

Chapter 8

Manhood, Sex, and Power in Antebellum Slave Communities

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Over the last few decades, historians have become increasingly attuned to the centrality of sex to U.S. slavery and the ways in which reproductive, bodily, and intimate practices were deeply enmeshed in the power dynamics of bondage. Pioneering work by scholars such as Deborah Gray White, Darlene Clark Hine, and Thelma Jennings emphasizes the gendered dimensions to slave life and the diverse ways in which enslaved women and men sought to shape human lives in an inhumane institution. While not restricted to sexual matters, these historians highlight the particular difficulties enslaved women faced in the intimate sphere, proving that "the institution of slavery created for slaveholders the possibility of unrestrained sexual access and control" and that many white men of the period, master or not, embraced this possibility.¹ The ubiquity of such abuse has been starkly and stubbornly revealed, with Catherine Clinton arguing that this should put to rest forever early southern protestations that "slavery was one big happy family."²

Much of this scholarship emphasizes the degree to which coerced sex reflected and consolidated white supremacy.³ In her influential study of the sexual exploitation of enslaved women, for example, Jennings notes that WPA respondents commonly "blamed the white people for forcing a behavior that many of them characterized as similar to that of animals."⁴ Much excellent work has since furthered this analysis, but this chapter aims to develop the literature by looking at sexual coercion within slave communities, thinking, in particular, about how some enslaved men exerted or expected dominance over enslaved women in sexual encounters.⁵ White men were the principal instigators of coerced sex – of this there is no doubt. However, gendered

discrepancies relating to power and agency could be reflected in sexual interactions within the slave quarters: sex could be a terrain of struggle in slave communities. Although important historical work demonstrates that many enslaved relationships could be "characterized as broadly egalitarian and supportive," Deborah Gray White, Brenda Stevenson, and Christopher Morris, and other scholars have also shown less positive dynamics in slave communities. Stevenson, for example, notes that enslaved men could "gain control of and manipulate black women's sexuality."⁶ However, such instances have also been described as the acts of men denied manhood elsewhere, taken as evidence of men left broken by bondage, or, more recently, placed within a framework that suggests sexual exploitation was understood by enslaved people as another shared burden of enslavement.⁷

However, former slaves recalled some enslaved men, as well as white men, forcing enslaved women to do "what they wanted them to do"; the WPA respondents' use of "want" when discussing these encounters indicates at least some perception of male agency and a belief that not all enslaved men were equally victimized by sexual encounters in slavery.⁸ All slaves were brutalized by the racial oppression of U.S. bondage, but tension over expressions of male dominance in the quarters can illustrate that the enslaved population of the antebellum South conceived of their struggles beyond a racial dichotomy. Despite the ostensible unity of racist oppression, layers of patriarchal thinking could also manifest in interactions between enslaved men and women. When Charles Ball described an intimate relationship in which an enslaved man "often beat and otherwise maltreated his wife," the man in question expected unquestioned dominance, bemoaning that he had "but one woman to do any thing for him." Such instances highlight limitations to the idea that enslaved men collectively faced emasculation. Indeed, shared expectations of patriarchal privilege could transcend racial divisions. Ball's overseer did

nothing to stop this man's abuse of his wife, seemingly normalizing claims of intimate strife by claiming that he "never interfered in the family quarrels of the black people."⁹ Scholars have challenged the enduring myth that enslaved men uniformly rejected compassion and care for others, showing that many felt that their identity as men came through protecting enslaved women from the horrors of slavery. However, we need not replace this myth with an idyllic version of enslaved manhood. Enslaved men took individual routes when constructing a sense of self, and these were not always routes worthy of applause.

Of course, much contemporary abolitionist material aimed to elevate enslaved men in public discourse, challenging persistent beliefs in their inferiority or bestial nature in order to attack the injustices of bondage. One such way in which enslaved men were applauded was through highlighting their heroic efforts to protect enslaved women from the sexual exploitation committed or controlled by hypocritical white men.¹⁰ Indeed, according to Henry Bibb, southerners defended their "peculiar institution" so strongly because "licentious white men could not carry out their wicked purposes among the defenceless colored population as they now do, without being exposed and punished by law, if slavery was abolished."¹¹ When black men were described as abusive by antislavery contemporaries, they could be depicted as having been dehumanized by slavery. Sambo, a brutal slave driver in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was "given" an unwilling enslaved woman and expected her submission to him, declaring, "wal, Lucy, yo my woman now." However, Beecher emphasized how the drivers on the plantation had been trained by Simon Legree "in savageness and brutality as systematically as he had his bull-dogs," until they were willing to do his bidding. This power dynamic was reinforced by Legree's comments to Sambo, after he initially failed to get the enslaved woman to accept this arrangement: "I'd a flogged her into 't," said Legree, spitting, "only there's such a

press o' work, it don't seem wuth a while to upset her jist now."¹² Other antislavery authors acknowledged that enslaved men were expected to fulfill their master's sexual demands in forced marriages, but maintained that honorable men still strove to protect enslaved women. For example, in a postbellum interview with "Uncle Stephen," a former slave from Louisiana, he recalled how he was split from his wife and forced to take a new partner by his master. But rather than accept this he secretly maintained his previous relationship and helped his new wife and others to see their lost loved ones.¹³ Another enslaved man chose to suffer heroically rather than accept his master's demands to marry an enslaved woman from his plantation, continually making illicit trips to his first wife. The sense of admiration for this man's refusal to accede to his master's sexual demands is made clear in the narrative, as is the suggestion that this related to his sense of honor as being conjoined with fidelity and faithfulness: "Sometimes they would catch Richard and drive four stakes in the ground, and they would tie his feet and hands to each one and beat him half to death. I tell you, sometimes he could not work. Marster did not care, for he had told Richard to take some of our women for a wife, but Richard would not do it. Richard loved Betty, and he would die for her."¹⁴ With depictions of enslaved men fighting against the sexual demands of their masters or looking for intimate relationships based on respect and care, much antislavery material therefore painted a picture in which enslaved men sought to protect women from the sexual exploitation endemic to U.S. slavery.

Yet while enslaved men were certainly capable of such heroic actions, they were trapped in an institution that legitimized sexual abuse, as well as living within a society that expected men to dominate sexual encounters, even accepting a degree of force at times.¹⁵ Although historians have explored this in relation to white men of the period, studies on enslaved men rarely suggest similar attitudes could influence identities and intimate encounters in slave

communities.¹⁶ Much scholarly work on enslaved men, has, in fact, focused on refuting the common, if contradictory, depictions of black men as either emasculated victims or bestial rapists by stressing the more positive attributes associated with enslaved masculinity.¹⁷ Yet to argue that some enslaved men considered the pursuit of unwilling women or assertions of sexual dominance as an element of manhood is not to make the claim that they were hypersexual "bucks" unable to control their sex drives. Instead, it is to suggest that multiple ideals and behaviors could be associated with masculinity in the antebellum United States and that enslaved men could take different paths in the construction of a masculine self. Some enslavers, and enslaved men alike, viewed sexual dominance as an acceptable expression of manhood. Gendered discrepancies relating to sex, power, and agency could, however, lead to tension in the slave quarters.

Although Rebecca Fraser has noted how "few personal texts are available that truly reveal the intimate lives of the enslaved," this chapter makes use of select testimonies from former slaves interviewed during the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), in order to address sex within slave communities.¹⁸ The aim is not to claim these interviewees spoke for everyone, but instead to use their stories to showcase the diversity of experience in slavery and note that sexual exploitation was not necessarily understood as a shared burden of bondage. While the WPA collections have been described as "an indispensable source" for historians of slavery, they have also been the subject of fierce critiques.¹⁹ Although many were enslaved only as children, Paul Escott, and, more recently, Gregory Smithers, highlight that a significant number of respondents experienced or were willing to discuss sexual matters, while also noting that "likely reticence caused some underreporting."²⁰ This reticence may have come from the conditions of the interviews, with the racial tension of the era no doubt

influencing some, but it may also have come from a morality or a "culture of dissemblance" imposed by the respondents themselves.²¹ Despite these limits, the formerly enslaved were not completely cowed into silence. Historians have made significant use of their testimony in order to discuss both intimacy and exploitation within slave communities.

With regard to enslaved men's role in intimate unions, Fraser has argued that some WPA respondents painted a picture of black male morality "far removed from white images of the sexually menacing and aggressive black male[;] . . . the men in these narratives were defined as both unassuming and modest in the context of a relationship that was intimately connected to sexual desire."²² Emily West has suggested that WPA accounts from South Carolina showcase the loving nature of intimate relationships. According to West, the testimony "provides virtually no cases of slave husbands abusing wives" and that such abuse was, moreover, "so completely against the positive tone of the slave testimony that it seems inconceivable that it could have been a significant part of the inner thoughts of ex-slaves."²³ West later addressed sexual abuse and violence in enslaved families while noting that enslaved men "did not seek to imitate the behavior of white men by systematically abusing enslaved females."²⁴ Yet, while enslaved men may not have systematically abused enslaved women, the language employed by some WPA respondents suggests that concerns with masculine dominance extended into the quarters and could affect how some enslaved men, as well as white men, perceived intimate power dynamics.

As Gregory Smithers shows, WPA respondents offered particular insights into sexual coercion in slavery when discussing forced marriages and "breeding."²⁵ Although debates exist over the mechanisms employed and the extent of white control, enslavers were deeply interested and depressingly invested in their slaves' reproductive lives, particularly following the closing of the Atlantic slave trade.²⁶ Slaves strove for agency in intimacy, but their sexual lives were rarely

free from white interference and marriage was frequently predicated on fecundity. Historians generally suggest that these pressures "made men and women 'victims of reproductive abuse.'"²⁷ Daina Ramey Berry has shown how "forced breeding in the slave quarters manifested itself as an indirect form of rape where *powerless* enslaved males and females became the victims of reproductive abuse to which they did not *willingly* give their consent" (original emphasis), and there are certainly clear examples of this dual burden.²⁸ One former slave stated that "Massa, he bring more women to see me. He wouldn't let me have jus' one woman," while other respondents maintained that male "stockmen" were rented out to those slave owners who had "some young women he wanted to raise children from."²⁹

These unions could entail a shared loss of autonomy for men and women, but the language some former slaves used to describe these encounters suggests that expectations of male dominance could permeate such encounters. Willie McCullough described how his mother reached the age of sixteen and was forced to marry an enslaved man; although both individuals were dehumanized through the process, the enslaver seemed to expect male sexual control and that the male slave would be appreciative of this: "[Master] told this negro he could take her to a certain cabin and go to bed. This was done without getting her consent or even asking her about it."³⁰ This assumption of normative male dominance and desire--that she was his to "take"--as well as the reference to her lack of consent but not his, challenges the idea that enslaved men were consciously emasculated by their enslavers when it came to establishing sexual relationships in the quarters. The use of the word "could," as opposed to "should," potentially speaks to a perception of sex as reward. This man may not have shared his enslaver's view on the matter, but in similar arrangements enslaved men apparently took the lead, believing that slaveholders would acquiesce to their requests. Katie Blackwell Johnson, a former slave from

Virginia, informed her interviewer that "if a man saw a girl he liked he would ask his master's permission to ask the master of the girl for her. If his master consented and her master consented then they came together." Tellingly, Johnson went on to note that "the woman had no choice in the matter."³¹

While ultimate control clearly rested with the white slaveholder, enslaved men appeared to hold a greater degree of intimate agency than enslaved women did. Other historians have noted this gendered power dynamic. Jennings, for example, argues that men frequently played the central role in determining intimate relationships: "most often some young male selected his partner and then asked the master if she could become his wife." More recently, Kathleen Brown has stated that enslaved men frequently took the lead in asking for wives, suggesting that this could "tell us about enslaved men's desires for intimacy and connections with women."³²

However, these requests were not always viewed in a positive light by the enslaved women involved. The fact that Katie Jackson went on to note that "some good masters would punish slaves who mistreated their womenfolk and some didn't," implies that enslaved men did not inevitably treat well the women they requested.³³ Some former slaves also felt that, rather than being victimized by their master in intimate matters, enslaved men could make requests of them. Moses Jeffries, for example, highlighted competitive male sexual agency and a lack of concern for female consent in his description of how marriage worked in slavery: "If I went on a plantation and saw a girl I wanted to marry, I would ask my master to buy her for me. It would n't matter if she were somebody else's wife; she would become mine."³⁴ The recollections by Jerry Eubanks of his youthful sexual endeavors underscore how shared expectations between black and white men of the acquisitive nature of male sexuality could inform sexual access to enslaved women. Eubanks, formerly an enslaved carriage driver from Mississippi, told his

interviewer: "I didn't marry, you know--dere was a boss over dere and a boss over here. If one had a woman I wanted, my boss would send a note and tell him--den I'd visit dat plantation on sich and sich a nights."³⁵ The emphasis on "want" suggests a degree of agency, as opposed to unrelenting pressure.

Some enslaved men who were involved in relationships that could fulfill historical definitions of breeding articulated these activities as examples of their standing above others: rather than evidence of emasculation or dependency, these roles were public recognition of virile manhood. Rias Body, enslaved in Georgia, suggested that "stud bucks"--including eight of his brothers--"were allowed to roam anywhere they pleased at night, without passes and with no questions asked," claiming that these men would compete with one another in order to "beget the largest number of children in a year." While Body admitted this was unpopular among other men, he painted their displeasure as jealousy: "of course, they were the envy of all the average sized and under-sized men who did not enjoy any such considerations."³⁶ Although it is clearly possible that some of these tales were boasts or exaggerations, this also implies a belief that the men involved were not powerless victims. Rather than accept such a role as evidence of their dehumanization and degradation, these slaves, or those around them, occasionally used these practices to craft homosocial hierarchies based on sexual prowess. Zeno John, who was enslaved as a small child in Louisiana, stated that "when de marsters see a good big nigger sometime dey buy him for a breeder." John's father purportedly held and fulfilled such responsibilities, as, "befo' he die he say he had sebenty chillen, gran'chillen, and great-gran-chillen."³⁷ Although it seemed as though his parents had little attachment to one another, with his mother choosing another man in freedom, the sexual prowess of John's father appeared worth emphasizing. Rather

than evidence of his father's powerlessness, John saw this role as direct recognition of his manhood: according to John, "my daddy was much of a man, yessir."³⁸

Other respondents emphasized a comparative and competitive element to male sexual dominance in their communities, with the men chosen for "breeding" roles depicted as more deserving than others. William Matthews noted that "if a unhealthy nigger take up wit' a healthy, stout woman, de white folks sep'rate 'em," but that "if a man was big, stout, man, good breed, dey give him four, five women. Dat's de God's truth."³⁹ Andrew Boone stated that his father was ranked in such a way and "had several women besides mother," as well as exclusive rights to them: "no udder man wus allowed to have anything to do wid 'em."⁴⁰ While bound within the broader exploitation of slavery, the emphasis on the prowess of these slaves compared with other men in the community suggests that these men were not automatically considered controlled or powerless by their peers. Furthermore, the depiction of intimacy as a "reward"--of women being given or owned--is infused with patriarchal rhetoric. Ex-slave John Cole, whose testimony has been used by Smithers to highlight the "master's disregard for courtship and nurturing family networks among the enslaved," also suggested that a degree of disregard could come from within the quarters.⁴¹ The idea that men's desires--white and black--could take precedence over female consent was highlighted in Cole's recollections that "if the woman wasn't willing, a good, hard-working hand could always get the master to make the girl marry him--whether of [sic] no, willy-nilly."⁴² These testimonials, while addressing intimate arrangements that could correspond to historical definitions of breeding, offer little sense of male sexual victimhood or a feeling of shared oppression. Instead, some contemporaries felt that select enslaved men could "earn" sexual access to enslaved women, occasionally irrespective of whether their female counterparts agreed.

Although the previous respondents did not always address consent in these encounters, enslaved women who had faced sexual pressure occasionally stressed that their resistance was directed at black men as well as at white men. Others felt that there was cooperation between enslaved men and owners in establishing intimate relationships and, tellingly, appeared to resent this. The references to the agency of the men involved offer insights into how enslaved women could perceive coerced sex as more than simply a shared oppression of bondage, making this an aspect of slavery where they felt victimized by gender as well as by race. Mary Gaffney, taken to Texas as part of her master's plan to "get rich," offered one such example.⁴³ On arrival, and despite knowing this was against her wishes, Gaffney's master "put another negro man with my mother, then he put one with me." Despite acknowledging her master was in control overall, she described how she "hated the man I married." Furthermore, she also suggested there was a degree of contest with regards to a sexual encounter, informing her interviewer: "I would not let that negro touch me." Gaffney was cruelly whipped into submission by her master, but she placed at least some of the blame for this on the enslaved man: "he told Maser and Maser gave me a real good whipping, so that night I let that negro have his way." While absolutely condemning her master, the initial hatred of her enslaved partner, and, perhaps more importantly, the suggestion that this sexual encounter was "his way," suggests her belief that his desires actively helped in the enforcement of sexual activity against her wishes.⁴⁴ Other female respondents detailed how they fought both master and slave in order to prevent unwanted intimacy, and the disdain with which they described the enslaved men suggests they did not believe they were equally powerless in the process. Silvia King was sold to a planter in Texas and, despite having told her master that she had a "man and three chillen back in de old country," was nonetheless forced to take a new husband. She attempted to refuse, and the inference in

King's testimony was that her given partner tried to force her into sex. Indeed, she "fit him good and plenty" before the overseer ultimately forced her to submit.⁴⁵

Enslaved men faced enormous pressures in bondage, including the threat of physical punishment and sale if they failed to do their enslaver's bidding. This undoubtedly affected their actions in the intimate sphere. However, enslaved women who expressed anger at the role some enslaved men took in enforcing intimacy within slavery appeared to believe that these behaviors spoke to broader expectations of dominance over others, and that this had negatively affected the women's lives. Their testimonies offer insight into the ways in which gender and race intersected and influenced relationships in slavery, and, perhaps, in freedom. Women's anger is evident in the testimony of Rose Williams, a formerly enslaved woman who had been sold as a teenager with the expectation that she "will make de good breeder." Williams' story is well known to scholars of slave intimacy, but there are elements of the story that illuminate contests over intimate agency within the slave quarters. Having turned sixteen, Williams was placed in a cabin with Rufus, an enslaved man on the plantation, and explained her confusion when he attempted to join her in bed. Rather than accept this, Williams kicked him out. Historian Deborah Gray White has noted that Rufus was "infuriated" by Rose's response. Although historian Thomas Foster insists that Rufus did not attempt to use physical force, his argument understates the level of conflict Williams' refusal occasioned.⁴⁶ Having kicked Rufus off the bunk, Williams explicitly went on to describe his anger at her, as well as the extreme lengths to which she defended herself: "Dat nigger jump up and he mad. He look like de wild boar. He starts for de bunk and I jumps quick for de poker." The language employed by Williams indicated a real perception of threat: "*when he comes at me* I lets him have it over de head" (emphasis added). Williams was eventually forced into a sexual relationship with Rufus after her master threatened

her with whipping as well as the sale of her family. When Williams eventually yielded, it was because she "cides' to do as de massa wish." Yet she also clearly believed this encounter was shaped by more than just the desires of her enslaver. When Williams initially described her refusal to have sex, she claimed this was "what Rufus wants."

Rufus, of course, has no say in this story; he may have endured threats and terrible suffering that we will never know. However, despite having been told by her mistress that this relationship was "de massa's wishes," and after more than seventy years of reflection, Williams hardly felt his behavior was symptomatic of the shared hardships of slavery. Before recounting her experience of forced sex, she described Rufus as a "bully" who expected his dominance to extend across the plantation: "He am big and 'cause he so he think everybody do what him say." Her insistence that she was unwilling to have "truck with any man" after emancipation implies that she felt her oppression was gendered as well as racial and that this had lasting consequences for her.⁴⁷ Williams' story, as well as other stories described in this essay, do not conform easily to the model of enslaved men enforcing intimacy in order to prove a subversive manhood denied elsewhere by emasculatory white men. Nor do they easily reflect the notion that such abuse was unquestionably recognized as evidence of a shared powerlessness that punished men and women equally. The agency that some slaves attributed to enslaved men in matters of sexual coercion, while by no means unproblematic, demonstrates the complexity to intimate relations in slavery, as well as how gendered power dynamics could disrupt or challenge the solidarity of slave communities.

Scholars are increasingly highlighting the complex legacies of sexual encounters in U.S. slave societies, and, in this vein, it is worth considering the complications attached to enslaved

intimacy. Sexual coercion within the slave quarters cannot be explained solely as a consequence of emasculation or oppression; enslaved men were not hypersexual "bucks" unable to control their sex drive, but neither were they all equally victimized through an institutionalized emasculatory regime. Some enslaved men were understood, and understood themselves, as being the beneficiaries of a form of masculine privilege in the intimate realm, using sexual dominance to construct a homosocial hierarchy in which they placed themselves above other men, sometimes at the expense of enslaved women. Historians have done significant work in restoring enslaved men to the historical picture as loving and caring husbands and fathers, but there was not an idyllic or singular version of enslaved manhood. Conflict in the quarters, boastful descriptions of "breeding," and implicit or explicit suggestions of a lack of concern for consent demonstrates that enslaved men could have different perceptions as to what manhood entailed and that this could divide slave communities. Coerced sexual activity could be articulated as an expression of masculinity by some enslaved men. This fact should not demonize all enslaved men, but it does highlight the complex and multiple understandings of manhood among the enslaved. Sexually domineering enslaved men may have been viewed with hatred and scorn by others in their community, but they did not invariably see themselves as low in a masculine hierarchy. While undeniably victimized and constrained in their actions by slavery, some enslaved men felt that manhood meant they could, and even should be, dominant in sex, even if this came at the expense of others in their community.

¹ Dorothy Roberts, "The Paradox of Silence and Display: Sexual Violation of Enslaved Women and Contemporary Contradictions in Black Female Sexuality," in *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies*, ed. Bernadette J. Brooten (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 41-61, 43. Pioneering work on gender and slavery includes Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (London: Women's Press, 1982); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love*,

Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: Norton, 1985); Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," *Signs* 4, no. 4 (1989): 912-21; Thelma Jennings, "'Us Colored Women Had to Go through a Plenty': Sexual Exploitation of African American Slave Women," *Journal of Women's History* 1, no. 3 (1990): 45-74; Catherine Clinton, "'Southern Dishonour': Flesh, Blood, Race and Bondage," in *In Joy and Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1990*, ed. Carol Bleser (New York: Oxford University of Press, 1991), 52-68; Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

² Catherine Clinton, "Breaking the Silence: Sexual Hypocrisies from Thomas Jefferson to Strom Thurmond," in Brooten, *Beyond Slavery*, 213-28, 223.

³ Although ideas on consent and coercion are not ahistorical, I define sexual coercion in a similar fashion to Sharon Block, who has applied the label to "acts not necessarily identified as rape in early America that nevertheless contained some degree of extorted or forced sexual relations." For the purposes of this essay I will primarily discuss sexual encounters in which some form of unwillingness to engage in sex was acknowledged or expressed. See Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), chapters 1-2.

⁴ Jennings, "Us Colored Women," 53.

⁵ Although outside the remit of this essay, scholars are increasingly exploring same-sex encounters in slavery, both consensual and otherwise. See Thomas A. Foster, "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under Slavery," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 3 (2011): 445-64; John Saillant, "The Black Body Erotic and the Republican Body Politic, 1790-1820," in *Long before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Thomas A. Foster (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 303-23.

⁶ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, 206-58, 240; Christopher Morris, "Within the Slave Cabin: Violence in Mississippi Slave Families," in *Over the Threshold: Intimate Violence in Early America*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (London: Psychology Press, 1999), 268-87.

⁷ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (1988): 1228-52, 1246; Foster, "Sexual Abuse of Black Men," especially 454-58. Some

commentators have used the idea of emasculation in slavery to explain rape in the twentieth century. See Robert Staples, *Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society* (San Francisco: Black Scholar's Press, 1985), 64.

⁸ George P. Rawick, gen. ed. *American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), vol. 9, pt. 3, 218.

⁹ Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains; or, The Life of an American Slave* (Indianapolis: H. Dayton, 1859), 197.

¹⁰ For more on the abolitionist construction of enslaved men as pure, see Maria Diedrich, "'My Love Is Black as Yours Is Fair': Premarital Love and Sexuality in the Antebellum Slave Narrative," *Phylon* 47 (1986): 238-47.

¹¹ Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (New York: H. Bibb, 1849), 199, accessed at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bibb/bibb.html>.

¹² Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 354-63.

¹³ Octavia V. Rogers Albert, *The House of Bondage, or, Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves, Original and Life Like, As They Appeared in Their Old Plantation and City Slave Life; Together with Pen-Pictures of the Peculiar Institution, with Sights and Insights into Their New Relations as Freedmen, Freemen, and Citizens* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1890), 106-8, accessed at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/albert/menu.html>.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁵ Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 20; Kirsten E. Wood, "Gender and Slavery," in *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 513-34, 524.

¹⁶ See, for example, Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 333; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 226, 283; Clare Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Craig Thompson Friend, "Sex, Self, and the Performance of Patriarchal Manhood in the Old South," in *The Old South's Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress*, ed. L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen, and Frank Towers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 246-65.

¹⁷ Black, *Dismantling Black Manhood*, 127. We could note, for example, the generally positive tone and emphasis on work, family life, and resistance as evidence for black manhood in essays in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity*, vol. 1, "Manhood Rights": *The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Rebecca Fraser, *Courtship and Love among the Enslaved in North Carolina* (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 2007), 11.

¹⁹ Paul Escott, "The Art and Science of Reading WPA Slave Narratives," in *The Slave's Narrative*, ed. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 40-48, 40. For methodological discussions on the uses and limitations of WPA sources, see Paul Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave-Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Donna Spindel, "Assessing Memory: Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives Reconsidered," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27, no. 2 (1996): 247-61; Stephanie Shaw, "Using the WPA Ex-Slave Narratives to Study the Impact of the Great Depression," *Journal of Southern History* 69, no. 3 (2003): 623-58; Edward Baptist, "'Stol' and Fetched Here': Enslaved Migration, Ex-slave Narratives, and Vernacular History," in *New Studies in the History of American Slavery*, ed. Edward Baptist and Stephanie M. H. Camp (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 243-274.

²⁰ Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, 45; Gregory D. Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence, and Memory in African American History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012), 101.

²¹ For more information on sexual morality, "principle," and the culture of dissemblance, see, Brenda Stevenson, "Gender Conventions, Ideals and Identity among Antebellum Virginia Slave Women," in *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, ed. D. B. Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 169-93, 171; Anthony Parent Jr. and Susan Brown Wallace, "Childhood and Sexual Identity under Slavery," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 3 (1993): 363-401; Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women," 915.

²² Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, 80.

²³ Emily West, "The Debate on the Strength of Slave Families: South Carolina and the Importance of Cross-Plantation Marriages," *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 221-41, 238.

²⁴ Emily West, "Tensions, Tempers, and Temptations: Marital Discord among Slaves in Antebellum South Carolina," *American Nineteenth Century History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 1-18, 7.

²⁵ Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, esp. chapter 5.

²⁶ See, for example, Wilma Dunaway, *The African American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 274; Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 3; Richard Sutch, "The Breeding of Slaves for Sale and the Westward Expansion of Slavery, 1850-1860," in *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Eugene D. Genovese (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 173-211; Richard H. Steckel, "Demography and Slavery," in Paquette and Smith, *Oxford Handbook of Slavery*, 643-63. Two prominent scholars of the internal slave trade, Michael Tadman and Steven Deyle, are skeptical of widespread "stud farms" but acknowledge the coercive power slaveholders wielded. Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 122-29; Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 47. For an assessment of breeding as an integral part of enslaved women's experiences, see Pamela D. Bridgewater, "Ain't I a Slave: Slavery Reproductive Abuse, and Reparations," *UCLA Women's Law Journal* (2005): 90-161. For wide-ranging discussions on the rhetoric, experiences, memories, and contested historiography on the topic, see Smithers, *Slave Breeding*.

²⁷ Wood, "Gender and Slavery," 523.

²⁸ Daina Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in antebellum Georgia* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 79.

²⁹ Rawick, *American Slave, Series 1*, vol. 4, pt. 1, 299; *American Slave, Series 2*, vol. 10, pt. 6, 223.

³⁰ Rawick, *American Slave, Series 2*, vol. 15, pt. 2, 78.

³¹ Charles Perdue Jr., Thomas E. Barden, Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 161.

³² Jennings, "Us Colored Women," 47; Kathleen M. Brown, "'Strength of the Lion . . . Arms Like Polished Iron': Embodying Black Masculinity in an Age of Slavery and Propertied Manhood," in Foster, *New Men*, 172-95, 180.

³³ Perdue et al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, 161.

³⁴ Rawick, *American Slave, Series 2*, vol. 9, pt. 4, 39.

³⁵ Rawick, *American Slave, Supplement, Series 1*, vol. 7, pt. 2, 689.

³⁶ Rawick, *American Slave, Supplement, Series 1*, vol. 3, pt. 1, 69.

³⁷ Rawick, *American Slave, Supplement, Series 2*, vol. 6, pt. 5, 1950.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Rawick, *American Slave, Supplement, Series 2*, vol. 7, pt. 6, 2616.

⁴⁰ Rawick, *American Slave, Series 2*, vol. 14, pt. 1, 136.

⁴¹ Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 115.

⁴² Rawick, *American Slave, Series 2*, vol. 12, pt. 1, 228.

⁴³ Rawick, *American Slave, Supplement, Series 2*, vol. 5, pt. 4, 1453.

⁴⁴ Mary eventually grew to accept the relationship, stating that after slavery she "just kept on living with that negro." However, the reference to initial hatred in the interview was clear, suggesting the importance of critically addressing the continuation of families post-emancipation. White also notes this need for caution in *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 150.

⁴⁵ Rawick, *American Slave, Series 1*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 291.

⁴⁶ White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 102-3; Foster, "Sexual Abuse of Black Men," 457.

⁴⁷ All Rose Williams quotations are from Rawick, *American Slave, Series 1*, vol. 5, pt. 4, 175-78.