Stretching the Chains: Runaway Slaves in South Carolina and Jamaica

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STRETCHING THE CHAINS:
RUNAWAY SLAVES IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND JAMAICA

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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

by
Jan Williams
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

James Axtell

Judith Ewell

Thaddeus Tate

Approved, August 1991
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is to examine two aspects of runaways under British slavery in the eighteenth century. The first chapter examines runaway slaves in South Carolina from 1740 to 1759. It provides a detailed analysis of the composition of runaway slaves as found in the colony’s only newspaper, the South Carolina Gazette. Factors discussed include the incidence of female runaways, skilled slaves who ran away and the ratio of African to American-born slaves. The chapter reaches conclusions on slave culture, the importance of families and common motives for running away. The chapter also examines certain white attitudes toward their slaves.

The second chapter broadens the scope of the thesis to discuss the Maroons of Jamaica, runaways who fled to the island’s mountains. The development of their communities is traced from the British invasion in 1655, but concentrates in the period from shortly before the Maroon war of the 1730s to the deportation of the Trelawney Town Maroons in 1796. By utilising a combination of primary and secondary sources, the chapter details the evolution of each major group of maroons, their wars against the British, and analyses the British attempts to solve the maroon problem.

The primary conclusions that the thesis draws are concerning the motives of runaways. Despite large numbers of runaways, and the existence in Jamaica of thriving runaway communities, there was no systematic attempt by the slaves to dismantle slavery in this manner. Rather, motives for running away were almost entirely personal.
STRETCHING THE CHAINS:
RUNAWAY SLAVES IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND JAMAICA.
INTRODUCTION

Brian Edwards, an eighteenth-century Jamaican planter and historian, once wrote with marvelous irony of the Maroons in Jamaica that the men cared as little for their wives as whites did for beasts of burden. But it was white slave owners throughout the British colonies who treated their slaves as little more than animals. Slaves were chattels, mere property to the whites who owned them. Slaveowners bought and sold their slaves at auctions, as they did with their cattle. If a slave ran away, the procedure to recover him or her was similar to a missing or stolen horse. Historian Peter Wood titled a chapter on runaways "Slaves Who Stole Themselves," and Billy Smith and Richard Wojtowicz took a similar title for their compilation of Pennsylvania Gazette runaway notices. These slaves who chose to defy their masters stretched the chains of slavery so severely that the whites lived in perpetual fear that the chains would snap completely.

This thesis focuses upon some slaves who chose freedom over subjugation by running away. Open resistance in the form

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of slave insurrections flared up frequently. Yet, the revolts never had the consistency of runaways. As will be seen in South Carolina, an average of fifty runaways were advertised for each year from 1740 to 1759. South Carolina did not suffer one major uprising after November 1740. For a slave acting individually, running away was the most effective form of resistance because it deprived the owner of the slave’s labor. Self-mutilation or suicide achieved the same result, but at much greater cost to the slave. If slaves ran away to gain freedom, freedom meant different things to different fugitives. The following chapters examine the slaves’ motives for running away. Moreover, contained within the historical sources are many aspects of slave life and culture. The first chapter is a detailed examination of the composition of runaway slaves as found in runaway advertisements in South Carolina between 1740 to 1759. A twenty-year sample is a convenient size since it approximately covers one generation of slaves. Children in 1740 were adults in 1759, and young adults had grown old. The chapter discusses who ran away, when and why, as well as aspects of slave culture such as naming processes. The advertisements also reveal many of the whites’ fundamental attitudes toward their slaves. The study has been confined to just one of the mainland colonies because of the unique nature of South Carolina slavery. To examine the similarities and contrasts of runaway advertisements with other colonies, such as Virginia, does much to highlight
different aspects of slave society, but aspects that are predominantly revealing about the whites who wrote the advertisements rather than the fugitive slaves.

The second chapter takes a broad look at the Maroons in Jamaica from the time of the British invasion to the conclusion of the Trelawney Town War in 1795. The word *maroon* is probably derived from the Spanish, *cimarron*, meaning "wild." It was a description that fitted very well with people's perceptions of the strange people in the mountains, white and black alike. Even today, there is deep suspicion of the maroons. In the 1970s, Milton McFarlane heard in a travel agency in the United States an anecdote of how two tourists had strayed into a Maroon area, were captured and then burnt to death by the Maroons. The chapter charts the development of different maroon communities in Jamaica, with their individual political and social systems that ultimately determined how they reacted when the British threatened their freedom. In order to fully understand the nature of Jamaican marronage, the roots of the runaways must be traced to the beginning of the British occupation. However, the bulk of the chapter concentrates on the period from the Maroon War of the 1730s until 1795.

By 1740 in South Carolina, blacks had outnumbered whites

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for more than thirty years.\textsuperscript{3} This prompted a Swiss man, Daniel Dyssli, to exclaim that "Carolina looks more like a negro country than like a country settled by white people."\textsuperscript{4} The African influence remained strong throughout the colonial era. The original settlers of Carolina came not from England, but Barbados where over-population and soil exhaustion sent adventurous entrepreneurs seeking new lands in which to establish plantations. They brought their own slaves from the West Indies. These slaves implanted heavily Africanized Caribbean customs in the colony which never developed elsewhere on the mainland. The climate was particularly conducive to the cultivation of a product unknown to Europeans, but familiar to many Africans -- rice. Thus in many ways, South Carolina more closely resembled a British Caribbean colony than it did her neighbors on the mainland.

Jamaica was Britain's most lucrative colony in the mid-eighteenth century, producing sugar for the European and American markets. Sugar cultivation was labor-intensive agriculture which extracted a heavy toll from the slaves. Work shifts of over twenty hours not unknown during harvest time. Such physical hardship shortened the useful work-life of a slave, and whites relied upon African imports to sustain numbers. The large numbers of slaves meant that they heavily outnumbered whites, a situation exacerbated by the plantation

\textsuperscript{3}Wood, \textit{Black Majority}, 131.

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, 132.
owners who found the climate inhospitable and often chose not to live there. Slave uprisings were more frequent and larger than in South Carolina, and the whites' greatest fear was always that the terrifying maroons would provoke an island-wide insurrection.

South Carolina and Jamaica are comparable because of numerous similarities. South Carolina was widely regarded as essentially Caribbean in nature. It was the only colony on the mainland that had a black majority. Although slaves were essential to colonial economies such as Virginia, South Carolina slaves had similar economic importance to West Indian islands such as Jamaica, Barbados and the Leeward Islands with their vast plantations producing labor-intensive crops. The influence of the original settlers, though waning by 1740, was still seen in the system of slavery as a whole. Moreover, both economies relied upon a single crop for much of their wealth: rice and sugar.

South Carolina and Jamaica had reached similar stages in development by 1740. South Carolina had witnessed a major slave rebellion at Stono in 1739, but had quickly crushed the core of resistance. Peaceful times lay ahead for the whites, during which time the colony was able to consolidate its position as a major producer of rice. Similarly, Jamaica experienced an economic boom once the Maroons concluded peace treaties with the government in 1738. In the 1730s, many in Britain and Jamaica feared that the Maroons would overrun the
island. After the war, confidence returned as did many planters and British investment. South Carolina and Jamaica were both colonies that were well established and relatively stable by 1740.

The basic methods for tracking runaways differed little from one British colony to another. Once a slave was found missing, a party was sent out to apprehend the fugitive. Sometimes tracking dogs went along. If the slave successfully eluded immediate capture and did not return of his own accord, the master could place an advertisement in the local newspaper. Beyond those steps, slave owners had few options unless a fugitive was spotted. Runaway notices in newspapers were more frequent in South Carolina than in Jamaica. The island's newspaper was based in Kingston and was utilized predominantly if the slave was hiding in the capital. Thus many of the runaway advertisements were for skilled or domestic slaves who lived in the city. In South Carolina, however, over three-quarters of the notices in the South Carolina Gazette were for plantation slaves.

Only weak historical links join the slaves advertised for in South Carolina newspapers and Maroons in Jamaica. The origins of the Maroon settlements remain obscure, and there are only shreds of evidence as to what types of slaves joined them. Therefore it is impossible to provide a systematic description of the composition of maroon societies such as runaway advertisements allow. However, a fundamental drawback
with the advertisements is that they do not tell how long the missing slaves remained free and how they eluded capture. An examination of the Maroons of Jamaica answer some of those questions. The Maroons' struggle was one of freedom, and in Jamaica they shaped a society under harsh and adverse conditions. Until nearly 1740, the British were determined to destroy or reenslave the inhabitants, but were ultimately unsuccessful. The runaway advertisements chart the attempts of individual slaves to gain their freedom; the Maroons' story is their collective endeavor to retain their status. Thus examining runaway advertisements and Maroons provides a fuller spectrum of runaways than either would alone.
CHAPTER I

RUNAWAY ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE,
1740-1759

The earliest settlers and visitors to South Carolina drew different conclusions to the nature of the new land. They found a semi-tropical country which initially stirred great excitement. Palm trees, the symbol of paradise, abounded and many settlers felt that the Garden of Eden had existed nearby. The early settlers agreed that oranges could be grown with success. The new colony was 31,000 square miles with a coastline of 190 miles. The main settlement, Charleston, was located on the shore in the south, 235 miles from the colony's westernmost point. The land sloped upwards from sea level to mountains that peaked at 3,500 feet. The heavy rainfall, ranging from an annual average of 41 inches in the driest areas to 70 in the wettest, prompted one royal official to call his post the "pisspot" of the world.¹

Much of the early settlement sprang up on the coast. Islands just off the mainland gave natural defence to the settlers from their Spanish neighbors. The coastal plain,

consisting of salt marshes and savannah, provided excellent fodder for cattle year round, and ranching became one of the important early sources of wealth. Moving inland, a traveller experienced swampy marshland surrounding knots of highland covered in pine trees. Eighty miles inland, large inhospitable sandhills running parallel to the coast provided a natural bar to progress and remained sparsely populated even when settlements sprang up farther west in later years.

The early image of paradise was soon tempered by the hardships of life. Earthquakes rocked the colony, particularly at the end of the seventeenth century. Hurricanes regularly swept through the area; two of the most devastating destroyed large parts of Charleston in the same year, 1752. Along with befalling natural disasters, the European settlers were tragically prone to diseases that flourished in the tropical climate. Immigrant Germans joked that if one wanted to die quickly, one simply had to go to South Carolina. Many early settlers died from dysentery and malaria, and by 1699 yellow fever was common. A terrifying aspect of these maladies was that whites had no idea where they came from. The mosquito was not discovered to carry malaria until much later, and the whites initially contracted yellow fever from their African slaves. Because the Africans with natural immunities to both yellow fever and malaria, survived epidemics without noticeable loss, the Europeans
never made the connection.²

Yet South Carolinians overcame these problems, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the colony was famed for its prosperity. The whites enjoyed the highest per capita income of all the North American mainland colonies. This wealth was based on a succession of different commodities. The early promise of oranges never materialized, and by 1750 ranching was no longer important. The export of deerskins was a vital aspect of the colony's wealth, with exports averaging £36,750 per annum throughout the colonial era. In the early years of the eighteenth century, naval stores, the export of tar and pitch, became the predominant trade for the Carolinas as whole. However, by 1740, naval stores were almost entirely relegated to North Carolina, hence its name the Tarheel state.³

In eighteenth-century South Carolina, rice had quickly eclipsed all other crops. Early settlers had tried to grow rice, but a lack of expertise defeated them. More resistant strains were reintroduced in the 1690s, and after early experimentation, rice became a significant crop in the 1700s.⁴ In the harvest year of 1717, 8,289 barrels of rice were exported. This rose to 44,656 barrels in 1735, 52.4 per cent

²Ibid., 37-40.
³Ibid., 141-44.
⁴Ibid., 145.
of all barrels exported.  

In 1722, 1.16 million acres were under rice cultivation, a figure that had doubled by the 1740s.

Yet the 1740s witnessed a serious slump in rice production. Forty-three million pounds were exported in 1740, but overproduction and the outbreak of King George's War, which disrupted shipping, spread economic gloom over rice planters. The price of rice in Charleston fell by 70 per cent from 1741 to 1746, and in 1749 just 22 million pounds were shipped.

Yet white South Carolinians continued to enjoy considerable affluence in this period. Many planters turned away from rice and cultivated other crops. This in turn stimulated rice culture because overproduction was no longer a problem. Increasingly, former rice planters found that indigo could bring large profits as the British found ready European markets and, because it was not as bulky as rice, indigo growers depended less on a steady supply of shipping. In 1750, 63,000 pounds were shipped to Britain, and this rose to half-a-million ten years later.

The rapid rise in rice production in the eighteenth

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6 Weir, Colonial South Carolina, 145.

7 Ibid., 145046.

8 Ibid.
century stimulated the demand for slaves. By 1708, blacks accounted for half the population. Twelve years later, two-thirds of the population were black, and by 1750, there were 40,000 blacks to only 15,000 whites. The burgeoning number of blacks led to problems in whites' control of their slaves. Peter Wood argued that the blacks developed "a spectrum of responses, ranging from complete submission to total resistance, along which any given individual could be located at a given time." Running away was one of the most visible form of slave resistance, yet only a small minority of slaves ever ran away. Daniel Littlefield calculated that 0.17 percent of the total slave population ran away in the 1740s and 1750s. The law in South Carolina provided harsh punishments for slaves who ran away. A runaway who had been absent for over twenty days could receive forty lashes. A two-time offender would have an "R" branded on the right cheek, and for a third disappearance an ear would be cut off as well as the slave being whipped. Day-to-day resistance was easier and less dangerous. Slaves would work slowly and carelessly. Small acts of sabotage, such as breaking tools,

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9Weir, Colonial South Carolina, 174; David C. Littlefield, Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina (Baton Rouge, La., 1981), 16; Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," Slavery and Abolition, 6:3 (December 1985), 75.


11Littlefield, Rice and Slaves, 160.
were common. For slaves who could speak good English, verbal insolence was an effective and safe method of resistance, for such insolence "allowed slaves a way to assert themselves and downgrade their masters without committing a crime."\textsuperscript{12} Day-to-day covert resistance was an effective manner in which the slaves could undermine the system of slavery.

Occasionally, more open resistance flared up. Slaves could lose patience with overseers or masters and physically attack them but such action usually resulted in the rebel's execution. In 1742 the \textit{South Carolina Gazette} reported the trial, sentencing, and execution of a slave "for attempting to murder a white lad."\textsuperscript{13} Attacks upon whites were usually more subtle, including the use of poison. Europeans recognized Africans' knowledge of the strange plants native to South Carolina, and although slaves used them for medicinal purposes, blacks also poisoned their owners. This practice was common enough that the South Carolina Slave Code of 1740 made the crime a felony. The code also made it illegal to pass on knowledge of plants or for slave "doctors" to administer medicine. The punishment for the second crime was fifty lashes with a whip, the highest number of lashes permitted in the colony's history. The tougher stance had only a limited effect as reports of poisoning continued. In St. George's Parish, five or six people reportedly died from

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 287.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 286.
poisoning in 1751, and forty or fifty more suffered attempts on their lives. That year, the colony's legislature raised the sentencing of a slave found guilty of administering poison to death. However, reports of slaves poisoning whites persisted throughout the colonial era.\textsuperscript{14}

Slaves did not limit their resistance to killing whites. Arson was another widespread practice that was also made a felony in the 1740 Slave Code. As with cases of poison, it was difficult to determine the true culprits of fires, yet Wood observes that more barns burned between October and January when the slaves cleaned and barreled rice than at other times of the year. The years 1732, 1738 and 1742 all reported more cases of barn burning than usual. Occasionally a slave would set fire to a building to divert attention from his running away. If the burning of barns caused economic hardship for planters, fires in Charleston caused whites the greatest concern. In 1740, a fire in the center of town burned out of control for six hours. Although the guilty party was never found, suspicions rested heavily with slaves. The fire destroyed three hundred houses and new fortifications and damaged £250,000 worth of property. The following July, a slave couple was caught trying to start a fire. The man, Boatswain, was burned at the stake.\textsuperscript{15}

Possibly the most terrifying form of slave resistance for

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 289-91.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 293-97.
the whites was open revolt. As in Jamaica, whites feared major slave uprisings throughout the eighteenth century. South Carolina had not yet suffered from large scale slave revolts, but the unease of the whites escalated as they read accounts in the *South Carolina Gazette* of the Maroon War in Jamaica in the final years of the 1730s. These articles added to the general tension of whites in a colony where blacks heavily outnumbered them. On October 11, 1735, a dispatch ran in the paper stating that Jamaica was "as bad there with the rebellious negroes as ever, being there runs every Day over to them three for every one that is taken."\(^\text{16}\) Toward the end of 1740, the year following the Maroon War peace treaties, South Carolinians faced their own revolt, the Stono Rebellion. The number of rebellious slaves was small and the uprising never approached the scale of Jamaican slave rebellions, but the symbol of overt armed resistance terrified the colony's white population.

The white reaction to the Stono Rebellion was harsh. Whites had always felt that African slaves were more likely to revolt than were American-born blacks, and large importation of African slaves during the 1730s had brought the colony's slave population to 39,000 by 1740, about half of whom were Africans who had been in the colony less than ten years. A virtual embargo on the slave trade was enacted over the next decade, and the slave population was able to reproduce

\(^{16}\text{Ibid., 223.}\)
naturally, although their numbers did not increase significantly.\textsuperscript{17}

White Carolinians not only nullified the threat from new Africans, but worked to change existing conditions. The Slave Code passed in 1740 addressed more fundamental issues than simply poisoning and arson by slaves. The Code primarily encouraged whites to treat their slaves better. Masters had to provide adequate food and clothing, allot Sunday as a rest day, and cut the maximum work day to fifteen hours. Simultaneously, the Code enforced stronger discipline with a series of measures, including allowing owners to inflict punishments on their own runaways.

Peter Wood argued that the Stono Rebellion had far-reaching effects in the royal colony. "The new social equilibrium which emerged in the generation before the Revolution," he contended, "was based upon a heightened degree of white repression and a reduced amount of black autonomy."\textsuperscript{18} The social equilibrium that developed during the 1740s and 1750s left blacks with fewer openings for resistance. Slave revolt became almost too dangerous and was unlikely to succeed. The only option remaining to many slaves was to run away. Thus, after the Stono rebellion, the number of runaway advertisements appearing in the South Carolina Gazette grew steadily.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, 302.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, 306.
Runaway advertisements are unrivalled as an objective historical source on slavery. For a subscriber to place false or misleading information in an ad only hindered the chances of recovery. The ad had to be informative enough to allow a stranger to recognize the slave. However, the South Carolina Gazette was not in print continuously through the eighteenth century, including a nine-month stretch after October 1757. Moreover, Wood pointed out that runaway advertisements were the "tip of an ill-defined iceberg." Most slaves were either caught or returned on their own initiative, so newspapers tended to be the last resort for whites. Not only would the subscriber have to pay the cost of the ad but also of an informer, the warden of the jail, and transport to return the slave. Thus it was only profitable to advertise for valuable slaves.

In the twenty years between 1740-1759, whites placed 595 runaway advertisements in the South Carolina Gazette, a low of 11 in 1742, a high of 46 in 1756. In all, the advertisements document 838 slaves. Only the slaves who were advertised for have been counted. For example, on April 16, 1754, Charles Fauchereaud advertised for his mulatto John Couture. Fauchereaud added in
efficient way to recover their property. Even owners who knew of their slave's whereabouts in the area sometimes advertised. Both Kate in 1745 and Abigail in 1751 had "been seen up the path," Kate on a neighboring plantation.²³

Peter Wood found that, without an overabundance of advertisements for skilled slaves, the composition of advertisements in the 1730s formed "a representative sample of field hands with no single distinguishing attribute."²⁴ This pattern continued for the next two decades. The size of the average slave holdings in South Carolina could cause problems for owners attempting to describe field hands because sheer numbers occasionally made it difficult for a master to remember the slave's most distinguishing features. Daniel Legare wrote that London was "remarkable for having but 3 toes on one foot," but could only hazard a guess as to which foot.²⁵

The advertisements followed certain formulas. A fully detailed advertisement contained, generally in the following order: when the slave ran away, complexion, sex, name, height, age, physical defects, name of any previous owner, and description of dress. Finally the advertisement stated the

a postscript that he may have gone with another black. Only Couture was counted in the sample.

²³SCG September 23, 1745 and March 11, 1751.
²⁵SCG, August 18, 1758
slave's suspected destination and other relevant details, such as if the slave had been spotted.

Physical appearance could be the fullest and most significant detail. James Parsons gave a vivid description of March, calling him "a very hairy, short, thick, chubby negro fellow." When March ran away again in 1759 and 1762, his owner failed to be quite so eloquent, satisfying himself with simply describing March as "hairy" or "chubby." White owners generally had a good idea of physical blemishes of a new African slave recently purchased. Pamok's slave, who was unnamed, "had a bump like a kernel between the skin and the ribs on one side." Another betraying physical feature of Africans was tribal marks. Twenty-four of the 111 fugitive African slaves had "country" marks. Often the advertisement gave no more details. Planter James Conyers, however, was able to write that Manso was "mark'd on the forehead with a cross, and three perpendicular strokes on each cheek." Manso also had "the mark of a large cut on his back, as if done with a cutlass."

An advertisement contained facets of a slave's daily life if it helped people identify the runaway. Field hands were generally not specifically described as such, but many of the

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26 SCG, July 11, 1754.

27 Ibid.

28 SCG., October 23, 1751.

29 Ibid.
Charleston slaves sold food or other services in town. Bacchus "used to go about selling Greens, Fruits, &c."30 When Stephen Hartley first advertised for Kate in 1750, he suspected that she was working in a kitchen or cook-house.31

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the differences between town and plantation slaves was firmly set. However, in the first half of the eighteenth century, blacks in South Carolina, Wood wrote, "were more unified by the common ground of Old World ancestry and recent migration than they were set apart by contrasting routines."32 Plantation slaves often had tasks in Charleston, and urban slaves were often employed on the plantations during planting and harvest times. Only 135 advertisements specified whether the slave lived in Charleston or on a plantation. Of these, plantation slaves outnumbered town slaves by more than three-to-one.

Despite a routine that allowed limited travel, most slaves never left their home colony. Yet some of the most difficult slaves to track down were those who had travelled. Quatee, a thirty-seven-year-old-slave, had lived in Barbados and Rhode Island until he was taken to Savannah, Georgia in the spring of 1754 by Patrick Mackay. By summer he had ran away in a two-masted ship. Mackay, assuming that Quatee would to attempt to board a vessel in Charleston and leave the

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30 SCG, June 11, 1744.
31 SCG, May 21, 1750.
32 Wood, Black Majority, 104.
colony, placed an ad in the *South Carolina Gazette*.\(^{33}\) But Quatee's extensive travels were very much the exception in mid-eighteenth-century slave life.

Even under the domination of white masters, slaves were able to retain facets of their African heritage and to amalgamate them into their daily existence. The runaway ads exemplify many ways in which the slaves were able to achieve this amalgamation. Slaves relied on medical care from fellow slaves. Two slaves who pretended to be doctors ran away in the 1740s, and one of them, an African, may have been a tribal healer in Africa before his capture.\(^{34}\)

An important part of slaves' African heritage in the largest slaveholding areas was the naming process. To Africans, "their name had considerable social significance or reflected unique personal circumstances."\(^{35}\) Some West African names were common to many tribes, although there were discrepancies. Among the Hausa-speaking tribes, Sambo meant second son; in Vai, it signified an idiot.\(^{36}\) In South Carolina, some slaves were able to retain their African names well into the 1750s. The most frequent practice was to name the child after the day of the week he or she was born. Cudjoe and Cuffee (Monday and Friday respectively) remained

\(^{33}\) *SCG*, July 25, 1754.

\(^{34}\) *SCG*, October 2, 1749.


among the most popular African-derived names. There are 575 different male names in the sample, including 13 Cuffee’s and 10 Cudjoe’s. A single Quaco is the only other male name that represented a day of the week.\textsuperscript{37}

Not all slaves chose to give their children African names. The most popular names were ordinary English names. Eighteen Toms and Wills ran away, and by far the most common name was Jack with thirty-five. ‘Very few took upper-class English names. There was only two Charles’ and one William — though Will was the third most common name. Slaves also named their children after biblical characters (Daniel and Cain) and often classical figures; Caesar was the second most popular name. British towns was another common source of names, with London prominent among them.

Women’s names followed a similar format. Of the 178 different names, English names such as Maria and Molly were the most common.\textsuperscript{38} African names tended to follow the days of the week, and once again the name for Friday, Phibe, proved the most popular. Phibe was the second most common name of the sample, although the name became anglicized over time to Phebe or Phoebe.

British slave owners may also have been instrumental in

\textsuperscript{37}There were three Quemina’s that could have related to Quame meaning Saturday, a Quash which probably was a derivative of Quashee (Sunday), and the widely travelled Quatee may also have actually been named Quashee.

\textsuperscript{38}There were ten Marias, eight Mollys and seven called Phyllis.
naming their slaves. When slave's first arrived from Africa, they had to be given English names so the whites could more easily identify them. English names such as London were popular enough to be used by slaves, yet a white influence on naming explains the presence of rare names such as Bristol, Glasgow, and Aberdeen and suggests that whites may have had a role in naming such slaves. Moreover, slave names became increasingly anglicized as time went on and fewer Africans arrived in the colony. Cudjoe became less common and was shortened to Joe. Jamie may have replaced Jemmy, and Sam, a shortening of Sambo, also conformed to English-speaking patterns.39 English-speaking masters may have simply made mistakes in transcribing African names. The divergences of spelling of names such as Cudjoe and Cuffee suggests that there were no fixed rules for spelling unfamiliar names.40

Once Africans were named or children grew old or strong enough to work, they faced a physically demanding workload. Many of the runaways had physical disabilities, the result of birth defects (possibly from their mothers continuing work until shortly before labor), accidents, or mistreatment at the

39Sam may also have been a shortened name for Sampson. Some of the slaves may have been named Sambo, but answered to Sam, which was the important fact in a runaway ad.

40The arrival of Africans and births were not the only occasion for masters to give out names. In the nineteenth century, a new master of William Brown changed his name because the master’s nephew was a William. William W. Brown, "Narrative of a Fugitive Slave: Written by Himself," in John Cobb ed. Four Fugitive Slave Narratives (Reading, Ma, 1969), 13.
hands of whites. Pompey was born with "six toes on one foot" and had a scar from a whip saw on his knee. An African from Gambia, so new in the colony that he did not even have a name, was shackled about his legs when he ran away. In addition, his owner Rawlins Londes wrote in the ad that the black "has a large broad scar behind one of his shoulders occasioned by fire when he was young and a scar on his throat that has raised his flesh." Possibly the most remarkable of the South Carolina runaways was Cuffee. He made off with his "three Legs, one of Wood." The determination that the runaway slaves required to overcome physical disabilities and hindrances such as false limbs and metal shackles highlights the resentment that bondage caused in slaves.

Women were not spared harsh physical treatment from whites any more than men were. The whip, the easiest way to keep discipline among the slaves, was liberally used on women. People could identify Maria not only by the mole under her right eye her master said, but also by a large scar from a whip in the pole of the neck. Whites did not confess in

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41 SCG, August 10, 1752.

42 SCG, June 9, 1757.

43 SCG, April 1, 1745. Possibly the one of the most extraordinary runaways did not run off in South Carolina, but Pennsylvania. On September 8, 1759, in Queen Ann’s County, Pennsylvania, Caesar absconded. Caesar, according to his mistress Sarah Massey, "has both his legs cut off, and walks on his knees." Pennsylvania Gazette, September 10, 1759.

44 SCG, February 9, 1747.
the ads if the threat of punishment or whipping was the cause of running away. But physical abuse that could leave blacks scarred for life undoubtedly instilled fear in the slaves.45

Not only did newly arrived Africans have to face a system enforced by a whip, they also had to contend with a totally alien culture. Although the Middle Passage had exposed Africans to the white men who spoke a strange tongue, the captives were kept below decks with people who only knew an African language. Once the new slaves completed their journey into slavery, they were confronted with Afro-Americans who only spoke English. Many new slaves had difficulty in mastering anything but the most rudimentary forms of English. Yet even American-born slaves were not fluent in English. Eighty-seven of the advertisements commented on the slaves' ability to speak English; sixteen of the slaves were described in terms of "poor", "broken" or "little" English. Only four runaway ads stated that slaves could not speak any English at all. This does not mean that all the others spoke English. Whites assumed that by calling an African "new," others would know that the runaway would not speak English. Overwhelmingly in South Carolina, the slaves could speak "tolerable" or good English. Sixty-seven of the eighty-seven (77 per cent) were

45In the nineteenth century, Josiah Henson related in his fugitive slave narrative that one of his first experiences with the brutality of slavery was when his father spent the night lurking in the woods to avoid punishment after fighting with the white overseer. Josiah Henson, "An Autobiography of the Reverend Josiah Henson ('Uncle Tom') from 1789 to 1881," in John Cobb ed. Four Fugitive Slave Narratives, 14.
described as such, and this percentage became higher in later years. From 1753 to 1759, only two runaways spoke "poor" English, whereas twenty-nine blacks were fluent. As creoles became more numerous in the eighteenth century, the slaves' ability to speak continues to shift toward fluency.

Runaway slaves could use their mastery of the language to good effect. When Andrew and Moll ran away from their plantation in late 1751, Andrew could speak "but indifferent English." Moll, however, spoke very good English, and, the ad ran, "has a most artful knack of framing and delivering a story, insomuch that she may easily be mistaken for a strictly religious and very upright creature." Some slaves were not only fluent English-speakers but multi-lingual. Cooper Joe's wife could speak good English, Chickasaw, and possibly French, "the Chickesaws having taken her from the French settlements on the Mississippi." Michael Johnson argued that field hands at the turn of the nineteenth century had "few chances to develop confidence in their ability to manipulate the expectations of whites through the use of language." But even by mid-eighteenth century, good English not only helped runaways deceive whites, but enriched a slave culture that was passed on orally.

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46 SCG, November 8, 1751.
47 SCG, September 22, 1746.
Poor English could act as a hindrance to runaways. Had someone stopped the fugitive pair Paul and Isaac, they would have found that the African Isaac could only speak indifferent English, and Barbadian-born Paul stammered.\textsuperscript{49} In his far larger sample of runaway advertisements from throughout the century, Daniel Meades found many slaves who stuttered.\textsuperscript{50} In the twenty years after 1740, only nine of the advertisements state that the slaves stuttered, which represents just over one per cent. This phenomenon may have become more marked later in the century, as three of the nine were advertised in 1758 and 1759 alone. Meades argued that large numbers of stutterers was indicative of a system based in part on terrorizing the slaves and inducing a psychological fear of whites.\textsuperscript{51}

One way for slaves to combat the fear that whites instilled in them was to flee. An important consideration for a fugitive was always when to run away. The busiest times of the year on plantations were at planting and harvesting. The extra workload at those times often forced slaves to run away. On the other hand, the more idle times of year may have led to a less vigorous pursuit of fugitive slaves until they were needed for busier times.

\textsuperscript{49}SCG, August 10, 1752.

\textsuperscript{50}Meades, "South Carolina Fugitives ," \emph{Journal of Negro History}, 60:2 (April 1975), 311.

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid.
Table 1
When Slaves Ran Away, 1740-1759.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
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<td>18</td>
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</table>

The runaway ads do not bear out either hypothesis. Advertisements for 197 runaways provided details on when the slaves left (see Table 1); 106 took off in the summer months of May through September. However, South Carolina’s winters were mild enough to allow more slaves to leave in December and January than in April. Twenty-seven slaves left in June, twenty-four in July. Although slaves preferred to run away during the summer, the differential between most months is too narrow to draw firmer conclusions. When slaves ran away was not particularly influenced by the time of year, but probably by more personal and immediate reasons, such as avoiding punishment.

At any stage of the year, male slaves consistently made up the large majority of runaway slaves. Of the 838 slaves advertised for in the sample, 641 (76.5 per cent) were male. This is a similar ratio to the 1730s, when 77 per cent of the runaways were male.\(^{52}\) This ratio does not necessarily represent all runaways. Male slaves were consistently more valuable than females as long as whites could supplement numbers through the slave trade, and whites primarily

advertised for their males. The ratios from year to year varied widely. In 1753, 20 of the 52 slaves, or 38.5 per cent of the runaways, were female. Four years later just seven of the 55 (12.7 per cent) slaves advertised were female.53

One important reason male runaways outnumbered females was the hold of children upon the women. Taking young children along would have been a hindrance and increased the chances of early capture. However, nearly a quarter of the women slaves, twenty-four in all, took the risk by carrying children with them. So great was the desire for freedom, either from a particular master or from slavery itself, that it outweighed the risks involved. Women in the later stages of pregnancy also absconded, possibly as an attempt to allow their child to pass as free. Stephen Hartley’s Kate was seven months pregnant, and when Rinah ran away in August 1748 she was "very big with child."54 The heart-wrenching decisions that women who left with their offspring must have made reveals the importance of family to the slaves.

Over half of the women whose ages are given in the advertisements were of prime child-rearing age. Twenty of the thirty-six were between fifteen and twenty-four years old.

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53This omits the years 1742 and 1744. There were just 11 advertisements in 1742 for 18 slaves, 17 of whom were male. Similarly two years later, 15 advertisements mentioned 16 slaves and two were women.

54SCG, August 15, 1748.
Table 3
Ages of Runaway Slaves, 1740-1759.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>0-15</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-35</th>
<th>0-36</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is reflected in the general pattern of slaves as a whole: 44.3 per cent of runaways were in that age group. The most common ages for both men and women were between thirty and thirty-five (25.9 per cent, see Table 2). Under one-eighth of the runaways were over thirty-five, and only very rarely did slaves run away when they were older than forty. Slaves who were fit and young were better able to survive fugitive life.

Another important minority in the sample of runaways was mulattoes, or slaves with mixed Afro-European blood. Mulattoes held a curious position in slave society. While being favored by the whites as privileged among slaves, they were rarely allowed into white society. Black slaves also rejected them for their link to whites. Fewer than one per cent of the runaway slaves were mulattoes in South Carolina. Social advancement, even by accident of birth, was one form of slave control that whites employed. With blacks outnumbering Europeans, whites had to rely on rigorous forms of control, which encouraged slave owners to allow mulattoes to exploit their racially privileged position. Yet mulattoes could also weaken the slave system by providing a link from the slave

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55 Gad Heuman's book on mulattoes in Jamaica is titled *Neither Black nor White*. 
world to the white. As runaways, mulattoes often attempted to pass as free. Blacks tried the same tactic, but for John Couture, who was almost white, it must have been far easier.  

If sexual contact between whites and blacks was limited in South Carolina, interracial sex between blacks and Indians was high. Forty-three of the runaways were mustees, South Carolina's term for people of mixed Indian and African ancestry. The number of mustee runaways ranged from one to five each year. In 1743, 18.5 per cent of runaways were mustees, a proportion that was never repeated. However much whites desired to keep the slaves isolated among their own race, they could not prevent interaction with other racial groups. Children with lighter colored skin were the most visible result of such contact.

If slaves of mixed blood weakened the slave system by proving that forbidden liberties took place, Africans always posed a greater security threat. In the South Carolina sample, Africans made up 13.2 per cent of the runaways. The numbers ranged from a single African slave advertised for in 1750 to seventeen in 1754. As with mustee slaves, the yearly total remained fairly consistent throughout the two decades.

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56 SCG, April 16, 1754.

57 No mustee runaways were reported for four years -- 1740, 1741, 1742, and 1751. In the early years, whites may have felt that distinguishing a slave as a mustee was not essential.
Whites placed most advertisements for Africans between 1755 and 1759, but only 16.6 per cent of the advertisements were for Africans. The years 1740-1744 boasted a higher percentage of advertisements for Africans, falling just short of 20 per cent. The majority of imported slaves were male, and this was reflected in the ads, with very few African women advertised for.

For Africans themselves, running away was more hazardous than for American-born slaves. Displaced from his home society and reduced to social impotence in America, an African's initial reaction was often to flee. But if a slave had only recently arrived in the New World, he had no one to aid him. Moreover, the language barrier would immediately betray him. In July 1751, John Pamok advertised for a "new negro man [who] has lost several of his teeth" and he could not "speak one word of English." Owners were often able to describe recently purchased slave with considerable accuracy, because they had just examined them closely at the sale. With whites able to provide such detail, African slaves had little chance to remain free.

Yet some did. Abraham Swadler placed an ad in September 1752 for three Angola men who had absconded in May 1751. The ad does not say how long the slaves had been in the country, nor how old they were. Therefore, it is possible that they had lived in the colony for many years, which would ease the

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58 SCG, July 29, 1751
problems of fleeing. Running away in groups was a common way for Africans to overcome the problems of being thrust into a new environment. Friends or extended family from the Middle Passage often provided the only link to home. In March 1753, four Gambia blacks ran away from Daniel Heyward. The following September, a fifth Gambian ran away, presumably to join them. They still had not returned when Heyward placed his ad in January 1754. Despite overwhelming odds against them, many Africans persisted in running away. The time lag between a slave's running away and an ad's appearing in the paper meant that a fair number of slaves returned or were captured. This proportion could only have been higher for Africans who faced the additional problems. Yet the high number of advertisements for Africans gives some clue as to how frequently new slaves ran away.

Over the three decades from 1730, the nature of African slavery gradually changed. In the 1730s, the Ibo Africans were the most prominent tribe. Over the next twenty years, they accounted for just ten per cent of the runaways. Almost a third of the runaways were Angolans, yet they too were less common by the late 1750s as the African slave population

59 SCG, September 19, 1752.
60 SCG., January 15, 1754.
61 Wood, Black Majority, 250.
became more diversified. No Guinea slaves ran away in the 1740s, yet seven did in the 1750s. Gambians were always in a minority until 1755-1759, when eleven ran away — ten per cent of the African fugitives. In his survey of South Carolina’s runaway slaves, Daniel Littlefield confirms the preponderance of Angolans in the 1740s, who accounted for 31.2 per cent of the total. Similarly, 14.1 per cent of the runaways in the 1750s were Gambian. Coromantee slaves, the hard-working but rebellious blacks that formed the core of early Maroon groups in Jamaica, did not reach South Carolina in high numbers, and only one ran away in twenty years. By the late 1750s, there were slaves from numerous regions, as opposed to the Angolan, Ibo, and Gambian mix of tribes in the 1740s, as slave traders delved deeper into Africa.

The life of a fugitive was easier for skilled slaves than for new Africans. Skilled runaways were able to sell their skills to other whites, and could often say that their masters were following the common practice of hiring skilled slaves out. Cuffee was a ship carpenter who had spent the few years

62Wood notes that Angolans were becoming the most common import towards the end of the 1730s. Wood, Black Majority, 302.

63Littlefield, Rice and Slaves, 118. In comparing his figures to Philip Curtin’s import figures, Littlefield found that Gambian and Angolan runaways ran away in equal numbers to their proportion of the total population. Yet throughout the colonial era, Ibos and Calabers made up just 3.7% of the African imports, and 15.6% of the African runaways.
before running away "working on men-o'—wars in Charleston." Some slaves even pretended to have a skill to facilitate their escape. Skilled slaves occasionally pretended to have another trade to avoid detection. Although owners were likely to advertise for a valuable skilled slave, in South Carolina skilled slaves accounted for just 5.3 per cent of the sample. The harsh conditions of slavery in South Carolina may have led to more field hand runaways, or a relative scarcity of skilled slaves may have ensured their good treatment and greater independence to discourage them from leaving. Carpenters and coopers were the most common skilled runaways in South Carolina -- making up 71.1 per cent. Shoemakers and sawyers accounted for 8.8 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively. Building materials slowly changed over the period, with three bricklayers running away in the 1750s after there were none in the previous ten years.

Frequently, slaves faced the perils of running away more bravely if they had company. One-hundred-thirty-one slaves had companions; the great majority went with just one person. Yet plantation slaves also found solace in large numbers. Eleven slaves ran away from Zacariah Villepontoux in November 1745.\(^65\) When ten blacks ran away from William Smith thirteen years later, they had no intentions of returning because they

\(^{64}\text{SCG, June 16, 1746.}\)

\(^{65}\text{SCG, November 18, 1745.}\)
left "with all their cloaths, blankets, pots, &c." Usually owners were unable to provide substantial motives for groups leaving. Whole families frequently took off together; owner William Duke must have greatly antagonized his slaves because a group of four, a family of five, and a woman with three children all left during a five-day period.

Slaves often ran away to join family. Nearly forty percent of the South Carolina sample had belonged to previous owners. Sometimes the owner sold slaves, but more commonly they were sold upon his death and families were split up. Spouses who were separated often ran away to be together. On April 10, 1749, the Gazette ran ads side by side searching for Lucy and Martel, man and wife who had lately belonged to Mrs. Shepeard. Often husband and wife left from the plantation. The lengths to which slaves would go to be with family was often exasperating for whites. John Allen, advertising in April 1749 for Topsham, announced that the boy was with his parents, who were also fugitives at the same time. Thirty-nine advertisements specifically mentioned that a slave had family.

For less family-oriented slaves, a tempting and dangerous objective for slaves was Spanish Florida, which harbored

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66 SCG, October 6, 1758.
67 SCG, June 25, 1750.
68 SCG, November 27, 1755.
69 SCG, April 10, 1749.
British slaves. The population of St. Augustine, the largest of such settlements, rose from 1,500 in 1730 to 3,000 in 1763. The first English slave runaway reached the town in 1687, yet fugitive slaves were given an added incentive to head south in 1738. Fugitive slaves arriving in the 1720s were often resold into Spanish slavery. This caused debate within Florida as to both the moral ramifications and the practical results of such a policy. The British, upon learning of fugitives' arrival in Florida, often requested their return. Failure to comply with the request strained what was, at best, a tense relationship. The problem was finally solved in 1738 when the governor of Florida proclaimed the blacks free and established their own settlement, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, just north of St. Augustine.

Mose not only gave refuge to the slaves, but acted "as a buffer against foreign encroachment." The ex-slaves could be relied on to fight the British who wished to reenslave them. Indeed, during the War of Jenkins' Ear, the Mose militia helped the Spanish fortify defences and provided vital intelligence reports. Once the British had launched a major offensive against the Spanish and captured Mose, the free

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70 Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," American Historical Review, 95 (Feb 1990), 10. The population of Fort Mose remained at about 100 people between 1738 and 1763.

71 Ibid., 14-17.

72 Ibid., 13.
blacks were instrumental in recapturing their town. "The success at Mose," Landers commented, "was one of the few enjoyed by the Spanish." 73

The free community thrived at the conclusion of the war. Forced to leave their destroyed town for St. Augustine until 1752, the blacks found Spanish views on extended families highly compatible with their own. There was considerable contact, especially through marriage, of free blacks and slaves. However, the free blacks' experience of British slavery and a common African heritage allowed them to form strong communities as the Maroons of Jamaica did. 74

Yet the free blacks suffered problems from the move to St. Augustine and under Spanish rule. Although they were legally free under Spanish law, racism existed among the Spanish. This racism, coupled with growing resentment at the growing economic competition the free blacks provided, led to the rebuilding of Mose. The ex-slaves protested that their "complete liberty" was violated, but to little effect. The result of the move was to isolate the community from the Spanish. 75

A significant difficulty Mose faced was endemic to most runaway communities. Since most runaway slaves were male, runaway societies throughout the New World tended to reflect

73 Ibid., 18-20.
74 Ibid., 23-25,
75 Ibid., 26.
the imbalance. In the initial years of Maroon communities in Jamaica, there was always a shortage of women. In the only census of Mose carried out in 1759, males outnumbered females two-to-one. Almost half the households consisted solely of males. In a community that rarely rose above 100 people, such imbalances threatened its survival.\footnote{Ibid., 27.}

Yet, as in the 1730s, only a minority tried to leave the province and most simply went "underground."\footnote{Wood, \textit{Black Majority}, 263.} The dangers of slaves traversing such great distances were often insurmountable. Moreover, most slaves headed for areas with which they were familiar, but running south would have been into the unknown. Landers notes that a majority of the Mose inhabitants were West African, and, because fewer numbers of Africans arrived in the colony, smaller numbers were likely to flee. Possibly the most important reason was a reluctance to leave behind family. Many of the fugitives escaped because they wanted to be with loved ones. If they went to Florida, they would never be able to return to the British colonies. It was a sacrifice that most slaves must have been unwilling to take.

Slaves who stayed in the province knew most of the ways their masters used to find them, and consequently disguised themselves as best they could. Cupid changed his name to
Jemmy to avoid capture.\textsuperscript{78} Cyrus not only changed his name, but hid out at a free woman’s home.\textsuperscript{79} More commonly, slaves took changes of clothes with them. In the case of Bess, "as she carried a good change of Cloaths, "an ad said, "there is no describing her dress."\textsuperscript{80} In addition skilled slaves could hire themselves out cheaper than the normal rate, which increased the chances that their employer at least would not inform on them. Good English would also aid a runaway in fabricating a story as to why they were away from their home.

Although runaway notices gave little evidence as to the success of fugitives, some slaves managed to stay away for a long time and to travel far. A slave of Richard Fowle ran away in Bermuda, escaped from the island, and was seen one morning in Charleston; an ad was placed by a relative of Fowle’s in the \textit{South Carolina Gazette} the same day.\textsuperscript{81} White owners were not always so lucky, even if they knew where the slave was. Robin, a well-known black fisherman in Charleston, harbored his son for nearly two years.\textsuperscript{82} Alard Belin was well informed that his slave Anthony was in Carolina in 1755, but Anthony had eluded capture since February 1749.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{78}\textit{SCG}, July 28, 1746.

\textsuperscript{79}\textit{SCG}, September 12, 1748.

\textsuperscript{80}\textit{SCG}, July 16, 1748.

\textsuperscript{81}\textit{SCG}, November 27, 1752.

\textsuperscript{82}\textit{SCG}, January 8, 1750

\textsuperscript{83}\textit{SCG}, March 20, 1755.
Capture and punishment were not always sufficient to deter slaves from running away again. That the slave law allowed for gradually harsher punishments was in part a recognition of runaway recidivism slaves. Fifty-nine slaves in the sample earned more than one advertisement, often spanning several years and owners. Davey, who was young when he ran away from Henry Perronneau in September 1754, appeared once more in the Gazette in May 1770. Consistent runaways were not always advertised for more than once. Bristol already had one ear cropt by the time he appeared in an ad in 1747. For such slaves, running away was the most effective form of personal resistance. It deprived their owners of labor and exposed weaknesses in a system of oppression.

Runaway ads were an easy way to pursue fugitive slaves. Whites designed the advertisements to be read by other whites, and although they offered rewards for information from blacks, few slaves were literate. Commenting on the lack of primary sources on slavery from the blacks themselves, Peter Wood found "documents written by white hands...a source of interest rather than dismay." The runaway ads reveal many of the perceptions that whites held about the people they subjugated to bondage.

Owners generally placed advertisements for runaways as

84 SCG, March 9, 1747.
85 Wood, Black Majority, xviii.
86 SCG, March 28, 1743.
they ran away, rather than make a concerted effort at the busiest times of the year to recover them. Between January and November, the newspaper carried between 44 (January) and 61 (October) ads each month; only December with 31 falls short of the range. The highest number of fugitives absconded in June and July; consequently July and August saw among the highest number of advertisements. October, the month with most advertisements, followed the month with the third highest number of runaways. November was the second lowest month for slaves to run away, and December has the fewest ads.87

An important identifying factor for the whites was to call a fugitive slave "well-known." Ten per cent of the advertisements state that the slave was well-known, usually in Charleston. This term was applied to all types of slaves -- men and women, skilled and field hands. The small size of the area led to a tight community where even whites recognized the slaves. When Jack and Ben ran away, they were so well-known "as to require no further descriptions."88 Advertising for well-known slaves provided the owner with a better chance of recovering his fugitives than advertising for strangers.

Advertisements also provided a means of communication from whites to their slaves. Messages for the slaves were

87 This does not hold true for advertisements placed in March. Only seven slaves were cited as leaving in February, but March contains forty-five advertisements, possibly because there was some effort by masters to recapture slaves before planting began.

88 SCG, February 10, 1757.
sent through the advertisement, particularly to proclaim forgiveness. Tom and Phoebe ran away when the death of their former master separated them. Tom’s new owner subsequently bought the absent Phoebe and offered to forgive Tom if he returned. Owners had to hope that word of mouth would pass on the message to illiterate slaves, usually through a white person who knew of their whereabouts. Such offers were rare, but they reveal the importance and value that some slaves represented to the whites and a more humane side of the slave-owner.

Owners characterized their slaves’ personalities in a variety of ways. Slaves could be intelligent and described as artful and cunning, or frightened and a "down-looker." Whatever the label, it was not favorable. Isaac Nicholls called Jeffery "a subtle Fellow, and will endeavour to deceive any one that examines him." Slaves were worse than animals. Kate was an "inhuman" creature when she ran away from her sick master. When Peter took a horse with him, the horse received an equally full but more affectionate description. Whites viewed their slaves as inferior and

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89SCG, August 10, 1752.

90Meades, "South Carolina Fugitives," Journal of Negro History 60:2 (April 1975), 291. There were very few slaves who had a down look between 1740-1759, and this label seems to have become more common later in the century.

91SCG, July 29, 1745.

92SCG, November 20, 1749.
with simplistic attitudes. Such blithe characterizations as calling a man "subtle" ignored individual human qualities in a slave. Remarkable facts, such as slaves fluent in different languages or running away on knees, were ignored except in the most cursory fashion. A runaway ad was not the place to write a glowing account of a slave, but when the only positive attributes were those of physical strength, the reduction of a fellow human to a laboring chattel was very apparent.

Runaway ads were candid statements about a problem that plagued all New World slave societies. Daniel Meades observed that the average runaway in eighteenth-century South Carolina was male, single, between the ages of eighteen to thirty, and had changed owners. The years 1740-1759 are no different, but the generalization ignores the very slaves who make runaway ads such a rich source, the exceptions. Every type of slave ran away, skilled and unskilled, male and female, African and creole. Artificial limbs did not deter slaves from absconding. The runaway advertisements document a society of one race's submission to another, yet they reveal an attempt by slaves to shape their own destiny. Slaves employed whatever means possible to this end, whether it was stealing a canoe or horse to facilitate an escape, or taking refuge with a relative. Often slaves' most valuable companions were loved ones, as fugitives persistently left to

be with their families. Many women refused to leave their children behind as they made their own bid for freedom. Simultaneously, the ads portray the colonists' acceptance of a labor system that left many slaves maimed and whose symbol of discipline was the whip. Whites made little attempt to understand the people they exploited, preferring instead to sort slaves into accepted stereotypes such as "subtle" and "cunning". The runaway advertisements in South Carolina unwittingly stand as stark testimony that slaves refused to submit to the oppression of their white masters.
CHAPTER II

THE MAROONS OF JAMAICA, 1655-1796.

If South Carolina was the richest of Britain's mainland colonies by the 1740s, Jamaica held a similar position among the West Indian islands. Michael Craton and James Walvin argued that "the word 'Jamaica' became synonymous with a certain style of ostentatious luxury built upon absentee fortunes made in sugar." Yet this was not always so. Similar to colonists' experiences in South Carolina, settlers, both Spanish and English, struggled at first to eke out a living. Columbus discovered the island in 1494, but when the Spanish failed to discover gold or silver, Jamaica became little more than an outpost. However, the Spanish neglect of the colony concealed a vast agricultural potential. The island is 140 miles long by 45 miles wide. For the most part, the tropical island was covered by dense forests, but further inland there were wide tracts of land suitable for grazing or

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planting. On the eastern side of the islands are the dominating Blue Mountains, stretching into peaks as high as 7,400 feet with over 200 inches of rain. From the center running fifty miles west are 500 square miles of "cockpit" country. These mountainous areas consist of limestone, which erosion renders into a broken topography.² It is "a spectacular landscape, a bewildering jumble of cones, cockpits and caverns" that affords excellent protection, and did so for slave runaways.³ Most of the major settlements were situated along the coast. Kingston, the British capital, was on the southern shore about fifty miles from the easternmost spur.

Under British occupation, the island had a slow start. The original conquerors were entitled to thirty-acre plots. These were too small for effective production, and the first large estates began to grow as settlers sold out to their more affluent neighbors. A variety of crops were experimented with, including cocoa, indigo, tobacco, pimento and ginger. Yet just nine years after the British invasion of 1655, sugar was already the most important crops and royal edicts from England encouraged further expansion.⁴

However, sugar was both a labor- and capital-intensive


⁴Craton and Walvin, A Jamaica Plantation, 18-20.
process. The initial overheads were high for planting the cane and distilling the sugar. In order to be economically viable, nineteenth-century economists declared that a sugar estate's optimum size was six hundred acres. This required huge amounts of labor, far more than indentured servants could provide, and Jamaicans relied upon large imports of African slaves. The early years of settlement witnessed a rapid rise in the number of Africans. The slave population rose from 1,400 in 1658 to 9,500 in 1673; by 1703, it had reached 45,000.\textsuperscript{5} These figures conceal the real number of slave imports. From 1673 to 1702 the slaves died at a rate of 6.7 per cent per year, and yet the total population continued to grow.\textsuperscript{6} But whites never had sufficient capital or labor to fully exploit sugar plantations in the seventeenth century, and economic hardship resulted. Whites began to leave the island, and by 1691 the white population had dropped to 1,400 from 7,768 in 1673.\textsuperscript{7}

It was not until the eighteenth century that sugar began to make substantial returns for the planters. As economic wealth grew, so the whites returned. By 1730 there were 8,000 whites, roughly half the number in South Carolina. While the white population peaked at 25,000 in 1787, it never came close

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{5}Philip D. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census (Madison Wis., 1969), 59.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 29.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7}Craton and Walvin, A Jamaica Plantation, 21-37.}
to matching the slave population. By 1730 blacks numbered 80,000, and slaves outnumbered whites ten-to-one for the remainder of the century. The price of slaves rose with such heavy demand, from an average of £25 per slave in 1700 to £50 on 1730. Thus slave traders were selling slaves for almost twice as much money in Jamaica than in South Carolina, despite the greater distance of the American mainland from Africa.

Although numbers increased rapidly, they were still not enough to open up all the interior tracts of land. Even so, sugar production rose significantly. Jamaica produced 13,000 tons of sugar in 1730, rising to 21,000 by 1758. From then, there was a large rise to 50,000 tons by 1773, averaging 36,500 tons each year. Capital and laborereas still in short supply as Britain’s frequent wars disrupted shipping and impeded fuller development. Nevertheless, Jamaica soon began to outdistance her main competitors. In 1700, she produced just half the amount of sugar of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, Britain’s principal suppliers. By 1730, Jamaica equalled Barbados; ten years later she exceeded both Barbados and the Leewards; in 1763 Jamaica exported four times as much sugar as Barbados.

The heavy imbalance of blacks to whites that sugar

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8 Ibid., 37.
9 Ibid., 54.
10 Ibid., 73.
11 Ibid., 52.
cultivation necessitated led to a scale of discipline problems that South Carolina planters never suffered. Many of the same forms of resistance were open to Jamaican slaves as South Carolinians. Day-to-day resistance, such as verbal insolence, was frequent. More violent resistance such as murder or arson was also possible. Resistance in Jamaica differed from that in South Carolina the possibility of armed insurrection was much greater on the island. Slave revolts were so commonplace that an uprising the size of the Stono Rebellion would have scarcely elicited a response. Slave insurrections failed to overthrow the slave system, and although in local cases whites may have addressed the slaves' grievances, usually the leaders were executed. Until the conclusion of the Maroon war of the 1730s, running away was the most effective form of resistance and the most likely to succeed. Once the Maroons agreed to return new fugitives, running away became "dangerous and mostly unsuccessful." Runaways could no longer find sanctuary with the Maroons and had to prove their freedom to whites if discovered "off plantation." Thus slaves fled to the almost uninhabitable forests and mountains. "Recapture was almost inevitable," Craton and Walvin assert, "and the annual quota of escapees represented a regular turnover in slaves; those captured simply filled the gaps left by new runaways."

\[12Ibid., 143.\]

\[13Ibid.\]
Therefore by 1740, when slaves in South Carolina had few realistic options for resistance except running away, that avenue of escape was conclusively closed to Jamaican slaves. Yet the Maroons were either fugitives themselves or descendants of runaways. They complete the spectrum of runaways. The slaves advertised for in South Carolina's newspapers were seeking some kind of freedom. The Maroons show us how slaves attempted to retain that freedom in the face of repeated attempts to destroy them. Maroons and their freedom represent the successful conclusion of runaways.

Marronage was the most extreme form of running away from slavery in the New World. Day-to-day resistance and running away for short periods of time may have done more to undermine the effective functioning of the slave system, but maroon communities represented the ultimate freedom. The slaves who fled to the mountains to join with other fugitives had no intention of returning. Unlike many slaves in South Carolina who ran away to join their families, the Maroons repudiated slavery and struck out on an independent course. This independence made the Maroons more terrifying to the whites than such forms of resistance as suicide and self-mutilation. In Jamaica, the threat of an insurrection inspired by the Maroons haunted the planters. The very existence of maroon communities encouraged slaves to run away. Maroons, in turn, were unable to survive without the plantations. Gad Heuman commented that "maroons were almost never totally independent;
they relied on the plantation society for various material goods as well as new recruits, especially women. Maroons therefore raided the estates, impeding the development and growth of the plantations."\(^{14}\) Simultaneously, however, maroon settlements bore a constant reminder of many slaves' overwhelming desire -- freedom.

Maroon communities were not unique to Jamaica. The town of Palmares in Brazil had ten thousand inhabitants, and there were significant communities in Mexico, Surinam, and elsewhere. The major difference between these settlements and Jamaica was the proximity of the Jamaica Maroons to the whites. Communities were commonly founded in isolated areas far from white towns or plantations. However, Jamaica is not large enough for runaways to put much distance between them and the whites. Despite its size, Jamaica suffered some of the worst slave discipline problems in the New World. Writing on the Maroon War of 1730-1739, Orlando Patterson identified certain factors that favored slave revolts and encouraged marronage. A high slave-to-master ratio, with a large proportion of African slaves, weakened white control over the slaves. The slave trade often captured Africans who held political or royal power in their homeland, and this influence was carried over to the New World. Jamaica suffered from a weak cultural cohesiveness among the whites, and the low

number of females discouraged families and personal ties to the plantation and reduced the power of whites. Moreover, the high incidence of absenteeism by plantation owners further weakened their control. The owners also tended to be absent more frequently at times of slave unrest, when they felt their lives were threatened. The monopolistic and monocultural sugar economy diminished competition, and made labor more expendable and thus less valuable. The final major factor was a geography that aided runaways and formed natural defenses. "Tropical and well-watered," Craton remarked, "the island was not only mountainous but, being made mostly of limestone, wonderfully pocked and broken in its topography."¹⁵ Throughout much of the eighteenth century, Jamaica satisfied these requirements, which led to numerous slave revolts and facilitated the formation and survival of maroon communities.¹⁶

Patterson's model readily explains why South Carolina never experienced the same problems with maroon communities. Although blacks outnumbered whites, it never reached the level of ten-to-one that Jamaicans lived with. What is more, the virtual embargo on the slave trade in the 1740s reduced the possibilities of royalty arriving in the province. In addition, the relative scarcity of new African labor made the

¹⁵Craton, Testing the Chains, 67.

slaves more valuable. The white social structure in South Carolina was more cohesive, with traditional nuclear families often living on the plantations. One reason for this was the lack of absenteeism. Although richer slave owners would reside in Charleston part of the year, their home was South Carolina. Many of the absentee planters in Jamaica were back in Britain or even in more temperate regions of the New World. Although rice continued to be the dominant product of South Carolina, it never took on the monopolistic qualities of sugar in Jamaica. In the 1740s, indigo competed fiercely with rice. Only in geography was South Carolina able to match Jamaica. Slaves moving inland would have found marshy, uninhabited areas where it was easy to remain concealed. However, this one factor was not sufficient to allow large communities of fugitive slaves to develop independently. Mose was a free black town of ex-slaves on the mainland, but it existed legally under Spanish jurisdiction. The early Maroon settlements in Jamaica existed outside of government control.

Although it is difficult to trace the background of many Maroons, the same type of slaves tended to predominate. Fewer women than men ran away in either settlement, and this was reflected both in the numbers of advertisements in South Carolina and the high premium placed upon women recruits to the Maroons. In South Carolina, a greater proportion of runaways were African than found in the total population. Africans generally tried to escape more frequently than creole
slaves, and this problem was exacerbated in Jamaica where there were relatively few Jamaican-born slaves. Although there are no conclusive figures on the number of runaways, there must have been more than the 0.17 per cent Daniel Littlefield estimated for South Carolina.

Marronage was present in Jamaica from the first days of English occupation. When England invaded Jamaica in 1655 and eventually ousted the Spanish, many of the African slaves seized the opportunity to take their own freedom and escaped. Large numbers of small groups of runaways roamed the mountains, many of whom simply died. As early as 1656, Major General Sedgewick, one of the commanders of the English invasion, warned that the runaway slaves "must either be destroyed, or brought in, upon some terms or other; or else they will prove a great discouragement to settling the country."17 The conflict with the earliest Maroons settled into a familiar pattern in the course of the next eighty-five years. A group led by Juan de Bolas, who were possibly free blacks under the Spanish rule, harassed the English through guerilla warfare. In February 1662 the English and Lubola signed a formal agreement to end hostilities. Despite their success, Bolas' Maroons were strategically too close to Spanish Town to carry on effective warfare, and their primary

17Bryan Edwards, Observations on the Disposition, Character, Manners and Habits of Life of the Maroons and a Detail of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the Late War Between Those People and the White Inhabitants (London, 1796) ii.
aim was to prevent their re-enslavement by the British. In return for their freedom and judicial power over all matters except "cases of great consequence," the Maroons were to aid the English in driving out the remaining Spanish and were to speak English.\textsuperscript{18} This agreement was the forerunner of the treaties signed in the 1730s to end the war. The guarantee of freedom and judicial rights over their numbers was an important early recognition that the English were unable to defeat the Maroons.

Bolas' band was only one group that threatened the English. Once Bolas had signed for peace, the hunting band, Los Vermejales, sought greater security in their position by raiding plantations for more recruits, especially women, and for arms. Bolas, sent by the English authorities to fight Los Vermejales, was ambushed and killed in 1663. This left the newly-settled English so powerless that on August 15, 1665, the Jamaica Assembly officially declared war. The declaration called for "all the inhabitants of this Island to surprise and kill those Rogues." It called the Maroons "contemptible and base" and declared that the persecution of such "perfidious villains" could not be "ill accounted for."\textsuperscript{19} It was not until 1670 that the English were finally able to defeat Los Vermejales, and then only with the help of the buccaneers, to


\textsuperscript{19}Campbell, Maroons of Jamaica, 27.
whom eighteenth-century Jamaican historian Edward Long attributed English possession of Jamaica.20

Although the English had overcome the main resistance to their occupation of Jamaica by 1670, the precedent of marronage had already been set. Throughout the New World, recently imported slaves were by far the most likely to run away. Moreover, the majority of early slave imports into Jamaica were of the Comorantee tribe, who, although being excellent workers, also quickly gained the reputation of being among the most rebellious Africans. Los Vermejales refused to accept African-born slaves into their ranks; thus runaway slaves either returned to the plantations or formed other groups. One of the more receptive and powerful groups in this period were the Madagascans. The origins of these Maroons are unclear. R. C. Dallas, writing his history in 1803, described their skin as "a deeper jet than that of any other negro; [and] their features resemble those of Europeans."21 The result of the runaways, Campbell commented, was that "these newly arrived Africans soon gained ascendancy in the hills in terms of sheer numbers."22

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20 For further discussion on the role of the buccaneers, see Campbell, *Maroons of Jamaica*, 21 and 31.

21 R. C. Dallas, *The History of the Maroons, from their Origin to the Establishment of their Chief Tribe at Sierra Leone: including the Expedition to Cuba, for the Purpose of Procuring Spanish Chasseurs, and the State of the Island of Jamaica for the Last Ten Years; with a Succinct History of the Islands Previous to that Period* (London, 1803), 31.

In the early years, the runaways had sufficient space in which to avoid other bands of maroons if they so wished. The southern coastal strip which the British inhabited soon suffered from soil exhaustion and droughts. Planters moved northwards in search of more fertile lands, and consequently encroached on Maroon territory. The squeeze on the Maroons was further exacerbated by the continual rise in their numbers. The Jamaica Assembly attempted to solve the runaway problem in 1673 by legally defining a runaway. A slave found without a ticket of leave was a runaway, irrespective of time away or distance from the plantation, and was subject to whipping by any white. This was not as structured as South Carolina, where a two-time offender would have an "R" branded onto his cheek, and for a third offense, a fugitive would lose an ear. Nevertheless, both colonies recognized the need to act against runaways by law. Though this may have deterred people from running away for short periods, it encouraged rebellious slaves to flee permanently. The development of plantation society was hindered in the final thirty years of the seventeenth century by numerous slave uprisings. In 1673, two hundred Comorantee slaves killed twelve whites and fled Lobby’s plantation in St. Ann’s Parish. St Mary’s Parish was forced to declare martial law in 1676, due to the number of runaways. By 1678 most of them had been recaptured or killed, but in 1685 another 150 slaves escaped from Guanoba Vale. The largest and most serious uprising occurred in Clarendon
Parish, where the ratio of blacks-to-whites was ninety-to-one. In 1690, five hundred blacks armed themselves for battle, only to be defeated by the whites on August 1. Two hundred of the rebels surrendered, but the survivors, including many of the women and children, took refuge in cockpit country. Among these rebels was Cudjoe, whose son was to rule over the Leeward Maroons during the war in the 1730s.23

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the Maroons had formed two major groups: the Windward Maroons on the eastern side of the island and the Leeward Maroons further to the West and inland in the cockpit country. As the numbers of runaways competing for a shrinking area increased, conflicts between Maroons heightened and were "sharpened by different ethnic identities."24 This led to a period of consolidation and the growth of bands. A common ethnicity was often the determining factor in alliances, especially in seeking help from a larger hostile group. More powerful bands defeated and assimilated smaller groups, and the existence of a common white enemy often forced smaller groups to band together.25 The Leeward Maroons experienced a bitter power struggle which resulted in Cudjoe defeating the Madagascans in about 1720 and assuming complete command of the area. The Windward Maroons remained,

23 Craton, Testing the Chains, 75-77.


25 Ibid., 296
in Barbara Kopytoff’s description, a cooperative federation.\textsuperscript{26} Each village had a different leader, and, according to Craton, "suffered from a lack of cohesiveness, cultural and political as well as militarily."\textsuperscript{27} The unifying force of the Windward Maroons was Nanny, the powerful obeah woman. What evidence there is of Nanny is largely circumstantial. The main Windward town, Nanny Town, was named after her, but it is uncertain whether she existed. Legend relates that Nanny could capture British bullets between her buttocks and fart them back at enemy troops.\textsuperscript{28} Although Craton argued that many of the differences between the two groups had been "eliminated by their adaptation to a common environment" by 1730, Kopytoff outlined significant divergences.\textsuperscript{29} Recruits to the Leeward Maroons were only gradually initiated into society. Many of the group’s secret locations were initially not revealed. The Windward Maroons required simply that an oath be taken to join them, although the penalty for breaking the oath was death. The Windwards extended capital punishment to other crimes, such as adultery, whereas the Leewards were "not so quick to kill fellow

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., 249.

\textsuperscript{27}Craton, Testing the Chains, 81.

\textsuperscript{28}Nanny has now become a national legend in Jamaica. The exploits of Nanny are widely related in the writing on Maroons. See, for example, Campbell, Maroons of Jamaica, 51–52.

\textsuperscript{29}Craton, Testing the Chains, 78.
The proximity of the Windwards to white settlements led to greater losses from more numerous white expeditions. This in turn led to a more militarized approach. Cudjoee, on the other hand, was always careful to stress freedom rather than revenge as the sole motive of attack. "The different organization of the two Maroon polities," concluded Kopytoff, "affected the military histories of the two societies." Kopytoff argued that before war broke out in 1730, it was the only period when the Maroons were "able to develop political institutions outside the sphere of influence of the colonial society." Once peace returned to the island, the era of the truly independent Maroons was over.

Hunting and agriculture provided the means by which the Maroons survived. The men hunted over wide tracts of land that the whites had not settled, and the women remained in the towns to tend the provision grounds and the children. To the whites of the time, maroon agriculture was haphazard and inefficient. Bryan Edwards, a Jamaican planter at the time of the Trelawney Town War in the 1790s, commented that "their repugnance to the labor of tilling the earth was remarkable." From Edwards's description of the

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31 Ibid., 306.

32 Ibid.

33 Edwards, Proceedings, xxix.
agriculture, Richard Sheridan concluded that the Maroons practiced slash-and-burn or shifting agriculture, a form that is known among Jamaican peasants today as 'fire-stick' farming.34

The Maroons supplemented their diet and gained commodities through plantation raids and illicit trading. Jews and free coloreds were the most active in trade with the Maroons. The Maroons exchanged fish, meat, and crafts for salt, tools, rum, and, most importantly, guns and powder. During the war in the 1730s, the amount of powder the Maroons possessed continually surprised the whites.

Not only did the women till the land, but they were expected to remain faithful to their husbands who could possess more than one wife. This led Edwards to conclude that the men had as much concern for their wives as "a white planter would have at the loss of a bullock."35 Dallas directly disputed this claim. Dallas related that in an attempt to Christianize the Maroons, the biggest problem was the converter's insistence on monogamous relationships. One Maroon male claimed that "Gar a'mighty good; he no tell somebody he mus forsake him wife and children. Somebody no


35Edwards, Proceedings, xxx.
wicked for forsake him wife." Dallas questioned whether a man who did not care for his family would have answered in such a way.

The existence of Maroon societies caused official concern throughout the first eighty-five years of British occupation, which increased as the slave rebellions became more frequent. Edwards observed that "their barbarities and outrages intimidated the whites from venturing any considerable distance from the sea coast." The primary tactic in the seventeenth century was to send out raiding parties against the Maroons. Although by the turn of the eighteenth century there had been many conflicts, Campbell noted that there was not an "appreciable victory against the Maroons, and the morale of the whites was low indeed." An earthquake and epidemics in 1692 worsened the situation and led to an increase in both slave runaways and Maroon raids. British policy did not greatly differ until 1729. Far from weakening the Maroons, the expeditions led to more heavily armed and powerful communities. In addition to the expeditions, the Assembly encouraged uncultivated lands to be settled to prevent the spread of Maroons. These policies were intensified and adapted upon the arrival of Robert Hunter as

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36"God is almighty good, but he would not tell somebody to forsake his wife and children. Nobody is so wicked to forsake his wife." Dallas, History of the Maroons, 113.

37Edwards, Proceedings, iii.

38Campbell, Maroons of Jamaica, 42.
governor in 1729. Hunter realized that the British were unable to defeat the Maroons militarily, and instead tried to force them to such extremes of poverty that they would accept any terms of peace offered. Hunter extended the policy of settling lands into attempting to drive a wedge between the two communities to separate and isolate them and to create a more favorable white-to-black ratio in the outlying areas. Although Craton noted that this period was a time of peace, Campbell argues that the large numbers of runaways and general fear of insurrection made it a perilous time for whites.\(^{39}\) Regular British troops were garrisoned in Jamaica, but they felt that the Jamaicans overstated the threat of an unseen enemy who employed guerilla tactics. They suffered extensive losses through disease, and the Jamaican Assembly lacked the money or the organization to effectively billet them. By 1730 they had been withdrawn and the planters were left undefended. The Jamaican Assembly was forced to react by raising taxes, at a time when Jamaica was suffering a depression. According to Campbell, there was nothing in "Jamaica's life which seemed favorable at this point, and this general malaise was due, whether directly or indirectly, to the maroon problem."\(^{40}\)

The situation almost inevitably degenerated into warfare with the Windward Maroons. They, more than their Leeward


\(^{40}\)Campbell, *Maroons of Jamaica*, 65.
contemporaries, felt the expansion of settlement squeezing their hunting grounds and consequently their freedom. As the Windwards relied more heavily on plantation raids than did the Leewards, the planters were anxious to rid themselves of the Windward threat first. Indeed, Cudjoe was not drawn into the fighting until 1736, when the main resistance of the Windwards had been broken.

Dallas described plunder as the "original spring" for the Maroons, but, once they were attacked, "every consideration became absorbed in the passion of revenge." 41 The Maroons employed guerilla tactics throughout the war. Close to admiration, Dallas related that "surprise and ambush were the chief principle of their warfare; they had not confidence in themselves in open fields, and therefore seldom risked a regular battle." 42 Edwards was not so complimentary. He labelled the Maroons as "the most despicable and cowardly enemy," and "by this dastardly method of conducting the war, they did infinite mischief to the whites, without much exposing their own persons to danger." 43 One of the more notable tactics was the use of the abeng. This was a cow horn that the Maroons used to communicate with each other, and by blowing many at the same time they were able to terrify the enemy. Milton McFarlane, a direct descendent of the Maroons,

41Dallas, History of the Maroons, 34.
42Ibid., 39.
43Edwards, Proceedings, viii.
wrote a short account of the Maroon war as told by Maroons. "When the abengs blared as if the heavens were in convulsion," he described, "it was nerve-racking. Half frightened and half crazed, the British line faltered and the soldiers ran amok with cries of fear."44 On her field trip to Accompong, Katherine Dunham discovered more about the abeng:

When expertly blown, the message is transmitted not by a signal or code but by the actual pronunciation of the words, and by tones which are easily distinguishable by ear....A long and arduous training is necessary to send messages as they were sent in the old days. If a person died, a relative at market in Black River, twenty-four miles away, could hear the signal of the horn and by listening intently to the spoken words hear the message as though it were delivered conversationally.45

Throughout the eighteenth century, the British, unaware of the abeng’s true power, were always shocked by how quickly news travelled to the Maroons.

British troops had to contend with numerous obstacles during the war. Not only did the Maroons harass and frustrate the soldiers, but the British had to overcome both the terrain and climate, which ultimately took a greater toll in


45Dunham, Journey to Accompong (Westport, Ct, 1971), 54. Dunham’s account of her visit must be treated skeptically. Campbell found in her field work that secrecy was second nature to some surviving Maroons, and that they would tell her nothing except what seemed unimportant. Dunham, on the other hand, claims to have been initiated into the rites of obeah magic. However, there seems little to gain by stretching the truth concerning the abeng.
It took British troops marching out of Port Antonio seven days to cover the ten miles to Nanny Town. In addition to fatigue, the soldiers probably would have wet their gunpowder fording streams. Jamaica possesses ideal terrain for the establishment of maroon communities. Yet the Maroons also had to overcome whatever difficulties the invading forces faced. As Richard Price noted of Maroons in general, the inhospitable environment "presented terrifying obstacles [to the Maroons], and that it was only with a great deal of suffering and by bringing to bear the full range of collective cultural experience" that they were able to overcome them and to survive.

The war initially went well for the British. In March 1732, Nanny Town fell. Although the Maroons recaptured it the following year, it fell into British hands once more in 1734 and was permanently destroyed. As the Maroons were driven from their provision grounds, they became more desperate for food. Maroon numbers swelled during the fighting from runaways and slaves who abandoned the expeditions into the mountains. To feed the new recruits, the Maroons therefore increased the intensity of their attacks and even took over

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plantations, such as Hobby's near San Antonio. Confident from their military success, the Jamaican Assembly fitted out the largest and best equipped force in July 1733 that they had sent. The expedition failed in crushing defeat. It was "the most humiliating defeat the government parties yet had from the Maroons" and dealt a large blow to the planters' morale.49

Maroon success was due, in large measure, to the extensive spy network they established. New recruits were encouraged to keep their ties open with their old plantation. In this way they had access not only to supplies but to news of the British plans. On pondering their next move in 1733, the Assembly complained that the Maroons "are as well acquainted with our designs as we ourselves."50 Moreover, the contact between slaves and Maroons weakened the slave system by allowing the slaves a direct role in the fight against their masters. The situation worsened with the death of Governor Hunter in 1734. Although the British had suffered the worst setbacks in his administration, Hunter had initiated most activity against the Maroons. As the Maroons grew more powerful, increasing numbers of whites left Jamaica, thus worsening the white-to-black ratio. The militia was an ineffective fighting force; they were poorly trained, unreliable, and often drunk whilst on duty. The Assembly's

49Campbell, History of the Maroons, 76.
50Ibid., 81.
refusal to declare martial law prevented Hunter from adopting powers necessary to defeat the Maroons.

The new governor, John Ayscough, succeeded in imposing martial law, the effect of which was quickly felt. Nanny Town was taken for the last time, and six companies of troops arrived from England. The Leeward Maroons were split by the British, and two groups marched west to join Cudjoe in 1736. Cudjoe accepted the first group for a short time, and refused the second. He claimed that he did not have enough provisions; and that his authority would be threatened if an independent group was incorporated; he also accused the Maroons of indiscretions in their conduct which provoked the whites, when their aim should have been survival.\(^{51}\)

The government extended its campaign to the leeward side of the island. Cudjoe concentrated in preventing the whites from penetrating the main settlements. However, for the first time the authorities gleaned an idea of how extensive the Leeward settlements had become in their forty-five year existence. From 1735, the war entered a quiet period, which lasted until the arrival of another governor, Edward Trelawney, in 1738.

Under Ayscough, the British had already begun considering concluding the war by treaty, rather than pursue an apparently fruitless policy of victory. Realizing the adverse effect the war was having on the Jamaican economy, the Board of Trade

\(^{51}\)Ibid., 93.
produced a memorandum entitled "Some Consideration." It called for a general amnesty and an official grant of lands to the Maroons. In return, the Maroons would acknowledge the governor, deliver up arms and return future fugitives. The memorandum was modeled on the Spanish treaties with maroons in Mexico and Panama, but it also closely echoed the treaty with Bolas in 1662. Pursuing peace was forgotten, however, once Nanny Town fell in 1734 and the government seemed to have gained the upperhand. In 1739 the Maroons launched new offensives, increasing attacks on settlements and encouraging runaways, which British raiding parties were unable to curtail. John Gregory, who had acted as governor until Trelawney arrived, secretly initiated negotiations once more through Colonel John Guthrie of the militia. Secrecy was paramount in order to avoid an angry reaction from the Assembly and not to raise the hopes of the colonists for an early peace. In February 1739, having discovered the location of the main Leeward settlement (to be named Trelawney Town), Guthrie marched into the town to negotiate.\footnote{Ibid., 100-110.}

The treaty with the Leeward Maroons was signed on March 15, 1739. The Maroons received a freehold of 1,500 acres, and could hunt anywhere except within three miles of a white's land. They were permitted to grow any agricultural products except sugar. For their part, they returned any new recruits obtained within two years, if the recruits wanted to return to
They pledged to aid the governor in the event of a foreign invasion and to return all slave runaways. The Maroons were to build roads to the two principal settlements, and two royal officials were to live there. The Maroons had effectively defeated the British, although British rhetoric attempted to hide this. Trelawney told both the Jamaican Assembly and the British government that the rebels had sued for peace. According to Dallas, Cudjoe, on meeting Guthrie, "seemed to have lost all his ferocity, and to have become humble, penitent, and abject."\textsuperscript{53} Reportedly, Cudjoe was supposed to have kissed Guthrie's feet. This event has caused widespread debate among writers on the period. Campbell concluded that as it is neither mentioned by Guthrie nor his companion to the meeting, Lieutenant Sadler, that it was probably fabricated.\textsuperscript{54}

Orlando Patterson called the treaty "a completely unnecessary sell-out" by Cudjoe because it favored the colonists.\textsuperscript{55} Patterson, among others, suggested that Cudjoe, unable to read, was not aware of the terms. However, the terms of the treaty were rigidly enforced, especially the return of the runaways. Moreover, the Leeward Maroons were beginning to suffer from the war with the destruction of provision grounds. The treaty secured their settlement from

\textsuperscript{53}Dallas, \textit{History of the Maroons}, 56.
\textsuperscript{54}Campbell, \textit{Maroons of Jamaica}, 113-4.
\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}, 129.
attack and ensured their autonomy. Most significantly, it officially confirmed the Maroons as free. Patterson further remarked that, "in the act of ratifying his own freedom, Cudjoe had sealed the fate of future freedom-fighting." The Maroons, as Campbell pointed out, never had a vision of overthrowing British control and provoking a general insurrection. They were primarily concerned with their own freedom.

In June 1739 a treaty with the Windward Maroons was concluded. It was essentially the same, except for subtle differences in tone. The Treaty with Cudjoe was concluded with the Maroons as victors, whereas the Windwards were facing defeat. Therefore the peace was harsher. Among other clauses, the Windwards agreed to return new recruits if they had joined within three, not two, years. Unlike the Leewards, these recruits had no choice but to return.

For the whites, the treaties were signed mainly for their economic benefits. The cost of the war was burdensome. Campbell cited "the psychological release from the fear of years of uncertainty" as a major factor in concluding the treaties. There was an immediate upturn in the Jamaican economy, and, by granting the freeholds, the whites moved the

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56 Patterson, Slavery and Slave Revolt, in Price ed., Maroon Societies, 273.

57 Campbell, Maroons of Jamaica, 131.

58 Ibid., 144.
Maroons from fertile lands which could be developed for sugar production. Trelawney wrote to the Lords Commissioners that "there is hardly any Good Land which has been hitherto safe from the Incursions of those Rebels."\textsuperscript{59} New families immigrated to Jamaica, many taking up lands in Portland, one of the most fertile areas in Jamaica. The growth in wealth brought a corresponding rise in slave imports. From 1739 to 1752, when the white population rose by 1,500, the slave population increased by 35,000.\textsuperscript{60} The Maroons actively participated in returning runaways and putting down rebellions. The Maroons were so effective that "the slaves came to treat them with a mixture of envy, fear and enmity, while the planters found their presence reassuring."\textsuperscript{61}

The treaties functioned effectively until the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763. The threat of foreign invasion was minimal and sugar production continued to expand. The Maroons were increasingly squeezed onto the lands granted to them, and, with the establishment of more white plantations, lost their hunting and pasture grounds. Although the Maroons could no longer supplement their population through runaways, their numbers rose through natural reproduction, something the slave population never achieved in Jamaica. Less room for more people led to factional splits within Maroon society. In

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., 147.
\textsuperscript{61}Craton, \textit{Testing the Chains}, 92.
1749 a group of Windward Maroons split away from Crawford Town to form Scotts Hall. Among the Leeward Maroons, the death of Cudjoe slowly led to Trelawney Town and Accompang assuming different identities in political administration.

The difficulties arising from the proximity of plantations and Maroon settlements continued to plague Jamaica. In the 1780s, the Assembly introduced measures designed to restrict the movement of Maroons. Maroons found outside the limits of their land were subject to deportation from the island. This policy was unsuccessful, but it set the tone for the next decade. In 1791, the Assembly passed a law stating that any Maroon could relocate on the island and assume the status of free-colored. Although some Maroons responded, especially mulattoes, free-coloreds faced social, political, and economic restrictions that did not apply to Maroons. The situation had become so desperate by 1792, that the Trelawney Maroons applied for new lands, claiming that they were being forced to trespass as soil exhaustion and rocky lands prevented the cultivation of sufficient crops.

The Committee rejected the application on the grounds that the Maroons still possessed uncultivated lands, that Maroons could leave by the 1791 law, and that economic diversity meant that Maroons did not rely upon agriculture for the necessities of life. The Trelawney Maroons felt that whites threatened their freedom once more. Not only was their food supply in jeopardy, but the white superintendents slowly
chipped away at the Maroons' political freedom. The treaties
gave the superintendents an ambiguous role in the settlements.
As early as 1744, the whites were granting them additional
power. By the 1790s, the superintendents had all but taken
over the judicial role from the Maroon leaders. Bryan Edwards
attributed breakdown of relations, in large measure, on to the
superintendents, whose office was "commonly bestowed on
persons of no education or consequence."\textsuperscript{62}

These problems alone were not enough to provoke the
outbreak of hostilities. Land disputes had been settled
before. However, in 1795 the replacement of the popular
Trelawney superintendent, John James, caused widespread anger
in Trelawney Town. James had earned the respect of the
Maroons. Dallas related that "barefoot, he equalled the speed
of the hardiest Maroons over rocks and precipices....He was
indefatigable in every pursuit to which the Maroons were
accustomed."\textsuperscript{63} The final breaking point came when a slave
flogged two Maroons in Montego Bay, thus breaking the treaty
of 1739. Edwards claimed that the whipped men were "abusing
and insulting every white person whom they met in the road" on
the way back to Trelawney.\textsuperscript{64} The version from Dallas is more
widely accepted, as the humiliation of the Maroons was
increased as "they were laughed at, hissed and hooted by the

\textsuperscript{62} Edwards, Proceeding, xxv.

\textsuperscript{63} Dallas, History of the Maroons, 133.

\textsuperscript{64} Edwards, Proceeding, xli.
The Maroons presented their complaints to the new governor, the Earl of Balcarres, citing the whippings and the land grant. They expelled the new superintendent, Craskell, and demanded the return of James.

Governor Balcarres had arrived in Jamaica only three months earlier. He had served in the British Army during the American Revolution, and took much the same approach in Jamaica as he had in the 1770s. He was convinced that France, with whom Britain had been at war since 1793, was instrumental in encouraging the Maroons. Craton supported this theory of French intervention. The primary evidence used to cite French involvement was an overheard conversation by a slave, in which a maroon uprising was discussed. Interpreted as a conversation between a Maroon and a Frenchman, David Geggus argued that the conversation was between a Maroon and slave or free-colored. He concluded that it was "simple hearsay reported secondhand and offers no evidence of actual Maroon contact with the French."  

Balcarres decided against the offer of negotiation, feeling that the Maroons could be quickly overwhelmed. For Balcarres, there were 1,500 British troops to fight 167 "uneducated, untrained," and uncivilized men who were able to bear arms. However, he found that "Maroons were even more

65Dallas, History of the Maroons, 148.

formidable opponents than the white woodsmen...in the American War of Independence."\(^6^7\) After the initial combat, there was no evidence of Maroon casualties, but for every six British soldiers shot, five received fatal wounds.\(^6^8\) The Maroons' guerilla tactics once again brought condemnation from Edwards. "Neither the courage nor the conduct of the best disciplined troops in the world," he wrote," could always avail against men, who, lurking in secret like the tygers of Africa, (themselves unseen) had no object but murder."\(^6^9\)

On the August 2, 1795, the Assembly declared martial law. A proclamation on August 8 gave the Maroons four days to surrender, but only thirty older Maroons turned themselves in. By the twenty-third, both Old Town and New Town had fallen, and Balcarres' hopes for a quick success seemed likely. But victory soon turned to defeat. Deprived of their provision grounds, the Maroons became, as they had in the 1730s, more dangerous and reverted to guerilla warfare throughout the island. The islanders' greatest fear was that warfare with the Trelawney Town Maroons would provoke a general Maroon war and possibly a slave insurrection. Yet the distance between communities was evident in Accompang's decision to join government forces. The Windward Maroons remained neutral. The slave relationship with Maroons faded in the half-century

\(^6^7\)Craton, Testing the Chains, 215.

\(^6^8\)Ibid.

\(^6^9\)Edwards, Proceedings, lxiv.
since the last armed conflict. The slaves had lingering cause to resent the Maroons, seemingly rewarded with freedom for rebellion in the 1730s. The situation had worsened as Maroons returned runaways. As Dallas noted, "a general spirit of amity never took rise among them, and as distinct bodies they remained the most determined foes." The Maroons no longer had the vital communication to plantations and access to British plans. Moreover, many of the Maroons were of Comorantee descent, but by the late eighteenth century the slave imports were predominantly from the Ibo and Bantu tribes. During the war itself, the Maroons were forced to raid slave provision grounds in order to maintain supplies.

By December 1795 Jamaicans were coming to the conclusion that the war was unwinnable. Balcarres, therefore, ordered the importation of Spanish bloodhounds from Cuba. Although these were not used in combat, the effect was immediate. Three days after the dogs' arrival, the Maroons agreed to a truce. It was ratified by the Assembly on December 28, and gave the Maroons just three days to come in. Only five met the deadline. However, by the January 15, 1796 most had turned themselves in. Sick women and children had slowed the process, and those who remained at large were persuaded by two Maroon leaders, who had agreed to aid the British, and the

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70 Dallas, History of the Maroons, 126.
threat of the dogs. Although sporadic resistance continued until March, the war was effectively over.

The Maroons had paid the price for attempting to preserve their freedom. In order to rid Jamaica of the problem, the Assembly deported the Trelawney Town Maroons to Nova Scotia on the pretext that the rebels had broken the terms of the truce deadline. After suffering great hardships in the cold climate, the surviving Maroons successfully petitioned the British crown to emigrate to Sierra Leone. Thus, many years after the first Africans arrived in Jamaica, the Trelawney Town Maroons were the first to legally return. General George Walpole, commander of the British troops, who had given his word that deportation would not happen, resigned his commission. Edwards concluded, however, that "after such a war, carried on in such a manner, it is impossible to believe, that a cordial reconciliation between white inhabitants and the Maroons could ever have taken place [his italics]."

The maroon communities were successful in their quest for, and subsequent preservation of, freedom. Even when the treaties of 1739 were signed and the primary source of maintaining and increasing the population was cut off, the Maroons were able to reproduce naturally. Until 1749, the population declined by a third, primarily due to the sexual imbalance of the population and lack of children. But, by 1773, the population had returned to its former level, and the

72 Edwards, Proceedings, lxxx.
The proportion of children had risen from 27.1 per cent to 37.6 per cent. The Maroons, far fitter and healthier than the slaves, had a distinct appearance, despite their common ancestry. Richard Sheridan discovered that the Maroon birth rate in the nineteenth century was twice that of Worthy Park plantation and 74 per cent higher than twelve sample sugar estates, due to their diet, work load and general environment.\textsuperscript{73}

The Maroons had changed their concept of freedom from the days in which small bands had eked out a living in the mountains. The initial struggle was to gain freedom from slavery and runaway slaves found sanctuary from white dominance in the newly formed communities. The inability of the British to defeat the Maroons in warfare gave them little option but to officially recognize that freedom. Although the Maroons would never be re-enslaved, their freedom was not assured. The definition was altered over time to embrace the preservation of Maroon society, without external authority. Thus the leaders of the Trelawney Town Maroons declared in 1795 "that they were forced into hostilities on a principle of self-preservation, being persuaded, from the subsequent action of the white people, that their destruction was determined."\textsuperscript{74} Since the Maroons possessed no political

\textsuperscript{73} Sheridan, "Maroons of Jamaica", \textit{Slavery and Abolition}, 6, 3 (December 1985), 157-170.

\textsuperscript{74} Dallas, \textit{History of the Maroons}, 148.
authority outside their lands, their only recourse, when threatened, was warfare. Conflict, both physical and political, marked the evolution of the relationship between the whites and the Maroons. For only twenty-four years, after the signing of the treaties, were those "islands of freedom in a sea of slavery" able to feel secure in their victory.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{75}Sheridan, "Maroons of Jamaica," \textit{Slavery and Abolition}, 6, 3 (December 1985), 154.
CONCLUSION

As one becomes intricately involved with the characters, events, and details of a subject, it is easy to lose a straightforward perspective on the significance of the topic. A painter needs distance with which to view his work, and it does no harm when the principle is applied to history. The achievements of runaway slaves were immense and it is easy to forget that. Slaves defied an authority often administered by physical violence in order to run away. South Carolinians punished their recaptured slaves with the whip, by branding the cheek with an "R", or, if the offender had fled before, cropping an ear. Many slaves often saw an old fugitive bearing the permanent marks of his capture. This in itself was sufficient to prevent some slaves from even attempting to escape. If a slave absconded, he or she faced an existence haunted by the possibility of discovery. Slaves often could not bear to be parted from family, which often provided the motive for escaping. If not running to family, slaves ran with them. The courage of young mothers taking small children was especially great because they were conspicuous. Life under bondage induced such loathing in slaves that they were
willing to risk their lives and the lives of their loved ones in order to escape.

The achievements of the Jamaican Maroons were even more astounding. They carved out an existence free from white control almost adjacent to white plantations. Moreover, the British found the runaways unconquerable when the Jamaica Assembly finally declared war. The Maroons effectively used their limited supply of manpower and weapons by utilizing their knowledge of the land and employing guerilla tactics. Some scholars, such as Michael Craton, argue that the Maroons were the first innovators of guerilla warfare with the use of ambush coupled with rapid retreat. The Leeward Maroons, under the leadership of Cudjoe, defeated troops backed by one of the most powerful nations in the world. Only when war was concluded in 1739 did Jamaican sugar production flourish to reach optimum output. Nearly sixty years later, the Trelawney Town Maroons almost brought the British to their knees. Governor Balcarres’s mocking attitude and scornful opinion of the Maroons in that war perfectly captured the arrogance of the British. Yet the Maroons induced fear and misery in the whites by their raids on plantations and many British felt unsafe on the island. Even though the Trelawney Maroons were finally defeated militarily, they did not lose their freedom and eventually returned to their native homeland.

Runaways in South Carolina were an integral part of the slave culture. The large number of field hands that slave
owners advertised for included a broad cross-section of society. The advertisements reveal the importance of naming practices to the slaves, highlighting both the attempt to retain aspects of their African past and their acculturation to America. Other factors, apart from skin color, barred a complete acculturation. Difficulties with language were common.

The Maroons had less direct impact on slave culture in Jamaica. Yet their own unique culture blended African practices with New World circumstances. Women played a role in the Blue Mountain communities similar to the one they had in Africa. The Maroons utilized what is still today a widespread agricultural method among peasants. The Maroons tried to recreate as much of their African homeland as possible.

Runaway slaves played an important role in both slave societies. For slaves who did not run away, aiding and abetting a fugitive was an effective form of resistance. Runaways relied upon other slaves for shelter, food, and protection. Slaves who did not inform on their runaway fellows witnessed the frustration of the supposedly omnipotent whites. In Jamaica, the importance of slave-maroon contact was even more vital than in South Carolina. Maroons received supplies, food, and arms from contacts with plantations. The network of spies was widespread enough to usually give Maroons advance warning of raiding parties and expeditions dispatched
by the Assembly. For their part, slaves felt that they were contributing to the war effort while striking at the power of whites. Some slaves must have envisaged their own freedom as near if the Maroons won the war. But the slave-maroon relationship did not last. The cost of the breakdown became apparent in the Trelawney Town war in 1795. Slaves resented Maroons for their freedom, which the Maroons vigorously denied to new fugitives. Rather than slaves volunteering provisions, maroons had to steal from slave provision grounds. This only increased the antagonism between the groups. The inability of the Trelawney Town Maroons to regain the support of the slaves was a significant factor in their defeat.

All runaway slaves were seeking some sort of freedom. Whether a slave left for a short time and returned on his or her own accord, or whether the slave struck out with no intention of returning, it was an individual freedom that was sought. Most of the slaves advertised for in the *South Carolina Gazette* were for single runaways. Groups tended to be either family or slaves with a common feature, such as ethnicity. Slave revolts sometimes aimed at releasing all slaves, but individual runaways took a solo course. The Jamaican Maroons were no exception. Their overwhelming desire was initially not to be re-enslaved. Once that risk was nullified, freedom came to encapsulate the preservation of autonomy. Until the 1730s, the Maroons relied upon new recruits and kidnapping of women to sustain numbers. Yet in
the treaties of 1739, both groups of Maroons willingly gave up the right to take new fugitives and even agreed to return them. Slaves who saw the Maroons as their own hope for freedom, understandably felt betrayed. The Maroons not only turned their backs on their fellow blacks, but the British rewarded the rebels with freedom. The acceptance to return future fugitives marked another tactic by the Maroons in the struggle to ensure their freedom. The British stopped the raids that had damaged parts of the Maroon communities so severely. Thus the Maroons could feel secure for the first time in their existence, even if they had sacrificed their true freedom.

Slaves in South Carolina never had the hope of maroon communities providing sanctuary and an structured life outside of slavery. Orlando Patterson’s model showed how conditions that fostered resistance in Jamaica did not exist in South Carolina. Large stable communities of maroons never grew in the area. Though some slaves eluded capture for many years, most slaves had narrower and more immediate objectives in mind, often the pull of a separated family. In South Carolina and Jamaica, indeed throughout the New World where slavery existed, slaves sought relief from the system of oppression by turning their backs and running away.
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