestic situation entirely, now claiming the planter was "from New England, it is said."⁵³ The work appears to have been widely read. The same year author Zora Neale Hurston, who was then early in her celebrated literary career, wrote Langston Hughes from Florida: "I shall go down state as soon as I get all the material on the African princess who married a white man beyond the three mile limit and lived on an island off Jacksonville." Hurston's efforts did not materialize in the immediate, as she continued to collect materials for various publishing endeavors.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, more serious attempts to chronicle Kingsley's life and his residence at Fort George Island were then underway by Carita Doggett Corse, a Florida author who later went on to direct Hurston and others for the Florida Writer's Project from 1935 to 1942. Part of the Roosevelt-era Federal Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration (WPA), the initiative collected a wide assortment of historical information and published several hundred volumes during its existence. Local authors would have plenty of opportunities to discuss the Kingsley

⁵² James M. Denham, "*A Rogue's Paradise*": *Crime and Punishment in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1861* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 205-08. The classic statement of these issues is Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁵³ Pleasant Daniel Gold, *History of Duval County, including Early History of East Florida* (St. Augustine, FL: The Record Company, 1928), 70. Nearly all of the Kingsley information lacks sources. Most instances are left undocumented, though Gold opted to qualify evidence throughout as "it is said." The author also incorrectly stated that upon Kingsley's death in 1843, "true to his promises rewarded many of his slaves with freedom" (p. 75). He had never promised to outright free his slaves in death and did not do so with his will. Most were sent to auction.

⁵⁴ Zora Neale Hurston to Langston Hughes, Jacksonville[, FL], April 3, 1929, in *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, ed. Carla Kaplan (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 136-37; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2-3.

story for the foreseeable future. Corse's work now provided something of a new standard through which they could approach the subject.⁵⁵

Four years before her appointment as state director for the WPA project, Corse had cemented her reputation as one of the Florida's more established authors with the publication of *The Key to the Golden Islands* in 1931. A highly romanticized history of Fort George Island and its inhabitants, the figure of Zephaniah Kingsley appears in the book's final sections as something larger than life, referred to as "the wealthiest planter in Florida" and "a wily Scotch pioneer" by the author.⁵⁶ Elsewhere, he is called "a benevolent despot" (p. 124), "a kind master" (p. 126), and "a compelling ghost" (p. 136). "Among all the illustrious ghosts which haunt the island," says Corse, "Kingsley's is the outstanding personality in whom all the existing traditions are centered."⁵⁷

The account represented the most up-to-date summary of the Kingsley Myth at its time of publication. However, its real curiosity is in its treatment of the origins of Anna Madgigine Jai and her royal lineage. Several decades on, Floridians still found elements of her story unsettling. Corse argued that "I have assumed that Anna came from Madagascar because many of the natives had the locality from which they came included in her their names, and Madegigine may have been an adjectival form of Madagascar. Moreover, 'Jai' is the family name of a race of native East Indian rulers, and Indian influence through Arabia is still very pronounced in the lan-

⁵⁵ Gary W. McDonogh, "Introduction," in Gary W. McDonogh, ed., *The Florida Negro: A Federal Writers' Project Legacy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), vii-xxxv passim; Angela E. Tomlinson, "Writing Race: The Florida Federal Writers' Project and Racial Identity, 1935-1943," (MA Thesis, Florida State University, 2008).

⁵⁶ Carita Doggett Corse, *The Key to the Golden Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1931), 113.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

guage, appearance, and customs of Madagascar.”⁵⁸ This unfortunate attempt to racially reconfigure a historical subject did reflect a larger ongoing regional dialogue that continually reinforced an overall factually incorrect portrait of Anna Madgigine Jai as an elite subject made more palatable for visitors and locals alike.⁵⁹ Madagascar was also apparently close enough in local imagination to “Zinguebar” (or Zanzibar) to become credible, the latter being the only East African locale where Kingsley publicly claimed to have made slave purchases.⁶⁰

Evident throughout Corse’s work is the persistent influence of a core folk-legend that can be traced directly to the Rollins family, owners of Fort George Island long after Zephaniah Kingsley’s residency there.⁶¹ Found in Florida’s postbellum tourism tales and national exposes as we have seen, the Kingsley Myth came to define the Fort George Island plantation as a lucrative attraction. For several years John Rollins and family tried many times to make the island pay handsomely, though the results were less than anticipated. The myth proved more difficult to halt. Mrs. Gertrude Rollins Wilson (1872-1956) and her husband (John) Millar Wilson were the last of the Rollins family to leave the property in 1923. The move was one that she lamented intensely. Long after the family’s long residence there Mrs. Wilson continued to influence public perception of the storied grounds and its many legends, never failing to note the world that

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 115-16.

⁵⁹ Fountain, “The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley,” 41-42.

⁶⁰ Kingsley, *Treatise*, in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 68. He included the place name as the slave port where he purchased “Gullah Jack” Pritchard, who authorities later for his prominent role in the failed Denmark Vesey conspiracy in 1822 Charleston, South Carolina. Private correspondence of course reveals other locations, but the contents were unknown widely at the time. An account of Jack’s terrible end is in Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: the Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1999), 195.

⁶¹ Corse, *The Key to the Golden Islands*, 131, 133-36, 138-39.

was lost. It is little wonder that *The Key to the Golden Islands* continues this trend, even plainly acknowledging Corse's large debt to Wilson in completing the work.⁶²

Smitten with the book, poet Percy MacKaye called *The Key to the Golden Islands* "delightfully authentic history" and Corse's "special lifework," which proved to be a significant addition "to a growing movement of American folk-culture, only recently becoming articulate." Having learned of some of the history written therein during a visit to the plantation's decaying slave quarters, MacKaye found the Kingsley story irresistible. In the book's Foreword he promised to include the planter in his future work *Wakefield: A Folk Masque of America*, commissioned by the United States Government for the George Washington Bicentennial Commission of 1932. "I have taken the liberty," he bragged, "of introducing to a national public an 'illustrious ghost' of Mrs. Corse's narrative: Zephaniah Kingsley, with his consort, Anna Madegigine Jai, of the island of 'Alimacani' [Fort George Island's aboriginal name]." Both figures did later appear, bizarrely, alongside Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, Ethan Allen, and Brigham Young as part of the play's fourteenth group of American "Pioneers."⁶³

Interest continued to grow around the Florida planter of legend, spurred no doubt in part by more local efforts to document regional history for Roosevelt's WPA program in the late 1930s.⁶⁴ Interviews conducted at the time with distant relatives and others served to demonstrate how thoroughly the Kingsley Myth had pervaded local Florida history, particularly in Jackson-

⁶² *Ibid.*, ix, 144, 145. She references the very generic "notes on Fort George Island, Florida" from Gertrude Wilson which are probably those found at the National Park Service Office at today's Kingsley Plantation. See the unpublished "Notes Concerning the Old Plantation on Fort George Island" and "Fort George During 1869 and Afterward" both by Gertrude Rollins Wilson (Mrs. John Millar Wilson). Gertrude Rollins Wilson was born at Fort George Island 6 November 1872 and died 1 March 1956.

⁶³ Percy MacKaye, *Wakefield: A Folk-Masque of the Birth of Washington* (Washington, D.C.: United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, 1932), xxii. Specifically, he listed them as "Zephaniah Kingsley, with his Arab-Ethiopian wife, Madegigine Jai, (of Florida)."

⁶⁴ James Johnson, "History of Zephaniah Kingsley and Family," unpublished manuscript, 4 January 1937, Federal Writers' Project, State Library of Florida, Tallahassee; E. W. Jones, "Negro Slaves Brought by Drovers Into Florida," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, 9 December 1937 (Sarasota, FL).

ville and nearby St. Augustine.⁶⁵ It was here that regional popularity of the old planter patriarch was clearly on the ascent in small, overlapping social circles. More local figures tried their hand at tackling Zephaniah Kingsley as a research subject. Jacksonville lawyer Philip S. May was one who proved to be among the most enthusiastic researchers. Lacking any formal historical training, May not only shopped his evolving portrait of Kingsley to audiences over several years but also encouraged others like Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Yearling* (published 1938, prize 1939) and his own client, to pursue the subject further.⁶⁶ Rawlings began her initial research in 1939 but abandoned the effort the following year for another project, a novel eventually entitled *Cross Creek* (1942).⁶⁷ Renowned novelist James Branch Cabell, a friend and confidant who counted Florida authors Corse, May, and Rawlings among his confidants was quick to pick up the Kingsley research trail when the last retreated.⁶⁸

Publisher Farrar and Rinehart, the New York outfit that put out the critically lauded *Rivers in America* series, eagerly welcomed someone of Cabell's esteemed literary reputation to make a contribution. Along with his friend Alfred J. Hanna, a professor of history at Rollins

⁶⁵ Interview of Mrs. Elizabeth Dismukes, 11 May 1939, and Interview of William F. Hawley, [24?] June 1940, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection, Washington, D.C. Issues with these interviews are explained in Jackson with Burns, *Ethnohistorical Study of the Kingsley Plantation Community*, 19-21; and Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve*, 76.

⁶⁶ Philip S. May, "One of the Most Fit and Discreet Men in the Territory," A Paper Delivered to the Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Society during the Morning Session, January 24, 1939 [listed in Minutes as January 23] and "Exhibit on Zephaniah Kingsley," 24 January 1939 both in Joshua C. Chase, "The Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Society," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 17 (April 1939): 329, 334; May's role as President of the Florida Historical Society is in "Minutes of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Society Held in the Library of the Society at St. Augustine June 8, 1945," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 24 (July 1945): 67-84; Rodger L. Tarr, ed., *The Private Marjorie: The Love Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to Norton S. Baskin* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 36, 47.

⁶⁷ Jacqueline J. Wilken, "Selected Letters of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to James Branch Cabell and Margaret Freeman Cabell," (MA Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1993). The Kingsley research files are in Series 3A: Miscellaneous Papers, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

⁶⁸ Jack C. Lane, "Constructing *The St. Johns*: History as Literary Narrative," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 80 (Winter 2002): 314-15; Branch Cabell and A. J. Hanna, *The St. Johns: A Parade of Diversities* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943), 300-01.

College (Winter Park, Florida), Cabell collaborated to create *The St. Johns: A Parade of Diversities* between 1941 and its 1943 publication. The joint effort was plagued by creative and interpretive tensions between the authors. More recent critics such as Jack C. Lane note, for example, that it was Cabell's "imagination" or, more plainly stated, his use of historical fiction that Hanna frequently lamented.⁶⁹

Figures like Kingsley were part of "[a] most gorgeous lot of strange persons [who] seem to have infested the banks of the St. Johns," Cabell told Hanna in January 1942.⁷⁰ The authors attacked his life and exploits mercilessly. They mocked his racial views, sexual practices, and Kingsley's supposedly "small" stature at every turn, calling him at times the "brisk dwarf" or "brisk midget."⁷¹ His vast plantation holdings comprised, in their words, a "large seraglio and patriarchal 90-mile-long slave kingdom...which he attempted to keep fertile and contented with Biblical piety."⁷² Detailed descriptions of the Fort George Island plantation itself emphasized seedier parts of the Kingsley story typically glossed over in earlier accounts.⁷³ Stark images of barbarous tools of punishment and power found there from Kingsley's time appear to have been inspired in part by Corse's work and borrowed liberally from Gertrude Rollins Wilson's own folk renderings. The authors could scarcely resist embellishing the "slave empire" as a long, isolated "negro breeding ground" populated by wild Africans, full of licentious sexual mores gone

⁶⁹ Lane, "Constructing *The St. Johns*," 319, 327. Part of their general disagreements are actually included at the end of *The St. Johns* printed as "An Epilogue: In the Form of an Altercation" in Cabell and Hanna, *The St. Johns*, 289-303.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Lane, "Constructing *The St. Johns*," 316.

⁷¹ Cabell and Hanna, *The St. Johns*, 162, 169, 170. References to Kingsley's supposed lack of height are incessant throughout.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 15; Lane, "Constructing *The St. Johns*," 322.

⁷³ Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," 844, for example, mentions the stockade, whipping post, and shackles found on the grounds during his visit but barely offers a comment. He almost casually mentions them only to introduce the romantic legend. Few were so bold as to even talk about them at all.

awry.⁷⁴ They teased the planter's lustful relations with Anna Madegigine Jai, referred to as the African princess of Madagascar, and other concubines. A familiar scene Cabell and Hanna imagined Kingsley "kissing his brown children goodnight," then "rode down the east bank of the St. Johns very jauntily, upon the back of his tall white horse, to look for that special sort of rational happiness to be found in the companionship of his eighth, or it may have been of his ninth, black wife."⁷⁵

Reviews of *The St. Johns: A Parade of Diversities* varied as widely as its audience.⁷⁶

Scholarly journals generally found fault with the book's fictive qualities, while newspapers overall praised it.⁷⁷ The same was true more locally as well. In the *New York Times Book Review* WPA writer Stetson Kennedy, himself no stranger to Kingsley and other Florida folk legends, called the book "a parade of perversities" but likened it to "an altogether new and transcendent kind, in which facts are made to read like fiction and textbook mummies are reincarnated in all their original addiction to wine, women and song."⁷⁸ The odd thing about *The St. Johns* was that

⁷⁴ Cabell and Hanna, *The St. Johns*, 162-64, 293-94. For example, Hanna said to Cabell during the writing process, "Sanctuaries have been reserved for the birds and plants of the St. Johns—such as, for example, a tract of a hundred acres of wild untouched jungle upon historic Fort George Island. There, Gertrude Rollins Wilson, sickened by the wanton destruction of wildlife to every side of her birthplace, has endowed and provided a handsome lodge for the accommodation of botanists, of ornithologists, and of yet other scientists interests in the Floridian field of their special out-of-door studies" (pp. 293-94).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-65, 171 (quote).

⁷⁶ Lane, "Constructing *The St. Johns*," 325, 327-28.

⁷⁷ In his review of the book for the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Carlos E. Castaneda ducked this overall trend by suggesting that "Historical accuracy has not been sacrificed, although literary freedom has stretched it a bit in places." He did admit, however, that Cabell and Hanna had written something likely to shock many of its readers, though such qualities he considered among its strong suits. Carlos E. Castaneda, "Review of *The St. Johns: A Parade of Diversities*, by James Branch Cabell and A.J. Hanna," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 1 (July 1944): 326.

⁷⁸ Stetson Kennedy, "Review of *The St. Johns: A Parade of Diversities*, by James Branch Cabell and A.J. Hanna," *New York Times Book Review*, 5 September 1943. See his work on Florida's "folkways" in Stetson Kennedy, *Palmetto Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942, especially 80-83; on Kennedy's involvement in the Florida WPA as head of Florida's Folklore Project from 1937 to 1942, see McDonogh, "Introduction," in *The Florida Negro*, ed. McDonogh, vii-xxxv.

despite its incessantly negative portrayal of the Florida past and its “strange persons” therein, the book somehow managed to retain a strong local following and also did little to change regional public opinion about Kingsley’s historical reputation for the worse. At least two reasons account for this. First, *The St. Johns* was at the least regarded as having been thoroughly researched and beyond extended dispute. Many well respected authorities had been consulted, perhaps lending sufficient credibility so far as the general public was concerned.⁷⁹ A second and more significant point involves the timing of the book’s publication. For slightly more than a year after *The St. Johns* appeared, its unflattering portrait of Zephaniah Kingsley was quickly eclipsed by a purportedly historical, and more standard, interpretation.

When Philip S. May published his essay “Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist (1765-1843)” in the January 1945 issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, it is doubtful that few Floridians within historical circles were surprised.⁸⁰ A Jacksonville lawyer, local history buff, and friend to most if not all authors then living who had researched the legend to some degree, May was first to contribute a published history that focused primarily on Zephaniah Kingsley as a historical subject. In general he offered a brief sketch gleaned almost exclusively from public records coupled with generous excerpts from Kingsley’s own writings. Demonstrating his subject’s “prominent part” in Florida’s past, May highlighted the planter’s roles as slavetrader, master, and racial progressive. As had most before him, May found his subject to be a kind master because the few surviving records then available said nothing to the contrary. As for the slave trade it-

⁷⁹ Lane, *Constructing The St. Johns*,” 327-28.

⁸⁰ Philip S. May, “Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist (1765-1843),” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 23 (January 1945): 145-59. The published version of the essay is quite close in language and structure to the earlier conference paper that May presented in January 1939 entitled “One of the Most Fit and Discreet Men in the Territory.”

self, he ignored its realities, excusing them as Kingsley had as an unfortunate but necessary means to financial independence.⁸¹

A crucial misstep in May's essay would continue to plague studies of Kingsley's slave management down to the present. He never explained, as it were, how the institution of slavery varied and shaped not the environment but the planter's overall goals, needs, and strategies of mastery. Kingsley's supposed benevolence and kindly behaviors toward his slave laborers could not have remained the same across his vast plantation empire. For one thing he was an absentee owner to most of his laborers, leaving others in charge of his large sugar and rice estate at White Oak near the Georgia border, residing at his plantations near Jacksonville at Fort George Island or his San Jose property. The certainty of benevolent treatment could not overcome practical matters of distance and the rhythms of the growing season. The demands of, say, sugar or rice, were quite different from that of growing provisions of domestic work, and so on.⁸² Planting strategies and labor control thus varied considerably with the needs determined by the realities of the master class. Citing Kingsley's proslavery *Treatise* on the point of the master's benevolent treatment of his bondmen, May cleverly linked the proof to such claims contained therein with a discussion of the slaveholder's black mistresses and mixed-race offspring. He simply avoided

⁸¹ Child, "Letter from New-York, 23," in *Balancing Evils Judiciously*, ed. Stowell, 111. See Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007).

⁸² Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake & Low-country* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 27-101; Mart A. Stewart, *'What Nature Suffers to Groe': Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002); S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Jane G. Landers, "Introduction," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 7.

For rice cultivation see William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, reprint 2000). Sugar demands on slaves and strategies are in Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 90-117; Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 46-52; Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba 1760-1860* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976). For East Florida in particular see Lucy B. Wayne, *Sweet Cane: The Architecture of the Sugar Works of East Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

clarifying just how repeated sexual contact between a white master and a select number of his female slaves logically meant Zephaniah Kingsley was a benevolent master generally. Had the author done so at the time, it is quite unlikely that subsequent accounts would have been as eager to embrace Kingsley as anything but a planter informed by West Indies behaviors that he was in actuality.⁸³

More than a century of gross distortions separated the Zephaniah Kingsley of historical fact from the much preferred Kingsley Myth. During that span many of the more subtle and “foreign” elements surrounding Kingsley’s biography not otherwise critical to the overall story had fallen out of usage for quite some time. By the time Philip May came to approach the subject, he seemed to come to understand Kingsley, notwithstanding his “Scottish” birth, as essentially Floridian and American by lengthy residency. Repeat instances throughout his essay note a lack of supporting documentation, which now only serve to highlight a gross misunderstanding of Kingsley’s life and writings found in May’s portrait. Thus, the author can only claim that Zephaniah Kingsley was a “nonconformist” by strictly limiting his comparative lens to a narrowly conceived southern United States during a brief period. May had finally reclaimed the planter as Florida’s own, reflecting the great lengths that the Kingsley Myth had traveled since the slaveholder had been publicly shunned in the same region a hundred years prior.⁸⁴

The high esteem May had for his essay’s subject is beyond dispute. Various examples attest to these sympathies marked by a frequent hyperbole that remain attached to the larger Kings-

⁸³ Trevor Burnard’s excellent treatment of similar issues surrounding Caribbean planter Thomas Thistlewood and his separation of duties as master from those precious few he came to favor is in his *Mastery, Tyranny, & Desire* (2004). Anxieties about “Caribbeanness” and its links to miscegenation in particular were real concerns of many American works in the postslavery period. This was all occurring against the backdrop of U.S. expanding interests in the Caribbean and Latin America. That Kingsley’s story should have been so bothersome at this critical juncture should not come as a surprise. See George B. Handley, *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas: Family Portraits in Black and White* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

⁸⁴ May, “Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist,” 146-50, 155.

ley story. Kingsley's properties, for example, May sees as among the most beautiful and the most prosperous in the region. In slavetrading as well he was among the most successful, shrewd, and humanitarian in his attentive care and the skilled training of his slaves, which readers learned supposedly set him apart from all else. Locals apparently referred to these slaves as "Kingsley's Niggers," which May's choice to do unfortunately helped to perpetuate the idea well into twentieth-century historiography.⁸⁵ Kingsley is seen as the undeserving victim of war for his losses during the Patriot War, a war in which May incorrectly suggested the planter was "unsympathetic" to the Patriots' cause.⁸⁶ But even in what initially seemed like defeat turned out to be "a curious twist of fate that Kingsley's estate was thus enriched through the uprising of the Patriots in which he had a part—more, however, through pressure from his associates than from his own convictions."⁸⁷ May had his own ideas why Kingsley was deservedly thought of as a prominent Floridian. "Kingsley prospered not because of the soundness of his theories," the author beamed, "but because he was one of those rare individuals whose unusual courage, vision, intelligence, adaptability and industry would have made him a leader under any other conditions."⁸⁸

Given that he seemed inclined at one point to abandon the project, it is doubtful Philip May ever envisioned that his brief portrait would both complement and eventually propel the

⁸⁵ John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 187.

⁸⁶ Kevin S. Hooper, *The Early History of Clay County: A Wilderness that Could be Tamed* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2006), 97; Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 246.

⁸⁷ May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist," 152 (quote).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 158. The statement on Kingsley's "adaptability" is not articulated in May's article, particularly with the author's usage of his subject's brief words on his own slaveholding practices. In using Kingsley's own statements from the late 1820s period to stand for the whole of his slaveholding experience, May thereby ignores the various physical locations, labor needs, and adaptive strategies required to become the success that the author claims. This error also allows May to claim benevolence by restricting Kingsley's patriarchal embrace to a limited geographic area and implies more personal oversight (read: benevolence, fatherly compassion) than was actually the case.

Kingsley Myth into sustained scholarly historical recognition for the next five decades. In setting the “standard” interpretation May did so by having what seemed like the final word on the sensitive subject of Kingsley’s relationships with black women for a largely white scholarly audience in 1940s Florida. Borrowing older and familiar concepts to explain Kingsley’s fondness for interracial liaisons, May now suddenly found certainty in his analysis when he placed Anna Madgigine Jai, still locally coined “the dusky favorite,”⁸⁹ in a central role as the planter’s “first wife” in a long line of “lesser wives and their progeny.” The arrangement was supposedly in keeping with “the traditions of the East, where he [Kingsley] spent much of his early life,” May argued. Anna’s racial appearance and royal status provided the core of this polygamous lifestyle. “[I]t is evident that she was not a pure negroid, but probably of mixed Arabian descent,” he told readers. “She was the mother of his favorite children, who were nurtured in luxury and given excellent European educations.”⁹⁰

Although the individual parts of this very argument are by no means unique to his interpretation, it is May’s deliberate linkage of a sexual hierarchy based on race to explaining Kingsley’s benevolent example that has had lasting and unfortunate consequences down to the present. This is made all the more problematic by all but excusing his own admiration for Kingsley as a historical subject. “Though he did great and continuing violence to the conventions of a society more critical than that of the present day,” writes May, “his talents were recognized by four different governmental authorities under whose dominion he lived in Florida.”⁹¹ Here and elsewhere May is hardly convincing, but readers seemed rather content with the author’s palatable

⁸⁹ The term “dusky” was used specifically for the vaguely articulated character of the African princess “Hannah” (the name and identity used in the antislavery pamphlet “The African Daughter”) in Julia B. Dodge’s article of 1877 (if not before) and later used in reference only to the figure of very specific figure of Anna Madgigine Jai. May’s usage reflects the evolution.

⁹⁰ May, “Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist,” 155, 154.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 158.

history and the journal's more scholarly pretenses to let the Kingsley legend undergo any significant modification for the foreseeable future.⁹² Thereafter, the romanticized Kingsley story continued to find wide appeal, even providing fuel for works of fiction in the more immediate years and beyond.⁹³

At this period so little substantive historical evidence remained of Zephaniah Kingsley that there was nothing to say that had not already been exhausted many times over by other writers. May's article had, for all purposes, effectively closed the matter for discussion for quite some time. Exactly twenty-five years passed in this manner before Kingsley was again the primary focus of a scholarly inquiry, though the results yielded nothing new.⁹⁴ In the meantime, Florida newspapers occasionally continued to print curiosity pieces for locals on slow news days. Such tales made for interesting reading and served to attract tourists to the Sunshine State when they were sometimes picked up by papers elsewhere.⁹⁵

⁹² Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1860* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 32-33, 112-113; James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., reprint 1998), 204, 209-10, 223. It was originally published in 1982.

⁹³ For example, Baynard Kendrick, *The Flames of Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948); and Catherine Stewart, *Three Roads to Valhalla* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

⁹⁴ Faye L. Glover's 1970 master's thesis drew on similar themes found almost exclusively in May's article for her curiously titled "Zephaniah Kingsley: Nonconformist, Slave Trader, Patriarch," (MA thesis, Atlanta University, 1970). Nearly all of Glover's sources came from National Park pamphlets and secondary newspaper accounts done in the 1960s otherwise heavily influenced by a combination of local legend and May's essay. These source limitations unfortunately led Glover to badly misread the context of the complex words that Kingsley inhabited. Much like her predecessor, Glover likewise insisted on focusing rather narrowly on the planter's residency at Fort George Island, giving virtually no attention to the width and breadth of her subject's travels. She predictably reasserts May's conclusion that because of Kingsley's benevolence and nonconformist attitude, he was a model slaveholder that righted his past wrongs.

⁹⁵ By no means a comprehensive list, but see F. T. MacFeely, "Whistler's Mother Lost in Attempt to Break a Will," *Schenectady Gazette*, 22 June 1950 (Schenectady, NY); F. T. MacFeely, "Toll Road Leads to History," *The News and Courier*, 7 September 1952 (Charleston, SC); "Fort George Island Steeped in History," *St. Petersburg Times*, 1 May 1955 (St. Petersburg, FL); Laura M. Gradick, "300 Year History of an Island," *Ocala Star-Banner*, 24 July 1955 (Ocala, FL); Dena Snodgrass, "Kingsley: A Man of Ability and Foresight," *The Florida Times-Union*, 27 December 1964 (Jacksonville, FL); "Historians to Visit Drayton Island as Guests of Cole," *Daytona Beach Sunday News-Journal*, 21 May 1967 (Daytona Beach, FL); C. E. Wright, "Manor House in Jacksonville Recalls Slavery," *The New York Times*, 10 November 1968 (New York, NY); William McGuire, "More About Kingsley," *The New York Times*, 24 November 1968; Jack Harper, "What a Way to Go," *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, 19 January

Time eroded some of the sharper edges to the Kingsley Myth, making more of its details susceptible to revision. In the 1978 issue of *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History*, author Jean B. Stephens's short article "Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans" offered a pointed challenge to a persistent issue of slaveholding benevolence in Florida history.⁹⁶ It simultaneously raised serious issues about the meaning of the accepted Kingsley tale and opened a significant door for others to follow by its bold willingness to question popular folklore involving a quintessential character in Florida's past. But doing so was tricky. The Kingsley story, Stephens rightly admitted, "is so laden with folk-history and marvelous tales, that to substantiate the facts of his varied activities and colorful life is a cross-disciplinary adventure in detection."⁹⁷

Stephens disputed several important details about illegal slave importations into Florida in 1827 and Kingsley's alleged involvement. In this tale Kingsley's slave ship was said to have sunk off the coast of Key West, its cargo the subject of international scandal. Folklore suggested that despite being smuggled contrary to U.S. law, under a perverted southern slave system the U.S. Coast Guard (apparently an inept outfit) "could find no one capable of taking care of the

1969; Wilma Spencer, "Historical Society Hears Talk on the Origin of Fort St. George," *Palm Beach Daily News*, 11 January 1970 (Palm Beach, FL); Bert Collier, "Kingsley: Florida's Slavery King," *Lakeland Ledger*, 19 January 1975 (Lakeland, FL).

George A. Kingsley, a descendant then residing in Kansas City, Missouri, told Florida historian Dena Snodgrass that he had heard of May's article but could not get a copy for himself. His ultimate goal was to acquire a royal title as "prince," claimed through Anna Madgigine Jai, which he had not been successful in obtaining from legal authorities. By garnering interest in his family story, he seemed to think it would help plead his case. "I confess that I would not be adverse to publicity in this matter," he told Snodgrass. George A. Kingsley to Dena Snodgrass, 27 July 1965, Box 3, Dena Snodgrass Collection, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

⁹⁶ Jean B. Stephens, "Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans," *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History* 15 (1978): 71-76.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 71. At the time she was writing, an account of Anna Madgigine Jai's as a princess appeared in Madeleine L'Engle, *The Summer of the Great-Grandmother* (New York: HarperOne, reprint 1984). It was originally published in 1974. See also John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (Revised and Enlarged Edition)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 35, 39. It was originally published in 1972.

Africans except Kingsley himself.”⁹⁸ The story had previously served to validate Kingsley’s reputation as benevolent slavemaster, racial progressive, and humanitarian. Contrary to the romantic tale, Stephens demonstrated that Kingsley had nothing to do with the slave ship in the first place, and was one of at least two planters who subsequently rented a small portion of the Africans from the United States Government for a brief period. Benevolence simply had nothing to do with the situation. It made good economic sense for him to use the rented slaves to complete a dangerous but lucrative contract to improve waterway navigation between the St. Marys and St. Johns rivers by deepening and widening channels and canals.⁹⁹ Rather than risk his own property on the venture, the author explained, Kingsley merely took advantage of a financially burdensome problem facing U.S. Marshal Waters Smith, whose oversight of the captured Africans had caused him no uncertain financial distress. Stephens only then hinted what later research confirmed: surviving evidence indicated the planter had acted somewhat dubiously with the rented labor, attempting to manipulate state and federal laws to keep them under his permanent control. She regarded this event as “rather typical” of Kingsley’s folk legend in the sense that it revealed underlying popular understandings and social attitudes. Its popularity came from “the audacity, the irony, the spirit of a frontier society, where folk-heroes are somewhat rascally and certainly daring; rascals who invariably out-wit the forces of settlement and stability which are closing in.” “However,” Stephens concluded, “like much else that has been said and written about Zephaniah Kingsley, the story is a folk-tale and not historical fact.”¹⁰⁰ At last the author had cracked the exterior of the longstanding fictions surrounding the heavily romanticized

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

Kingsley image. This represented a crucial evolution in Kingsley studies and a valuable opportunity to reexamine the planter as a legitimate historical figure.¹⁰¹

Reflecting a longstanding interest in the Fort George Island setting, it was archaeological studies rather than biographical concerns that continued to dominate most Kingsley topics since Dr. Charles H. Fairbanks conducted pioneering research there in 1968.¹⁰² Much of the public discussion seemed satisfied for the moment, apparently content to leave Zephaniah Kingsley limited to a minimal, almost shadowy role insofar as it required explaining the remnants of the island's former plantation world. The general point to be made is that the numerous studies uncovered many aspects first touched on by Fairbanks but did not move beyond minimally discussing Kingsley's life much past what was clearly doctrinal myth.¹⁰³ Several unpublished studies likewise achieved little clarity about the place.¹⁰⁴ Still, thousands of visitors flocked yearly to the Fort George Island plantation, or what had long since been rebranded in Florida parlance as the "Kingsley Plantation." State and local tourism continued unabated, collectively relying on the Kingsley-African princess story. This strategy, intentional or not, thereby conflated the plan-

¹⁰¹ Stephens's article topic was later expanded in Gail Swanson's *Slave Ship Guerrero* (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2005). She included irrefutable historical evidence of Smith's battles with Kingsley to reclaim the Africans. Smith himself was no saint when it came to dealing with people of color in Florida. See Frank Marotti, *Heaven's Soldiers: Free People of Color and the Spanish Legacy in Antebellum Florida* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 28.

¹⁰² Charles H. Fairbanks, "The Kingsley Slave Cabins in Duval County, Florida, 1968," *Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology Papers* 7 (1974): 62-93.

¹⁰³ Karen Jo Walker, "Kingsley and His Slaves: Anthropological Interpretation and Evaluation," (MA Thesis, University of Florida, 1988), which was reprinted unchanged the following year with the same title in *Volumes in Historical Archaeology* 5 (Columbia, SC, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ Stetson Kennedy (attributed), "A Fortified Mansion in Florida," no date, unpublished MS at Kingsley Plantation Office, Jacksonville, Florida; Herschel Shepard, "Kingsley Plantation Structural and Site Improvements, Jacksonville, Florida," 1981, unpublished MS at Kingsley Plantation Office, Jacksonville, Florida; Henry A. Baker, "Roads and Walkways at the Kingsley Plantation, An Archaeological Study," September 1985, unpublished MS at Kingsley Plantation Office, Jacksonville, Florida.

tation site itself with the romantic legend in an ongoing effort to find national appeal for its remote location.¹⁰⁵

Since 1991 the National Park Service (NPS) has operated the Kingsley Plantation on Fort George Island as part of the larger Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, a park in total covering approximately 46,000 acres. It has made a concerted effort to expand knowledge of local history, though has had the unenviable job of doing so amidst the pull of diverse, often irreconcilable needs.¹⁰⁶ Shortly after its acquisition by the NPS one visitor spoke of a guided tour and strange backdrop as conspiring to perpetuate “the lies and rituals of the Kingsley Plantation.” They apparently encountered a bizarre mixture of readily-available printed literature filled with half-truths and glaring falsities, now coupled with a park ranger who promoted the supposed benevolence of the plantation’s namesake and “did not warm to the accusation that Kingsley used his slave women for sex,” said author J. P. White.¹⁰⁷

While the incident was no doubt very publicly embarrassing for the NPS, such attitudes were not universally held by the park. In order to better facilitate the identification and management of resources under its domain, the NPS sponsored research that was conducted by historian Daniel W. Stowell and later published in 1996 as *Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve*:

¹⁰⁵ David L. Butler, “Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification of a Slave-Free Antebellum South,” *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2 (2001): 165; Charles E. Bennett, *Twelve on the River St. Johns* (Jacksonville: University of North Florida Press, 1989), 73-88 (on John McIntosh), 89-113 (on Zephaniah Kingsley); Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 187-88; George E. Buker, *Jacksonville: Riverport-Seaport*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 27-30, 34-35. The works of the late Eugenia Price, such as *Don Juan McQueen* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1974), also continue to draw many visitors to Fort George Island. See Mary Bray Wheeler, *Eugenia Price’s South: A Guide to the People and Places of Her Beloved Region* (Marietta, GA: Longstreet Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁶ Carol Sharon Clark, “Visitor Responses to Interpretation at Kingsley Plantation, Jacksonville, Florida” (MA Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 2006), 4. A more recent version is found in Carol Clark, Pat Stephens Williams, Michael Legg, and Ray Darville, “Visitor Responses to Interpretation at Historic Kingsley Plantation,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 16 (2011): 23-33.

¹⁰⁷ J. P. White, “Christmas at the Plantation,” *North American Review* 278 (November-December 1993): 4-9, 5 (quote).

Historic Resource Study. The report offered the first of two attempts to sketch Kingsley's life and significance apart from accepted fable. It represented a significant, mature departure from the Florida past. Although his study centered on Fort George Island, location of Kingsley's sole surviving plantation, Stowell's research drastically expanded public awareness of Zephaniah Kingsley's remarkable life and times in a historically accurate, though very brief, biographical sketch.¹⁰⁸

Four years later Stowell followed his ecological study with the timely edited collection *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley* (2000). In this important volume he provided the clearest, most up-to-date sketch of Zephaniah Kingsley's rather remarkable life theretofore uncovered. *Balancing Evils Judiciously* contains most of Kingsley's known published works on slavery available to Stowell at the time, some of which were scattered and inaccessible. Additionally, Stowell presented the four editions of Kingsley's controversial pamphlet *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society*, painstakingly tracing the changes to each version, providing careful context and clarification throughout. The result of Stowell's volume represented nothing less than a watershed in mature Kingsley studies.¹⁰⁹

Other efforts were underway as well. Shortly before the NPS began research for its commissioned *Historic Resource Study*, a local newspaper prompted local historian Daniel L. Schafer at the University of North Florida to compose a series of newspaper articles on one of Zephaniah Kingsley's black mistresses, Anna Madgigine Jai. The material eventually resulted in the brief work of 1994 entitled *Anna Kingsley*, which he subsequently expanded three years later. Schafer's thin narrative portrayed Anna as a powerful, independent African woman that tenaciously sought a better life for herself and her children. As a loving partner and mother, Schafer

¹⁰⁸ Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve* (October 1996).

¹⁰⁹ Stowell, ed., *Balancing Evils Judiciously* (2000).

boldly suggested that Anna was of the Wolof in Senegal. That specific identification had no evidentiary basis but did have profound consequences for his approach to his subject and overall conclusions. By itself Anna's identity as Wolof was not otherwise abnormal. Taking selected instances from late twentieth-century West Africa, he claimed that several general features found on one of Kingsley's plantations had similarities. Wolof cultural practices, he argues, dictated her behaviors in East Florida in all matters ranging from architectural styles to spatial living arrangements reflected at the Kingsley Plantation on Fort George Island. In this account Kingsley almost entirely transformed his plantation to conform to what Schafer argues were decidedly Wolof standards and practices. Her "authority and influence" he regards as both "clear" and "considerable," in his words.¹¹⁰ In other areas Schafer followed many aspects of the Kingsley Myth quite closely, including his assertion that the relationship between Zephaniah and Anna was a loving one based on mutual respect, though surviving historical evidence on this point is nonexistent throughout his text. In an effort to consistently assert Anna's "agency," he must otherwise dispense with the nagging historical problem of Kingsley's domineering figure at nearly every turn.¹¹¹

Schafer's expanded some of his findings in 2003 for *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner*, but he left his original conclusions of years past mostly intact. A larger problem is the author's treatment of Anna's fabled royal origins. "Curiously, the 'African princess references may be the most credible of the Anna Kingsley stories," he says, "even though they cannot be conclusively proven."¹¹² Perhaps more curious still

¹¹⁰ Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley* (2003), 56.

¹¹¹ I have been greatly influenced on this subject by Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37 (Fall 2003): 113-24.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, x.

is that Schafer never explains how or why such references are credible at all, often resorting to blatant conjecture, using sources that others have suggested require a great deal of caution, and resorting most frequently to the practice of scant or missing citations.¹¹³ Despite rightly acknowledging in his own words that “[m]ost of the legends were rumors passed down through the decades by uncritical journalists and local historians who seldom checked for accuracy,” he instead seems to have not so much replaced Kingsley legends as much as complicated them at times or simply resurrected older ones.¹¹⁴ Interestingly enough, the very prominent stress of Anna’s royalty does nothing to alter her life in slavery and freedom as Schafer tells it. From her purchase in Havana by Kingsley to her 1870 death, Anna’s royalty brought her no different treatment had by other black mistresses of similarly powerful white men.¹¹⁵ Kingsley never mentioned the idea to anyone who inquired of his controversial relationship. Worse yet her own children failed to even mark her burial plot, and the knowledge of her final resting place lost for many decades.¹¹⁶

It is understandable in the case of his work on Anna Madgigine Jai that Zephaniah Kingsley deliberately remains at best a sideshow figure to Anna’s magnanimous narrative presence. When Kingsley does appear, however, he is the more familiar planter of local legend. Schafer reasserts the older, romanticized idea that Kingsley was a benevolent master by relying on the planter’s own assertions to that end and pointing to the Kingsley’s treatment of a few privileged individuals. For instance, Kingsley’s slaves make no appearance as ever having run away or

¹¹³ Examples are ubiquitous but see Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley* (2003), 124, and Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve*, 76.

¹¹⁴ Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley* (2003), x, 58-61.

¹¹⁵ Laurel A. Clark, “The Rights of a Florida Wife: Slavery, U.S. Expansion, and Married Women’s Property Law,” *Journal of Women’s History* 22 (Winter 2010): 53-54.

¹¹⁶ Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley*, 120-21.

otherwise protested their enslavement. Such instances were long available in Kingsley's published writings and accessible locally at repositories from the Kingsley Plantation to courthouses.¹¹⁷ This is unfortunate for many reasons, as Schafer's works have undoubtedly achieved the widest reception of any Kingsley study to date. His works have, ironically, also provided an incomplete portrait of Zephaniah Kingsley that suffers most from trying to understand his subject within a Florida context. He at once claims to disentangle historical fact from longstanding Florida myth while is simultaneously dependent upon the latter to construct his narrative.¹¹⁸ Naturally, public perception has failed to make any appreciable distinction. The book's overall presentation and highly problematic, conjectural basis give sufficient narrative detail for the casual reader, while its prominent placement for purchase at the Kingsley Plantation's visitor center gives it marked credibility.¹¹⁹

Since his death in September 1843 the Kingsley Myth provided a useful foil for discussions of American slavery and slaveholders generally. In the postbellum South tales of Kingsley's slaveholding benevolence told to unsuspecting journalists came to rely heavily on the romantic courtship with African royalty that evolved into convenient explanations for what much of the nation then regarded as offensive transgressions across the "color line." Since 1998 the Kingsley Plantation has celebrated the Kingsley Heritage Celebration which came to address

¹¹⁷ The archival holdings at the Kingsley Plantation contain abundant communications between repositories and the park related to Zephaniah Kingsley and family. Copies of documents with their dates of reproduction go back several decades that feature the substance of Kingsley's dealings with slaves and other matters that have escaped the pull of the Kingsley Myth.

¹¹⁸ Kirsten E. Wood, "Review of *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner*, by Daniel L. Schafer," *Journal of Southern History* 70 (August 2004): 663.

¹¹⁹ Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Kingsley* (St. Augustine, FL: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1994); idem., *Anna Kingsley: Revised and Expanded Edition* (St. Augustine, FL: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1997); idem., *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley* (2003). See also his "Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove Plantation, 1803-1813," in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Landers, 98-120.

some of the historical needs of the local, state, and national varieties.¹²⁰ In addition, it was a chance to bring together some of the many Kingsley descendants and even later attracted members related to the Rollins family, one time owners of the plantation and its many legends. Two of the event's co-organizers, Manuel Lebrón and his mother Sandra Lebrón, claim direct ties to Zephaniah Kingsley and Anna Madgigine Jai through their youngest son, John Maxwell Kingsley. Hailing from the Dominican Republic these members of the larger Kingsley descendant community shared their positions toward historical memory as it related to the Kingsley story. According to interviews conducted at the plantation in 1998 with anthropologist Antoinette T. Jackson, the Lebróns “stressed the unity of the family and a desire and willingness to personally forget negative aspects of the past and concentrate on establishing positive relationships going forward.”¹²¹ This surprising admission reflects the larger implications stemming from the dominance of the Kingsley Myth itself as well as its crucial “legitimizing” component regarding the question of Anna Madgigine Jai’s royal origins.¹²²

Both aspects have produced a disturbing, uninterrupted metanarrative since the late nineteenth century that has largely avoided dealing with the staggering human costs involved when examining the life and exploits of a wealthy slavetrader, slaveowner, plantation businessman, and proslavery author in proper historical context. On the one hand this overall failure, or at least general unwillingness, to address basic realities of Kingsley’s daily activities may reflect larger issues in which authors Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small argue that a “lack of talk about...slavery” demonstrates a “concerted social forgetting has become an organizing princi-

¹²⁰ Jackson, *Speaking for the Enslaved*, 118-21.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 120-21, 121 (quote).

¹²² See Weller, “The Royal Slave and the Prestige of Origins.”

ple.”¹²³ In the case of the Kingsley Myth, the story’s own flexibility might be used to glorify particular aspects of the past—such as whiteness, elite planter culture, or the romantic plantation setting generally—in accordance with the needs of a particular group or defined community. However, this has been done for the most part at the expense of confronting the experiences of slaves.¹²⁴

A second impediment, on the other hand, is the issue of a prominent romantic love story between an elite slaveowner and a royal slave. As Barry Weller argues, this primary concern with the “prestige of origins” or “the pathos of degraded majesty could dramatize the more pervasive suffering of slaves in general, [but] it could also...rewrite and even displace this suffering.” As evinced throughout its more than 170 year lifespan, the Kingsley story has persistently done the latter. There are of course thorny issues dealing with living descendants who claim ties to the royalty in question, but Weller notes that this larger phenomenon has consequences beyond the group in question. For lineal heirs and others who claim kinship to the idea of a royal slave descendant, he says the idea similarly “offers a fantasy of absolute freedom and power, of operations of the will unconstrained by material limitation or political opposition, or of an escape from the disappointments and betrayals of historical process.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 1; Butler, “Whitewashing Plantations,” 172-74.

¹²⁴ A few important exceptions to this point exist, though have yet to alter the Kingsley Myth. See Stephens, “Zephaniah Kingsley and the Recaptured Africans”; Fountain, “The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley” (1996); Philip Matthew Smith, “Persistent Borderland: Freedom and Citizenship in Territorial Florida,” (PhD Dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2007); Marotti, *Cana Sanctuary* (2012); idem., *Heaven’s Soldiers* (2013).

Ongoing archaeological work at the Kingsley Plantation headed by James M. Davidson is rooted in uncovering the plantation’s slave past. On 10 November 2011, the National Park Service formally announced that Davidson’s team had recently located the slave cemetery when it uncovered some of the graves during its 2010 dig. <http://www.nps.gov/timu/parknews/archaeological-discovery.htm> (accessed 1 December 2011).

¹²⁵ Weller, “The Royal Slave and the Prestige of Origins,” 72, 76.

Nonetheless, as I have suggested in the chapter herein, this claim to privilege and elite status through an African princess heir of legend has been made possible only in awkward partnership with an uncritical acceptance of slaveholding benevolence utterly divorced from its historical context, an imprecise rendering of Kingsley's racial thought and intentions, and a relative silence about (or failure to properly examine) the various contexts of enslavement under Kingsley's long and domineering mastery. Ultimately, the slave experience is not a single story relegated to a select few individuals who shared his bed or supreme confidence; nor is it limited to one island's perspective during a particular phase of his Atlantic journeys. Instead, it is borne of the young and old littered throughout the circum-Atlantic connected by water and land; from small boating vessels to the bowels of a slave ship's hold or from behind a plow mule; in fields growing provisions, tending to Sea Island cotton, or laboring under the cruel, deadly demands of sugar production and its relentless pace. All told the Kingsley Myth is a weighty thing constructed out of bits and pieces of truth, romance, misunderstandings, omissions, and outright lies. It is also an incredibly powerful historical tool wielded it seems by a few at the expense of the many.¹²⁶ Only when we recognize that such romantic fables are built upon fragile and very human foundations will the palatable make way for calculating the costs of such a history.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Such extraordinary explanations continue to the present. A local piece written by a white Kingsley descendant absurdly attempted to demonstrate that Zephaniah never owned Anna Madgine Jai at all, suggesting instead that he married the princess in Africa, concocting the slave story later in order to better protect her legal freedom by then manumitting her under Spanish law in order to make her once again free. The story is an obvious ploy to reinvigorate the Kingsley Myth of "equal" partners. Kathleen Gibbs Johnson Wu, "Manumission of Anna: Another Interpretation," *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History* (2009): 51-68.

¹²⁷ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 214-20; Fountain, "The Ironic Career of Zephaniah Kingsley," 42.

CONCLUSION: LEGACIES

Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation feared the prospect of a world beyond slavery. There was little in the scenario to inspire hope and much to despair. Set in the “whirling and distorted landscape” of the Atlantic world littoral, the nineteenth-century master class confronted the free world armed with no shortage of strategies to retain control against the tide of revolutions and the sweeping changes of modernity in the era of the “second slavery.”¹ Zephaniah Kingsley was certainly part of this class of slaveowners driven primarily by their insatiable thirst for power precisely at a time and place that most threatened to strip them of that precious quality.² Within a relatively short span of time, Kingsley’s own varied approaches ranged from unabashed proslavery arguments to later carrying out a “benevolent” experiment for colonizing free people of color. His attempts to explain the supposed shift were not only negligible but persuaded none beyond himself that he had had a proverbial change of heart. These antics left him isolated.

Reveled by southern slaveholders for his perceived slights of the master class and by transatlantic abolitionists who found little merit in his enduring proslavery visions, Kingsley re-

¹ Daniel B. Rood, “Plantation Technocrats: A Social History of Knowledge in the Slaveholding Atlantic World, 1830-1865,” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2010), 1-17; Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation & Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 23-65; Dale Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 56-71; David L. Lightner, *Slavery and the Commerce Power: How the Struggle Against the Interstate Slave Trade Led to Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 1-15. The quote is from Lydia Maria Child, “Letter from New-York, 23,” in *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley*, ed. Daniel W. Stowell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 115.

² Trevor Burnard, “The Planter Class,” in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, eds. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (New York: Routledge, 2011), 189-90; Gelian Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 135-58; M. J. Steel, “A Philosophy of Fear: The World View of the Jamaican Plantocracy in a Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 27 (1993): 1-20; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 20-27; Gerald Horne, *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 17-31.

mained for some the very picture of distinctiveness. Such a view is possible to maintain but ultimately misguided. According to Steven M. Stowe, in the planter's world "power became cultural authority as individuals persuaded themselves and others that their reality was *the* reality, and if persuasion failed, produced that reality at all costs."³ Kingsley's own story is a testament to such a vision, deluded as it might be. But as Gordon K. Lewis reminds us, "The planter mind lived in a world of self-sustaining myth."⁴ Kingsley's solutions for what he believed to be slavery's imminent demise were, in the end, entirely about his own reality, power, and legacy. More to the point, these were truly Atlantic remedies of a slavemaster whose life and ideals mirrored the Caribbean plantation societies from which they were gathered. Therefore, previous efforts to situate Zephaniah Kingsley squarely within the patterns of antebellum U.S. slaveholders have arrived at the rather unsurprising conclusion that he was a "nonconformist," or in most ways altogether different from the rest.⁵

Discounting the width and breadth of his qualities has heretofore presented a much distorted portrait, though one in which his supposedly unintelligible and "nonconformist" qualities have served posterity very well. In the past it has been possible, fashionable even, to suggest that Kingsley was an utterly unique slaveholder filled with benevolent intent, possessed of a genuine interest in creating an enduring landscape of racial harmony and social cooperation. While it is certainly possible to advance such notions, the weight of evidence does not support these conclu-

³ Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 250.

⁴ Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 2004), 119.

⁵ Philip S. May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist (1765-1843)," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 23 (January 1945): 145-59; Faye L. Glover, "Zephaniah Kingsley: Nonconformist, Slave Trader, Patriarch," (MA Thesis, Atlanta University, 1970); Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 67.

sions. Planters of the Caribbean rimland like Zephaniah Kingsley found themselves as agents of the expansion of slavery into new spaces throughout the Atlantic world backed by new laws, technologies, and systems of dominance. Some retreated from what they regarded as the nightmarish scenarios of particular West Indian locales, settling in neighboring islands or leaving for destinations such as Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States.⁶ Others like Kingsley also found themselves caught up in these moving frontiers and entangled imperial contests. At the margins of antebellum slave society in the American Deep South, those of this peripatetic class driven by power and wealth attempted to create their own visions of plantation worlds to better cement their membership within the Atlantic master class against the very forces that threatened their undoing.⁷

Migration continued to be one of the hallmark qualities of Atlantic slaveholders, and active solutions to the problem of emancipation followed suit, attaining hemispheric heights in an era that circulated such knowledge on a scale greater in extent than any time in human history.⁸ Newspapers, pamphlets, books, and treatises all vied for consumer attention as legitimate reme-

⁶ Laird W. Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33-63; Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "A Second Slavery? The 19th-Century Sugar Revolutions in Cuba and Puerto Rico," in *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*, eds. Stephan Palmié and Francisco Scarano (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 333-45. See Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

⁷ Peter McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 249-70; William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 151, 154; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 178-79; Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁸ Julius Sherrard Scott III, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 1986); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (Second Edition)*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 18-20; Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1-7; James H. Sweet, *Domingo Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

dies for an assortment of social, political, and economic ills.⁹ Those problems stemming from slaveholding and the science of agriculture were particularly apt to the deluge of reform literature that traversed the ocean currents. Slaveholders everywhere in the Atlantic world could and did offer their own ideas for others to follow suit. Improvements suggested by planters in an outpost of the Caribbean, for example, might easily be carried out by a slew of eager readers throughout the circum-Atlantic.¹⁰ Kingsley was absolutely attuned to these exchanges from a lifetime spent crisscrossing this historical space, carefully weighing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the supposedly best and brightest solutions so detrimental to slavery's future. As a master his worldview, historical approach, and ultimate solutions were based on what he regarded as irrefutable proof afforded only by experimentation; and all had distinctly Atlantic mechanisms.¹¹

Thus it is difficult to understand Zephaniah Kingsley as a historical figure or the full weight of his intentions without reference to the larger processes afforded by the fluid backdrop of the Atlantic world in a time of great upheaval. An examination of his path from proslavery author to philanthropic colonizationist to eventual creature of myth suggests that the process was anything but linear. I argue that what Kingsley so publicly extolled as abrupt reversals in his own thinking are in reality indicative of the planter's single, sustained proslavery approach to the

⁹ José C. Moya, "Modernization, Modernity, and the Trans/formation of the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000*, eds. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 191; Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Enrico Dal Lago, "Comparative Slavery," in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, eds. Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 677-78; Jonathan Curry-Machado, "Indispensable Aliens: The Influence of Engineering Migrants in Mid-Nineteenth Century Cuba," (PhD Dissertation, London Metropolitan University, 2003); Rood, "Plantation Technocrats," 129-71.

¹¹ David Watts, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development, Culture and Environmental Change since 1492* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 476-511; Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 202; Woodville K. Marshall, "A 'Valued Pamphlet': Henry James Ross's Rational for Sharecropping in the West Indies," *Slavery & Abolition* 24 (December 2003): 82-111.

problems of race and slavery. Hoping to reform southern slavery, he offered varied means drawn from Atlantic precedents by which to remake the institution along lines that would further entrench power in the hands of the master class. When he failed to convince others to follow his proposed vision of southern slaveholding society, Kingsley struggled mightily to make it a reality nonetheless.¹²

Finding an escape in colonization proved to be an ambiguous solution to the equally ambiguous future that slaveholders had long come to recognize as the spirit of the age. By posturing as the timely architect of a benevolent enterprise to colonize Haiti with former slaves and free people of color, Kingsley was all too willing to appear in philanthropic guise to win favor with other anxious patriarchs and enlightened abolitionists alike.¹³ The problem was in the details, or the lack thereof. He clearly emphasized in very personal terms that *his* so called “colonization experiments” and *his* long terms plans for those individuals involved fit into *his* overall grand vision for Haiti, but what that end might look like for those willing to emigrate never progressed beyond the stages of Kingsley’s own self-interest. If slaveholders, abolitionists, and black emigrants were all somehow convinced of the planter’s benevolent schemes, then more telling are the pitiable results and abandonment of his plantation settlement in Haiti by those most affected. They are loud, demonstrable assertions to the contrary.

It is little wonder that the subject of the conscious weighed so heavily on him in his final days. The Age of Emancipation might be told as a “story marked by increasing loss and privation and by the threat of a looming apocalypse” for Atlantic masters.¹⁴ Another version might

¹² Guterl, *American Mediterranean*, 5.

¹³ Matthew Mason describes international jockeying of the era to be on the right side of an “Atlantic moral consensus.” Mason, “Keeping Up Appearances: The International Politics of Slave trade Abolition in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 66 (October 2009): 832.

¹⁴ Guterl, *American Mediterranean*, 7 (quote).

rightly suggest that the era was defined by more avenues for varied peoples to overcome their past conditions and to determine their own futures.¹⁵ Still another possibility is that Zephaniah Kingsley came to his own moral crux in the thick of these great upheavals hardened by circumstances, weakened by time, sickness, and worry. And so faced with the unbearable weight of his own legacy, he could only turn away.

¹⁵ Demetrius L. Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 178-80; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 246-70; Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 217-27. Accounts of postemancipation societies are in Herbert S. Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 243-71, and George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 85-115.

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The Floridian and Advocate
The Free Enquirer
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Gentleman's Magazine
Island Register
Jacksonville Courier
The Knickerbocker; or New York Monthly Magazine
Lakeland Ledger
Liberator
London Gazette
Milwaukee Daily Sentinel
Morning Oregonian
National Intelligencer
The New-York Spectator
The News and Courier
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