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Title: The Effects of Institutionalized Slavery on Enslaved Women in Jamaica

Signature of Author: Marleen Berger Date: April 23, 2020

Printed Name of Author: Marleen Berger

Street Address: 202 Orlemann Avenue

City, State, Zip Code: Oreland, Pennsylvania, 19075

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# The Effects of Institutionalized Slavery on Enslaved Women in Jamaica

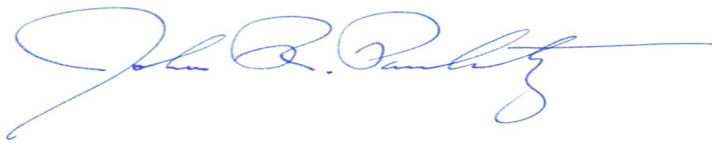
Marleen Berger

Candidate for the degree

Bachelor of Arts

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

Departmental Distinction in History



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John Pankratz, Ph.D.



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Hilary Aquino, Ph.D.



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Michele Cramer, M.S.

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### **Abstract**

The study of demographics of the slave trade in Jamaica provides a valuable insight into the impact of slavery on the overall standard of living of enslaved women. Slavery is often characterized as a time of oppression that is expressed through the lives of men, ultimately leaving women marginalized. This generalization ultimately ignores the multi-layered forms of dehumanization many enslaved women faced across Jamaica. This research explores the impact of slavery on the lives of women across Jamaica through an arduous journey of labor, sexual abuse and reproductive complexities. As the lives of enslaved women were drastically uprooted, the dehumanized nature of slave plantations often destroyed their spiritual and maternal responsibilities. As various plantation owners and slave holders discovered maternity and fertility as an essential way to regenerate a laboring population, this ideology ultimately forced enslaved women to birth children, who, in successive generations, would become slaves themselves. Constantly faced with the fear of insurrection and found freedom, plantation owners unified in their ideology that enslaved women controlled the means of the population on slave plantations across Jamaica.

## Table of Contents

I.	Abstract.....	2
II.	Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Background.....	4
III.	Racial Stereotypes of Enslaved Women.....	6
IV.	Sexual Abuse.....	10
V.	Slave Women and Reproduction.....	16
VI.	Food Rations and Diet.....	18
VII.	Labor and its Effect on Reproduction.....	21
VIII.	Women-Led Resistance.....	23
IX.	Infectious Diseases and Reproduction.....	25
X.	Contraception and Abortion.....	27
XI.	Birthing Facilities and Midwives.....	29
XII.	African Culture of Late Weaning.....	30
XIII.	Women’s Role in Market Exchange.....	31
XIV.	Jamaican Workhouses.....	33
XV.	Specific Slave Plantations.....	38
XVI.	Conclusion.....	40
XVII.	Appendix.....	42
XVIII.	References.....	45

## Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Eighteenth-century Jamaica was a place of economic and social prosperity that offered almost any white European man an opportunity to acquire immense wealth. Throughout the eighteenth century, large numbers of white Europeans flocked to Jamaica, determined to take advantage of plantation societies. Although the vast majority of European plantation owners and masters were absentees, they greatly affected the lives of thousands of slaves. From the beginning of British rule in Jamaica in 1655, until the early nineteenth-century, thousands of Africans were violently taken and forced into a system of labor. With the intensive importation of slaves, the population of Jamaica dramatically increased where approximately 110,000 slaves lived in the colony compared to only 10,000 whites. Approximately 75 percent of the slaves worked on the various plantations, where conditions of labor were incredibly inhumane and grueling.

The accumulated wealth of the plantations dominated island politics, which ultimately defended the ideology of slavery. Jamaica at the time of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was the largest British colony that imported more than half of the estimated two million enslaved Africans that were brought to the British West Indies by 1807. Coupled with the influence of fluctuating local and international prices for sugar as a commodity, the overall demand for slaves increased in the British Caribbean. Living in a society in which whites were the minority, it caused an immense level of fear of insurrection and rebellion which forced plantations to use physical and mental punishments to curb any chance of revolt. African in-migration was also a central feature on Jamaican plantation life between 1655 and 1808. During this time period, 3,432 known voyages from Africa shipped 915,204 Africans to Jamaica. The size of the slave

trade that entered Jamaica shows the enormous numbers of slaves that were imported into a system that was very reliant upon slave labor.

The overall gender structure of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade have only occasionally been focused on the experiences of enslaved women. Slavery has been overlooked Few historians have focused on the oppression of enslaved women, which unfortunately, shaped the structure of the slave trade due to their high value. Due to the combination of brutal labor and extreme exploitation of slaves the sugar regime was the most profitable form of production due to the combination of brutal labor and deepened exploitation of slaves. As the economy in Jamaica developed, various plantation owners focused their attention on the profitability their plantation would earn on the backs of slaves. Ignorant of the possibility of a decline in the overall slave population, plantation owners and overseers continued to import thousands of slaves. As a means of production, slavery began to intensify and exploit women in every way possible. Women endured more hardships and pain during Jamaican slavery that ultimately destroyed their humanity and sense of freedom. During a time of exploitation and oppression, it is easy for a 'superior race' to use deeply rooted racism and hatred to fuel and justify the means of slavery. Although the system of slavery damaged thousands of human beings, women throughout the slave regime in Jamaica were overlooked. Often times women are marginalized and categorized as the same as men, but in reality, enslaved women in Jamaica faced levels of cruelty and disruption that defy any categorization.

## Racial Stereotypes of Enslaved Women

As the ideology of women through the eyes of European oppressors began to form, African women were excluded from the ideology of what beauty entailed. Masking the hatred for African women, European expression of a racial stereotypes allowed others to fall into the trap of the notion of an African woman being muscular with masculine build and sub human traits. Not only does this belief in African women evolve into a means of suppression, it formulated a larger separation between the beauty of a white European woman and that of an African woman. Constantly faced with scrutiny from their oppressors, African women were constantly compared to animals. William Towerson wrote in the 1550s, “the Africans of the Sesto River on the Grain Coast (current day Liberia) claimed that men and women go so much alike, that a woman is only known for her breasts, which are mostly long and hanging down like the udder of a milch goat”.<sup>1</sup> These very stereotypes Europeans created were a means to justify the separation between races. By providing reasoning, and seeming evidence, behind racism, Europeans were able to expand their superficial knowledge about Africa to other locations.

The evolved racialized discourses confirmed by the actions of a European’s idea of cultural superiority allowed for the creation of justified power over ‘inferior peoples’. Although it is difficult to not generalize about numerous societies that were ethnically and culturally different from one another, African societies had a centralized aspect of what motherhood entailed. African women who were mothers were central to the transmission of family cultures, traditions and values. As women carried out the duties of motherhood by passing on knowledge throughout various plantations, the culture of one’s past was never lost. In all pre-industrial peasant societies, fertility and motherhood were central to the African cultures of women. In a

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara, Bush, *African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children: Traumas of Dislocation and Enslavement Across the Atlantic World*, (Caribbean Quarterly, 2008), 71.

society that was centered around ancestor worship, the woman of the family was at the center of the kinship web which guaranteed its endless proliferation as the carrier of roots.<sup>2</sup> As adolescent African women aged, the notion of becoming a mother fulfilled their duties as being a woman. Motherhood was considered to be the greatest gift on earth until it was stripped away on slave plantations.

The assumptions about the ease of childbirth in African societies persisted to the modern era which perpetuated the ideology that women were able to replenish slave populations on plantations. The effect of this notion on women on plantation societies caused some of the highest mortality rates among African women. In many West African peasant cultures, pregnancy and childbirth are regarded as a very dangerous and unpredictable time for woman and are associated with complex rituals.<sup>3</sup> In a plantation society, many Europeans were ignored the dangerous nature of childbirth in order to force slave reproduction. No matter the location, childbirth remained as, if not more, hazardous, with a high incidence of gynecological complications which was a direct result of the labor and physical treatment of African slaves. Ignoring the various complications only fueled the stereotypes that African women were able to reproduce strong and vigorous children. Under very false pretenses, adolescent African slaves were forced into gender roles, marriage and fertility in order to try to combat mortality death rates on plantations.

As the British transatlantic slave trade came under abolitionist scrutiny in 1788, many slave holders had considered different methods of obtaining laborers. As slave holders faced a considerable shift in population density, enslaved women encountered heightened

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<sup>2</sup> Bush, *African Caribbean Mothers and Children*, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Bush.,73.



responsibilities in regard to their daily work as well as increasing pressure to reproduce.

Although it was more common for plantations to buy males, slave holders somewhat reluctantly bought females throughout the seventeenth century and maintained this practice until the late eighteenth century. The notion of male slaves being stronger and more capable of performing hard labor caused the exploitation of females to achieve productivity goals to increase. This stereotyping of women not taking part in the daily labor force created the assertion that enslaved women were less capable than men even though enslaved women worked alongside the men clearing fields for planting, digging cane holes and cutting and carrying canes from the fields to the factories. Women played a key role in the distribution of supplies to various parts of the plantations. Women also had the responsibilities of supplying fuel for the boilers, feeding canes to the mills and removing its residual trash. During harvest time, women worked in the cane fields from sunrise to sunset alongside the men and at nights labored on a shift system to keep apace the processing of sugar cane.

Plantations also revolved heavily around the process of bondwomen's labor. To many plantation owners, pregnancy and childcare were distractions that were formed by capitalistic planters whose main focus was maintaining productivity. Jamaican slave holders were generally unwilling to sacrifice losing women's labor in the fields during pregnancy and childbirth or wait an extended period of time for children to age in order to work in the field. As women bore children, the unfortunate nature of children born from mothers in slavery automatically made the child property to the slave owner of the mother which directly gave ownership to the slave holder of the enslaved mother. This law directly correlates to the Condition of the Mother Law that was passed in the United States by the General Assembly in December of 1662. As Virginia's colonial government at the time defined the conditions and control a slave master had over enslaved

Africans, a similar process occurred in Jamaica (see figure one). The Condition of the Mother Law was designed to curb the possibility of an enslaved woman's child to be free or able to inherit land.<sup>4</sup> This notion not only plays into the ideological framework of the importance a woman's reproduction was to slavery, it ensured the control slave holders had on reproduction. The reproductive abilities of women were foundational to slave holder's motives. Unlike previous notions of enslaved women birthing new slaves thus increasing the population, slave holders after 1788 deliberately calculated and adopted reforms aimed at harnessing enslaved women's fertility.<sup>5</sup> The reproductive function of a woman was previously ignored by slave holders until the ready supply of slaves dwindled. This not only signifies the drastic change in ideology of plantation owners, since up until a certain time, women were valuable as field hands, but then their reproductive labor became more valuable.

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<sup>4</sup> William Waller Henning, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All of the Laws of Virginia*, (New York, 1823).

<sup>5</sup> Sasha Turner, *Home-Grown Slaves: Women, Reproduction, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade in Jamaica*, (Journal of Women's History, 2011), 40.

## Sexual Abuse

Thomas Thistlewood at the age of twenty-nine, was aboard the *Flying Flamborough* on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1750 headed to Jamaica. Thomas Thistlewood failed to establish himself as a successful farmer in Topholme, Lincolnshire, which ultimately caused him to seek fortune in Jamaica.<sup>6</sup> As a brutal slave owner who often resorted to sexual abuse and severe punishment, Thistlewood quickly became one of the largest plantation and slave owners in Jamaica. Because Thistlewood arrived to Jamaica during a time of prosperity from the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748 to the beginning of the American Revolution in 1776, Jamaica was the powerhouse of the British Empire.<sup>7</sup> Due to the various ideologies plantation owners like Thomas Thistlewood constructed, the emphasis of Jamaican colonial laws on men's agency, and their overall construction of a woman's sexuality suggest that race and class differences are the crucial determining factors behind female sexual conduct in the eighteenth century. Women who were enslaved in Jamaica during the eighteenth century were depicted as extremely different from men in regard to their sexuality. In the case of women's bodies and women's sexual conduct, these topics were at the center of sexual conflict. This social conflict ultimately places women of color and white women at political and sexual odds and further carries institutionalized racism. White European men constructed the ideology that African slave women were promiscuous and constantly asked for sex. This notion that African slave women were promiscuous prompted slave holders and plantation owners to make sexual advances on the slaves, which ultimately led to the high rate of sexual abuse.

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<sup>6</sup> Trevor, Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World*, (North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Burnard., 13.

Enslaved women were also faced with an unprecedented amount of sexual abuse. European white men not only invoked their power over African women in ways of psychological control, they used physical power to control the beliefs and actions of women. In the memoir of Thomas Thistlewood, a slave woman named Sally, who was under his control, was faced with daily abuse. In 1782, Sally had a miscarriage while she was having her collar taken off as her private parts tore in a terrible manner, which was discovered in the morning by her having “bled a great deal where she lay in the bilboes last night”.<sup>8</sup> Thistlewood also repeatedly whipped slaves, rubbed salt, lemon juice, and urine into the wounds; made a slave defecate into the mouth of another slave and then gagged the unfortunate recipient of this gift and chained slaves overnight in bilboes.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, young women like Sally were not protected by law against such treacherous treatment. Legislation in Jamaica was not passed until 1823 in order to protect female children, including those who were enslaved, under the age of ten from sexual abuse. Before legislation was passed, several cases of cruelty were brought to colonial courts. One of the more intense court cases allowed a young girl named Kate to express her torture. Kate refused sexual advances from her owners Henry and Helen Moss, which resulted in red pepper being rubbed in her eyes while being flogged.<sup>10</sup> The stories of Kate and Sally are just two examples of the evil treatment women faced while enslaved.

In a matrix of power, white men of British origin who owned a majority of Jamaican slaves were the wealthiest and most powerful men. However, these men were generally in charge of the plantations from overseas which transferred the power to white overseers and enslaved

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<sup>8</sup> Douglass Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica 1750-1786*, (Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies Press, 1998), 150.

<sup>9</sup> Markus Nehl, *A Vicious Circle of Violence: Revisiting Marlon James's The Book of Night Women*, (Transcript Verlag, 2016), 166.

<sup>10</sup> Bush, *African Caribbean Mothers and Children*, 80.

black work gang leaders to be in charge. Due to a large majority of white plantation owners living abroad, they transferred their power to white overseers as well as some black men to overlook their plantations. These men frequently abused their power and privilege and took advantage of enslaved women through sexual abuse. If these women resisted any form of sexual advancement, they would face extreme punishments. The power black and white overseers had over the enslaved women was unprecedented. From the earliest days of slavery in the Caribbean, a woman's reproductive role was not valued and ultimately destroyed. To an enslaved woman, their spiritual connection to childbirth and motherhood prior to being enslaved, gave them a sense of purpose once they had children. Once the women were enslaved, their beliefs and everyday practices were tarnished. Like so many other white Jamaicans, many overseers were rapists who were determined to preserve white dominance and power. An excerpt from *The Book of the Night Women*, written by a Jamaican author, Marlon James in 2009, expresses demoralizing violence against enslaved women:

“Later that night he shove Bacchus’ head on a stick and plant the stick right in front of the slave quarters, where Bacchus stay until he rot off. Knowing who Bacchus’s sister be, a house slave who not yet fourteen, he drag her from great house to the stable, where he rape her and leave him seed in her. Wilkins say they must teach the negroes a lesson. That Saturday, the negroes get the learning. In the morning when the womens washing before they go to the field, Wilkins ride up and grab Leto, a girl who not be sixteen yet. Leto scream. One hour or so later he summon all the slave to one of the empty fields. This is what happen to you when you cross with your master! Jack Wilkins say. In the middle of the field was bundles of stick and bush. In the middle of the bundle was a tree trunk. Tied to the tree trunk was Leto who screaming, pleading and crying” .<sup>11</sup>

As this excerpt reveals, the treatment many individual enslaved women faced on plantations in Jamaica became a means of mass control and mental torture. By showing the other enslaved woman Leto in the field it not only is a form of oppression, but it shows the dominant

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<sup>11</sup> Nehl, *A Vicious Cycle*, 176.

nature and force of the plantation overseer. The act of rape was a direct means to control insubordination as well as a way to intimidate a whole slave community of women. Sexual manipulation and exploitation was a common practice of plantation owners in order for them to coerce the enslaved women to stay on the plantation where they could possibly be paid more money for sexual advances than they would earn if they were free.

Throughout the diary of Thomas Thistlewood, he recounts for his many sexual encounters with enslaved women in a way that showed no evidence of self-scrutiny for his actions. Although it is evident that he had little concern for the well-being of his enslaved women, he is brutally honest about his sexual predations as he writes in his diary. Thomas Thistlewood regularly wrote about his sexual experiences in a way that was easily translated as each was characterized by an event that incorporated a time, date and person.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Thistlewood incorporated as much detail as he could about his encounters as he inevitably wrote about if others were present and if he made any form of payment to his victim. The descriptions provided by Thistlewood shows through his own personal account of his many rapes as acts rather than taking into account the emotions and perspective of the enslaved woman. It is also important to highlight his diaries never incorporated information as to how his sexual encounters occurred.

It was also evident through the writings of Thistlewood that he encountered an inner struggle with whether or not he should engage in a sexual relationship with some of his enslaved women. In one instance Thistlewood wrote, "Negro wench came to persuade me if possible to lay with her. She wanted to have a child for her master. Was a very likely wench of the Mandigo Country but speaks good English".<sup>13</sup> His diary entries are not only explicit in his every day

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<sup>12</sup> Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Burnard., 29.

feelings in regard to his sexual encounters, but they offer an insight as to which slaves “willingly” wanted to have sex with him and those who did not. It is evident through the writings in his diaries the retelling of his sexual encounters with his slaves were written in a way that only expresses how he views them. This plays into an important notion that highlights the powerful nature of Thomas Thistlewood and his coercive abilities to control enslaved women through sexual abuse.

Over the course thirty-seven years Thistlewood was present on his estates in Jamaica, he engaged in 3,852 acts of sexual intercourse with 138 women. Thistlewood coupled 108 times with 14 different partners as the intensity of his sexual activity varying and eventually peaking in 1754, shortly after he had an encounter with Phibbah; as he had sexual encounters 265 times, then declining again to 200 encounters in his thirties, to over 100 sexual encounters in his forties and fifties to around 80 sex acts in the last decade of his life per year.<sup>14</sup> Even though it was clear that Thomas Thistlewood was sexually active for most of his time on his estates in Jamaica, his diary shows some of his sexual encounters resulted in him having a “wife”. Since it was illegal for a white man and a black woman to have an official marriage, Phibbah only fulfilled a sexual and social role. His first wife his diary goes into detail about is Marina which lasted from August of 1750 until September 1751. Phibbah was his most frequent enslaved woman he had sexual encounters with as he recorded having sex with her over 2,142 times which accounts for 55 percent of his total sexual acts. It is evident that Thistlewood had an intense attachment to Phibbah even though he never confined himself to her. Thistlewood gained most of his sexual encounters from those whom he was able to exploit and have answer to him. One could contextualize on the side of Phibbah that in order to protect herself from any physical abuse or murder, she continued to give herself to Thistlewood as a means of protection.

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<sup>14</sup> Burnard, *Mastery Tyranny, and Desire*, 156.

Thistlewood was inevitably a rapist who harbored attitudes concerning his sexual encounters with his enslaved women. Thistlewood used sex as a way in which his enslaved women could avoid punishment if they had sex with him. The capacity black women had to resist sexual advances from slave masters and overseers was negligible. Sexual exploitation of enslaved women only exacerbated the psychological and physical control many slave masters had over enslaved women. Constantly living in fear of punishment and death, many enslaved women took the sexual encounters with Thistlewood a time where they knew they would survive.



### Slave Women and Reproduction

In the second half of the eighteenth century approximately 50% of the slaves on Jamaican sugar estates were women. Although there was a strong percentage of women on various estates, the overall gross reproduction rates did not reflect this high percentage. This was caused from slave owners who bought slaves rather than focusing on breeding slaves and supporting their pregnancies. The overall calculations planters conducted allowed them to estimate the costs of purchasing adult and adolescent Africans as opposed to rearing children themselves and concluded it would not be beneficial to encourage their seasoned women to breed<sup>15</sup>. Soon after the legal end to the British Slave Trade in 1807, the overall viewpoint of the slave owners drastically changed. Without an influx of slaves to import to various plantations, planters and overseers had to resort to breeding in order to keep the population of slaves from falling too low. Planters were also faced with the challenge of importing women since Jamaica imported 575,000 Africans and 60% of those who were imported were male. Slave purchases ended in 1807 and by 1834, the Jamaican slave population fell by 43,000 – a decline of 12 percent. This decline was not only caused by the end of the slave trade, but from aged slaves who died as well as runaways. Not only does the decline in population show the failure of breeding in order to curb the population decline, it showed the drastic measures of plantation owners were not as calculated as they could have been. The disorientation, disease and punishment took a severe toll on many slave women which caused women to stop menstruating due to stress. Under the extreme conditions women were under, the desire and ability to have children was dramatically reduced. Women were faced with emotional amenorrhea and secondary amenorrhea that was

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction in Jamaica*, (Brunel University, 2006), 231.

caused by illness and the sudden change in their environment.<sup>16</sup> The loss of excitement to fulfill the duties of motherhood emphasizes how the notion of slavery attacked the most fundamental basis of an African women identity and her ability to continue lineage.

Slave women across plantations assumed a major role in the determination of the predisposition to pregnancy and the decisions then taken about children. In simple terms, plantation owners needed to work slaves hard to keep up output levels on sugar plantations, the more so after the end to the British Slave Trade. Political tensions between those who wanted to breed African slaves and those who did not, who were on the side of abolishing slavery all together, caused an enormous rift between plantations. Those who were against the forced nature of reproduction among slave women was due to the conditions slaves were forced to work under. Harm to the fetus during pregnancy often times resulted in a miscarriage or stillbirth as the mother was not healthy while being forced in unnatural positions while working in the fields.

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<sup>16</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 235.

### Food Rations and Diet

Enslaved women had a diet that contained grain, vegetables and dried fish.

Unfortunately, in some cases, women were unable to carry to term due to an inadequate level of nutrition. On various plantations across Jamaica, women were forced to provide provisions for themselves instead of relying on the master's rations. In times of war, it was difficult for plantation owners to add imported rations of wheat, flour and other grains to the diets of the slaves since the cost of imports drastically increased. The average diet of an enslaved woman lacked the necessary nutrients like thiamine, vitamin A and calcium which affected their overall fertility. On average, food that was supplied on plantations amounted to approximately 1,500 to 2,000 calories and approximately 45 grams of protein per day. Average conditions for men require roughly 3200 calories per day and women require approximately 2300 calories per day. Under conditions of exceptionally heavy labor, male and females need about 450 more calories in order to work properly.<sup>17</sup>

An inadequate diet had an enormous effect on the fertility and overall physiology of enslaved women. In order for women to properly menstruate, women need to take in three times the amount of iron into their bodies. Enslaved women also required 30 to 50 percent more calcium and thiamine than men in order to properly lactate while pregnant or breastfeeding. Enslaved women who were deficient in nutrients faced irregularities in menstruation making it difficult to conceive. A lack of nutrition in an enslaved woman's diet was due to the men consuming the majority of the protein that was allotted to the families. Most women resorted to the practice of geophagy, otherwise known as 'dirt eating'. James Thomson who was a doctor in

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<sup>17</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 235.

Jamaica wrote in 1820, “women who indulge in dirt eating soon lose their monthly period”.<sup>18</sup>

Dirt eating was a general practice in British Caribbean slave societies as slaves regularly ate baked clayey cakes known to slaves as ‘aboo,’ as a natural response to help nutrient deficiencies.

The existence of geophagy among slave populations in Jamaica was a practice thousands of slaves have used. Slave owners and plantation overseers had clear attitudes in regard to the slaves eating dirt, for example, a Jamaican planter stated: “nothing is more horribly disgusting, nothing more to be dreaded, nothing exhibiting a more heart-rending, ghastly spectacle, than a negro child possessed of the malady”.<sup>19</sup> Although it is clear that plantation owners viewed this form of nutrition as atrocious and degrading, one can contextualize the planters showed some form of fear (see figure 2). The disturbed nature of plantation owners when geophagy became well known, emphasizes the fear that plantation owners had when slaves ultimately died. It became apparent to plantation owners once slaves were hooked on geophagy; it was nearly impossible to break them from the habit. As a form of addictive behavior, slaves did whatever they could to combat the lack of nutrition in their regular diets did not consist of. Some plantation owners tried to prevent other slaves from participating in the addictive pattern of dirt eating by providing as much food as possible as well as treating them with stomach medicines. Although it would have been difficult for smaller plantations in Jamaica to provide medicines and extra food, larger plantations placed several enslaved women as nurses and built extra hospital rooms in case there were plentiful cases of geophagy.

The overall connection between geophagy and the complex relation it had on a slave’s humanity, many plantation owners viewed a slave who ingested dirt as a creature, for example,

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<sup>18</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 236.

<sup>19</sup> Michelle Gadpaille, *Eating Dirt, Being Dirt Backgrounds to the Story of Slavery*, (2014), 5.

“the ill slave becomes a creature rather than a human being, the dirt deprives the slave of her or his humanity”.<sup>20</sup> This account of a non-human trait allows plantation owners and overseers to justify their viewpoint on slaves being an inferior people ultimately rendering them creatures. Due to the belief that geophagy affected creatures, plantation owners rarely took responsibility for the slave’s habit of dirt eating. Plantation owners commonly attributed dirt eating as a punishable offence on behalf of the slave instead of taking into account the slave looking for other ways of getting nutrition. When slaves were found guilty of eating dirt, they were often flogged. The practice of geophagy was unacceptable in the eyes of plantation owners which only extended their power over slaves.

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<sup>20</sup> Gadpaille, *Eating Dirt, Being Dirt*, 6.

### Labor and its Effect on Reproduction

The cultivation of sugar was more physically demanding than growing any other plantation crop. Slaves were faced with long hours of standing having to lift heavy weights of sugar which led to damaged bodies and low natality. Female Jamaican slaves, pregnant or not, were subject to extreme labor until six weeks before expected delivery. Once it became apparent that plantations needed to begin the process of reproduction since the option to import slaves was no longer feasible, plantation overseers excused women from field work when it was known that they were pregnant and placed them outside of the great gang into the second gang with lighter tasks.<sup>21</sup> Planters were obviously aware of the risks they imposed on pregnant enslaved women they owned, but placed the women back in the field four months later and required them to work in a less demanding atmosphere as long as they were still breastfeeding. As planters lessened the work of the new mothers, plantation production levels declined due to less work of enslaved women.

It soon became evident that women who were faced with the least tedious work had the highest reproduction rates. Edward Long, who lived on a Jamaican plantation stated in 1774 that “those negroes breed the best, whose labor is least, or easiest. Thus the domestic negroes have more children”.<sup>22</sup> The notion that slave women were just domestic servants, shows the marginalization of how women were categorized as an inferior gender to men. This ideology of women being inferior is a direct result of the culmination of stereotypes white Europeans created. On various plantations across Jamaica, slave women worked in the fields alongside the men all while dealing with the possibility of being pregnant.

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<sup>21</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 238.

<sup>22</sup> Morgan., 238.

In the case of Thomas Thistlewood, his most treasured enslaved woman, Phibbah, was pregnant with his child all while still working in the great house. It was stated in Thistlewood's diaries that she often times overstepped his view of proper authority, but was rarely punished due to her close relationship with Thistlewood. As Phibbah gave birth on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January:

“On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Old Daphne came over from Salt River to attend to her, and at about 8 o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1760, she was delivered of a boy. House Franke was sent over from Paradise to look after her for a few days, and Egypt Lucy was kept at home giving Phibbah's child suck. For a day or so Phibbah was unwell with a bad looseness and, on hearing of it from Thistlewood, Mrs Cope sent her flour, wine, cinnamon. At the end of the week House Franke was recalled to Paradise and went laden with gifts, a cuba teal and a diver for herself, and a roasting pig for Mrs Cope. In her place, Mr Mould's Franke came to take over the Egypt cookhouse until Phibbah was up and about again”.<sup>23</sup>

Physical punishment of severe proportions was also harmful to fertility. Slave owners and overseers showed little mercy in punishing pregnant women and often followed the normal treatment they would have received if not pregnant. Thomas Thistlewood, who was a plantation owner in Westmoreland parish regularly flogged slaves of both sexes and hired out his pregnant women at the full rate of pay for field laborers until they were within two or three months of delivery.<sup>24</sup> Until the growing attention to the treatment of pregnant slaves. It was common practice at the time to place enslaved women in holes on their stomachs to be able to flog them on the back. The lack of accommodations enslaved women faced while pregnant sometimes caused a prolapsed uterus or death of the unborn child.

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<sup>23</sup> Hall, *In Miserable Slavery*, 94.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 239

### Women-Led Resistance

Although a majority of slave insurrections were committed by recently arrived enslaved men, rigorous tasks women faced in the fields on plantations often led to a collective form of resistance that left some plantations with low production. From individual forms of resistance to small groups of women, sabotage and arson were often committed by women to force the plantation to be considered not productive. In working fields on plantations women often formed small groups that would generate resistance in the forms of small revolts and rebellions which made it incredibly difficult for plantations to control the women. Women were often punished more than male slaves because of their consistent use of small resistance. Women often tried to poison their masters, run away which was often known as a form of petit marronage, and even sabotage crops which forced plantation owners and overseers to use physical punishment.

The overall notion that few enslaved women took part in large forms of revolts or insurrections, offers an important insight into the dynamics of plantations in Jamaica. It was evident the control slave masters and overseers had on enslaved women which typically kept them from orchestrating large forms rebellion. Although it was very common for plantations to face some sort of resistance from the women in the fields or in daily tasks, plantations rarely faced insurrections that were solely led by enslaved women. The slave trade also faced various ideologies of abolitionists who believed a natural increase was not a matter of replacing the slaves from the slave trade with another supply all while faced with the forced nature of plantation owners treating enslaved people as a dispensable product. Despite widespread beliefs of abolitionists who regarded that slavery should be abolished all together, their main focus was on the slave trade itself. Over time, abolitionists argued enslaved Africans would learn the habits of freed people which would ultimately eliminate the need of a bonded laborer. Abolitionists'



activism mobilized a particular racial violence against black sexuality and motherhood due to women's fertility and maternity being central to the African culture. It is important to note the idealization that enslaved women had no agency and were not seen in society to have any merit, acknowledgement of being a human or be able to push back in a way that was troublesome for plantation owners.

### Infectious Diseases and Reproduction

On numerous Jamaican slave plantations, mortality and miscarriages were more attributable to infectious disease than to malnutrition or physical mistreatment. Many of the infectious diseases had devastating effects on pregnancy and the overall ability to reproduce. Diseases such as syphilis, yaws<sup>25</sup> and elephantiasis<sup>26</sup> were very common among enslaved women and increased the likelihood of a miscarriage or stillbirth. Plantation societies also faced outbreaks of smallpox, measles and scarlet fever that frequently added to the level of overall mortality rates. Women also faced dysentery which was caused by malnutrition and excessive labor and contributed to the overall death rate of diarrheal diseases. Slaves sometimes caught colds or fevers while working in the fields in wet clothes with no shoes which caused enslaved women to attempt to combat the chance of contracting elephantiasis, which was caused from chigoes entering the body. Although the various diseases were common and not confined to just pregnant women; but pregnant slaves had a heightened susceptibility to diseases due to a lower immunity level.

Sexually transmitted diseases also contributed to the overall mortality rates of enslaved women. Although sexually transmitted diseases played a miniscule role on plantations, if contracted while pregnant, syphilis in the last six months of pregnancy results in stillbirth. Many historians have singled out cases of venereal disease as an affliction to slave women. In many cases, plantation owners blamed enslaved women for being promiscuous, which would lead to the lack of fertility due to venereal complaints. On plantations run by Simon Taylor and John

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<sup>25</sup> Yaws is a contagious disease that is caused by bacteria entering broken skin abrasions and causes crusted lesions that ultimately develop into deep ulcers of the skin. (Yaws 1363)

<sup>26</sup> Elephantiasis is the enlargement of limbs that is caused by parasites that enter the body. (Elephantiasis 1115)

Wedderburn, slaves often faced blame for their 'sexual actions'. Plantation owners resorted to blame in order to combat the realities of low numbers on their plantations. According to Dr. Thomas Dancer, who was a physician in Jamaica, stated "only 0.5 percent of a sample of 2,394 slaves living on the Jamaican estates were infected with venereal disease".<sup>27</sup> The unfortunate cause of alleged promiscuity of slave women was often times sexual exploitation from white overseers and plantation owners.

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<sup>27</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 242.

## Contraception and Abortion

Enslaved women used various herbs and infusions for contraceptive purposes. Plants such as okra and aloe were transported to Jamaica and were often used as abortifacients. Plantation owners and overseers often scolded enslaved women for the practice of self-abortion. In some cases, enslaved women on plantations practiced being an 'obeahmen' otherwise known as a practitioner who aided women in pursuing abortion.<sup>28</sup> Plantation owners made it evident that if an enslaved woman were to be found of having an abortion, she would be sent away to perform arduous manual labor. However, despite the use of such means to abort unborn children or use contraceptive measures, it is difficult to pinpoint and support that slave women had significant control over their bodies due to extreme labor conditions, diseases and malnutrition.

Slave women also faced spontaneous miscarriages and stillbirths that many plantation owners believed to be planned. On a plantation in Jamaica during the 1700s through to the 1800s, it would have been very difficult to determine if the death of an unborn child was calculated or not. To be able to distinguish between calculated and a woman simply having a miscarriage, plantation owners would have sent more women away to be punished.

From the viewpoint of slave women's dedication to children and motherhood, it seems unlikely that self-abortion would have been a common occurrence on plantations. Enslaved women at the time were fully aware of the risks of abortion which causes me to believe abortions may have been more common for younger aged slaves. Without common knowledge of the risks associated with abortion, young females would have had issues with hemorrhaging, septicemia and even the risk of death. It is far more feasible that stillborn deaths and miscarriages were associated with arduous labor. To some extent it is difficult to conclude if children were born

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<sup>28</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 245.

prematurely or not due to 80 percent of infant deaths occurring soon after the child had survived at least a week.<sup>29</sup> The health of the child depended solely on the health and overall nutritional intake of the mother. Given the environment of little nutrition, heinous labor conditions and brutal physical punishment, it was often the case that children did not survive.

Instances of miscarriages, stillbirths and the death of infants within a few days of birth between 1762 and 1831 on the Mesopotamia plantation in Jamaica recorded only half of the pregnancies of the enslaved women made it to term; reports from Vere parish suggested half of their pregnancies also ended in miscarriage and at Worthy Park, Rose Price owned 240 female slaves and at the time only 72.5 percent had reached or passed through childbearing years.<sup>30</sup> Some of the 37.1 percent of his women had given birth approximately 352 times, but live births only accounted for about 275 which indicated one miscarriage for every 4.6 live births or 18 percent. There was also little evidence that suggested women died during childbirth or shortly after delivery. From the Mesopotamia plantation, records showed that only three mothers out of seventy-two died in childbirth and on Golden Grove sugar estate, only four out of fifty-two females died after childbirth.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 248.

<sup>30</sup> Morgan.,249

<sup>31</sup> Morgan.,249

### Birthing Facilities and Midwives

A battle between slaves and plantation owners and overseers in regard to the sanitation of birthing rooms and at home deliveries occurred throughout the late eighteenth century. In a set of rules offered to plantation owners, enslaved women were encouraged to go to a lying-in house that was attended to by a midwife. If the child and mother survived, the midwife would be awarded 10 shillings, while the mother was given a linen frock for herself and her child. There was considerable difficulty to persuade female slaves to have birth in lying-in houses. Many female slaves were unwilling to leave the comforts of their own homes to give birth in lying-in houses because those who were sick were treated alongside expectant mothers in the lying-in houses. Despite plantation owner's continued efforts to provide more availability of lying-in houses separate from hospitals, women continued throughout the period of slavery to give birth in their own homes.

Many slave plantations designated elderly women and mothers as caregivers during the time of another slave giving birth. On John Tharp's estate in 1805, there were seven women who were listed as midwives between the ages of thirty and sixty.<sup>32</sup> Planters often blamed the midwives for the unsuccessful childbirths and argued they were unskilled and not in the appropriate conditions to care for a mother in labor. Even though a majority of the women who were midwives were elderly, it does not mean however that they were incapable of caring for laboring mothers. The support provided by midwives offered a sense of comfort to laboring mothers which combated the cruel words and treatment of plantation owners and overseers.

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<sup>32</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 250.

### African Culture of Late Weaning

The traumatic pressures and implications African slave women were faced with had an enormous and destructive effect on the kinship structures within which birth, motherhood and childrearing practices and rituals were embedded into culture. Although women predominated in the internal slave trade in Africans, they are estimated to have compromised only on average one third of captives sent to the Americas.<sup>33</sup> Children constituted only 19% of captives shipped to Jamaica from 1764 through 1788, of this 19%, children between 10 and 16 constituted 14% of those transported to the British Caribbean from 1683 to 1791. During this time of extreme enslavement, many families in the cases of extensive famine, would sell their children in order to obtain some form of sustainability.<sup>34</sup>

In most cases, African families were faced with the notion that many European slave owners were reluctant to capture young children and young women since they took up desirable space on ships which could have been filled by men who were slightly older and more suitable to plantation labor. Slave owners were also concerned in the case of a woman giving birth on the ship before reaching its intended location. The chances of survival were not only compromised for the child, but the mother's chance of survival was non-existent. In the cases of survival, most ship owners would sever all ties to the mother by killing the babies in order to be able to sell the mothers once the ship arrived.<sup>35</sup> The unfortunate reality of women not being able to perform birth rituals of their cultures or origin deeply burdened the relationship African women had with childbirth.

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<sup>33</sup> Bush, *African Caribbean Slave Mothers*, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Bush.,77.

<sup>35</sup> Bush.,78.

One aspect of slave childrearing culture that many plantation owners and overseers wanted to eradicate was the practice of late weaning of slave children and infants. This practice was often blamed by plantation owners for the low rates of reproduction since the practice was linked to a two-year post-natal period many enslaved women practiced as a form of contraception and protection. The continual practice of late weaning provides strong evidence that enslaved women carried their African cultures with them to various plantations as a form of resistance. When weaning houses were introduced in Jamaica to cut down on the extended period of time enslaved women devoted to breastfeeding, mothers strongly resisted this separation from their children. Many enslaved women were reluctant to return to the plantation work regiment and their forms of resistance from the forcible nature of separation from their children was a rational response by enslaved women with the problems that were associated with childbirth.

The overall desire to have children was affected by the lack of incentive due to the fear of being separated once the enslaved woman had her child. This form of resistance not only kept reproduction levels low, the overall pressure on plantation owners and overseers rose as they tried to combat low population numbers. Undoubtedly a complex relationship between mothers and the responsibilities of being a mother were directly interrupted and destroyed under the institutionalized system of slavery. The overall horrors of the Middle Passage, enslavement and sexual abuse were all triggers that prevented enslaved women from carrying on their African born traditions of motherhood and pregnancy.



### Women's Role in Market Exchange

While the structure of slavery on Jamaican plantations required most enslaved people to exert most of their labor on the plantation, economic activity that was conducted by the enslaved people was not limited to plantation production. Women, for example, participated in a cash economy by producing their own agricultural products to exchange in local markets. Because some plantations were isolated and extremely arduous to walk from, not all enslaved women on plantations may have been able to utilize the markets as a source of income. The most common products bought by the markets from the enslaved women were pork, yams and castor oil.<sup>36</sup> Although meat was mostly controlled by the men, castor oil was exclusively bought and sold by enslaved women. In all, eleven women are recorded to have sold castor oil to the Jamaican Coffee Plantation between 1822 and 1826.<sup>37</sup> Due to the coercive nature of the plantation at the Radnor plantation, enslaved women were not free to sell their products directly through labor. As a form of gender based work was created on plantations, this limited the marketable skills that women could acquire and soon develop outside of midwifery.

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<sup>36</sup> James, Delle, *Women's Lives and Labour on Radnor, a Jamaican Coffee Plantation*, (Caribbean Quarterly, 2008), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Delle., 11.

## Jamaican Workhouses

As slavery drastically declined, workhouses were experiments by plantation owners and slave holders to see how much productive labor could be extracted from a 'free' person. Because Jamaican workhouses went under direct scrutiny of abolitionists in regard to the physical treatment and power that was exercised on the bodies of female slaves, the workhouses became the center for free or runaway slaves that were caught breaking the law. Throughout 1834 to 1838, Jamaica was under a period of Apprenticeship where all children under the age of six were freed. Other slaves were also declared freed, but under a condition of apprenticed part-time work to their old masters. Eventually, the treatment of those who were sent to the workhouses went under direct scrutiny by the public in April of 1838 an act was passed that tried to combat the abuse the plantation owners and overseers placed upon women. Rather than conforming to political and public opinion, the overall apprenticeship period was abolished in August of 1838.

The workhouses were operated by a committee of men that consisted of a chief magistrate of the parish and five justices followed by local planters that formed the hierarchy of the workhouse system. The committee appointed white officers as supervisors of the treadmill (see figure 3). was often used as punishment to slaves. The committee created rules and guidelines that the slaves had to follow, for example, the 'rule of silence' that forced slaves to not talk to others while at work.<sup>38</sup> The members of the committee were also required to regularly inspect the living quarters of the slaves as well as other rooms throughout the parishes. In cases where members of the committee witnessed cases of abuse, they were required to report it to the governor which resulted in the prosecution of the workhouse overseers.

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<sup>38</sup> Henrice Atlink, *Slavery by Another Name: Apprenticed Women in Jamaican Workhouses in the Period 1834-8*, (Social History, 2001), 42.

The capacity of the workhouses usually housed around 16 to 150 slaves with apartments for the officers. The parishes often had hospitals, dormitories, offices and a treadmill house for punishment. There was little to no difference between the punishment the women faced in comparison to the men; both the males and females were regularly placed on the treadmill for the same amount of time. Most of the women were required to take part in hard labor in the ‘penal gang’ and the treadmill. Every day, early in the mornings, the slaves were woken up and put on the treadmill before being sent to work in the fields and around the parish. After completing the various tasks on the parish, slaves were then placed back on the treadmill for another session.

The most common form of punishment that enslaved females faced on the parishes of workhouses was the pain of flogging. Usually women were flogged for not following instructions or disobeying direct orders from their masters and overseers. Although flogging went directly against the Abolition Act, many women were flogged as a form of punishment. Many members of the committee, however, justified the practice by pointing out that when female apprentices entered the workhouse they were no longer subject to the Abolition Act but the 1834 act for making further provision for the building, repairing and regulating of gaols, houses of correction, hospitals and asylums which allowed any ordinary justice to inflict corporal punishment on inmates who disobeyed the rules and delegate his power to punish to the supervisor and drivers of the institution.<sup>39</sup> The entire purpose of physical punishment in the years of slavery served the purpose to make female slaves obedient and submissive to the overseers and masters.

The treadmill was also a destructive way to enforce obedience and submissiveness. The overall speed and tenacity of the treadmill often caused a “free” person who’d been convicted of

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<sup>39</sup> Atlink, *Slavery by Another Name*, 46.

some offense to fall while the mill was still moving that gave slaves horrendous injuries and often times many died. The severe pain and punishment the treadmill gave to slaves destroyed all hopes of humane treatment, newly found freedom in civilization and overall respect for the human body. Often times, slaves were placed on the mill for more than the allotted time as a form of punishment and deliberate force to physically and mentally harm the slaves. In cases of slaves sentenced to more time on the mill, overseers often kicked the slaves as a form of physical coercion to force the slaves back on. Bella Richard who was a young pregnant woman was kicked and sent back on the mill as a form of punishment for her various 'crimes'.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the forced nature of the mill, overseers often bound slaves to the mill as it was spinning to physically harm the slaves when they couldn't keep up with the speed of the mill.

Another form of punishment women frequently faced while on the parishes was solitary confinement. Women who were placed in solitary confinement were usually the ones who asked for more food rations for their children as well as women who were unable to complete their required work in the penal gangs or in the fields. Solitary confinement was designed to force women to receive punishment for their offenses against the overseers that ultimately led to them being labeled as disobedient.

Although the Act of 1834 did not include the legal or illegal means of chaining slaves together, it was still regularly practiced. When slaves immediately entered the workhouses, the women were often shackled together around their necks to their waists down to their feet. Women unfortunately worked day and night shackled and were only taken off on Sundays when they were working around the yards of the parishes. One could conclude, women who were pregnant were not exempt from the shackled control of the overseers which forced them to work

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<sup>40</sup> Atlink, *Slavery by Another Name*, 47.

to their very limit. It was common for overseers and parish owners to deny such treatment in an attempt to escape legal punishment. The overall psychological torture and pain the mill and shackles caused enslaved women was directly caused by the planter's society that enhanced their overall position of power and institutionalized racism.

The overall structure of the workhouse parishes and disciplinary practices embodied the deep institutionalized racism within the lives of Africans. Supervisors of the parishes had to keep journals of every aspect of the parishes in order to report back to the committee. The supervisors were not only responsible for reporting severe punishment back to the committee, but they were required to carry out punishments against the overseer if he misbehaved or did not follow the guidelines. Although supervisors were required to keep the parishes accountable, it was apparent that the supervisors considered themselves to be an equal with the planters when it came to the disregard of women. Several supervisors were guilty of placing women on the mill for an extended period of time including ones that were not required to take part in the mill as a punishment.<sup>41</sup> The overall ignorance and disregard for the enslaved women not only severely endangered their lives, it created an environment that fostered racism and hatred. For example, Supervisor Liddell put a woman in the penal gang and on the mill in spite of the clause in her committal stated that she should not be put to work until seen by the workhouse doctor and Letitia died shortly after her release.<sup>42</sup> After this heinous act of punishment, the workhouse committee investigated the supervisor and concluded there was inappropriate measures that were taken, but concluded the death of Letitia was not brought on by the defiance of the clause.

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<sup>41</sup> Atlink, *Slavery by Another Name*, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Atlink., 52.

Although it was not mentioned what her committal stated, this highlights the nature of the workhouses and the hierarchy that tried to hide any and all forms of broken court orders.

### Specific Slave Plantations

The January 1792 slave schedules of Golden Grove's plantation registered 204 females to 237 males.<sup>43</sup> This shows that women accounted for just about 46 percent of the total slave population. Of these women, 25 were above the age of 70 years and beyond the years of childbearing. Girls with the greatest reproductive promise aged 9 to 17 and accounted for another 42 of the Golden Grove's 204 females. A majority of the women however, were field workers between the ages of 30 to 70 years old since their reproductive potential was much lower than the others. In later years, in 1817, showed 117.8 males to 100 females. The significance of these statistics shows the change in the importation of slaves into Jamaica along with the rapid decline in slave populations. As the atmosphere surrounding slavery changed, plantation owners struggled to keep their numbers up in order to be productive, and the example mentioned above in regard to Golden Grove's plantation, it is easy for one to contextualize the importance a slave population had on the successes and economic stability they created.

Parishes with large urban areas, like Kingston and St. Catherine, generally had a larger female population. With a bulk of the slave population falling between the ages of 25 and 44, females above the age of 12 were considered by slaveholders as best suited for birthing future laborers. Slave holders had a higher demand for young females within childbearing years to combat the decline in the slave population due to the governmental trading policies provided tax relief on the importation of females below the age of 25.

Matthew Gregory Lewis, was an absentee Jamaican proprietor, contextualized reproductive patterns when visiting his sugar estate in the Westmoreland Parish in 1817. Lewis realized his property of nearly 330 slaves that was composed of a larger proportion of enslaved

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<sup>43</sup> Turner, *Home-Grown Slaves*, 44.

women than men, only twelve or thirteen children had been added annually to the birth records.<sup>44</sup> Various plantations at the time did not have accurate records to track the progress of reproduction. Unfortunately, plantations that lacked important information rendered plantation owners worried in regard to the decline in the slave populations. Lewis faced the reality of only eight women out of his 150 on his 'breeding list'. In comparison to local plantations that were creole, based showed creole women at the height of fertility, were able to reproduce a larger number of children. Between 1817 and 1832 on various creole plantations, creole slave women aged 25 to 29 gave birth to 112 babies per 1,000 women, while African slaves had 64 infants per 1,000 women.<sup>45</sup> To combat the differences in creole plantations to African plantations, there could be several reasons as to the poor level of reproduction on African plantations. One could attribute the poor nutritional state of slaves, high levels of infant mortality as well as the brutal treatment African slaves faced. Although it is difficult to determine what exactly caused the difference between the reproduction rates between the various plantations, it is easy to assume one or more of the factors recognized above was responsible.

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<sup>44</sup> Morgan, *Slave Women and Reproduction*, 233.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan.,233.



## Conclusion

Overall, the study of enslaved women in Jamaica provides a valuable insight into the horrendous treatment they faced on a daily basis. Slavery is often characterized into a large content field in which gender is rarely emphasized. In most cases of slave research, women are excluded or rarely mentioned, as most scholarship focuses on enslaved men. As research of enslaved women becomes more prominent, historians and scholars are able to contextualize the deeply institutionalized notions of slavery, white Europeans created. The dehumanized nature of slave plantations as well as slave owners destroyed women in Jamaica in such a way that their spiritual and maternal practices were ultimately eradicated.

The traumatic pressures and responsibilities enslaved women in Jamaica faced were unprecedented. Constantly encountered with sexual abuse, coercion and severe physical punishment, enslaved women in Jamaica were at the center of white ignorance. As a historian, it is imperative to analyze and research all aspects of a time in history to give all demographics and genders the proper recognition in scholarship. The slave trade in Jamaica deeply impacted the lives of women in such a manner that institutionalized racism, stereotypes and severe coercive actions fostered the notion of slavery for hundreds of years.

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## Appendix

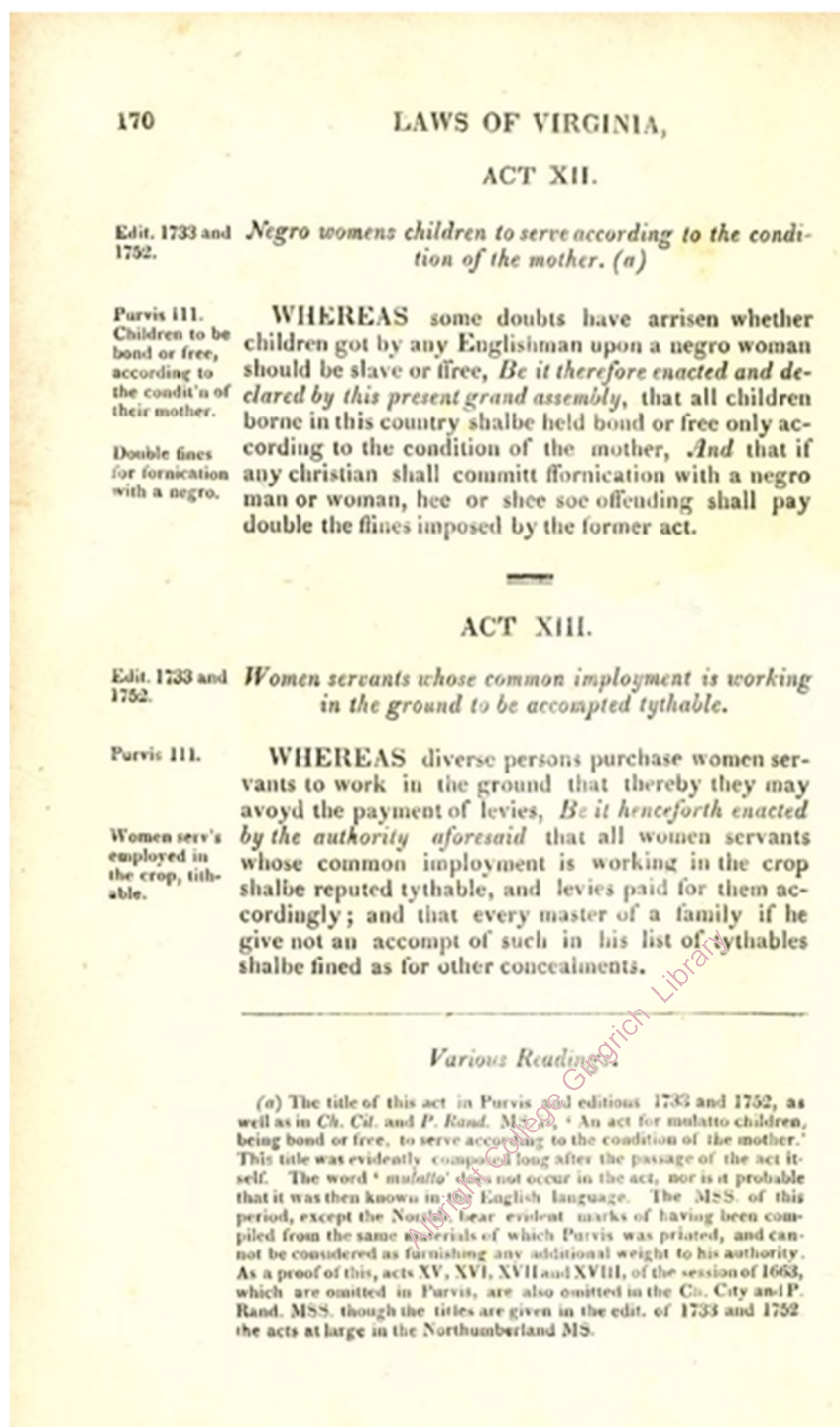
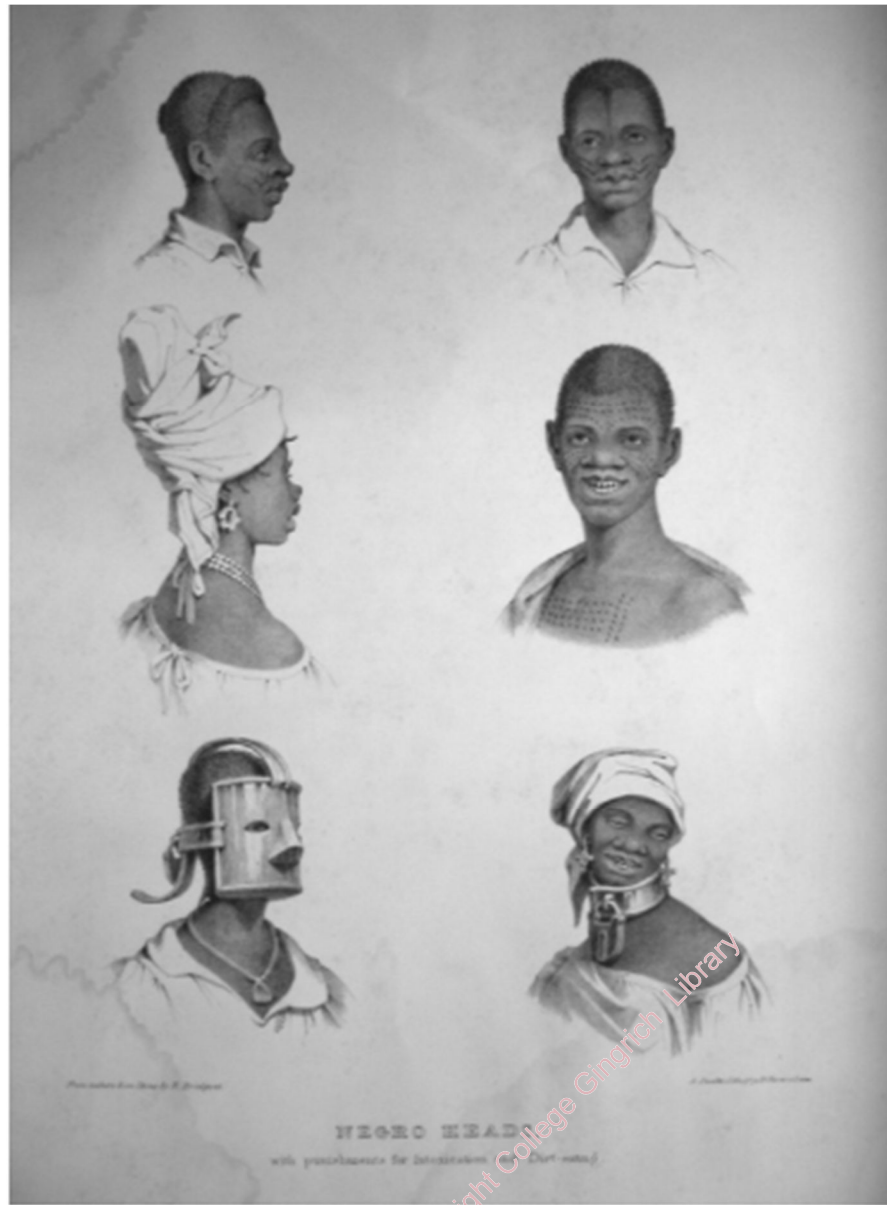
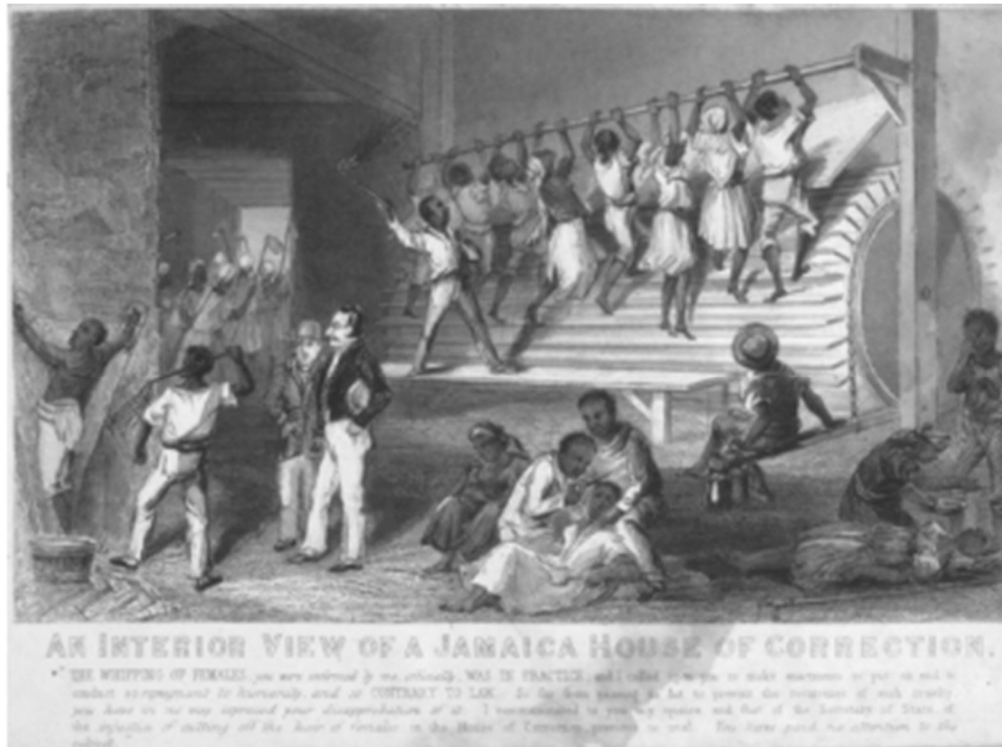


Figure 1: *Laws of Virginia*. This legal document outlines the laws Virginia passed in order to prevent children of slaves being able to obtain land.



**Figure 2:** *Negro Heads, with Punishments for Intoxication and Dirt-Eating.*  
 The mask that is represented emphasizes the physical prevention many plantation owners used in order to halt the practice of geophagy.



**Figure 3:** *Treadmill, Jamaica, 1837.* This photograph represents the physical and mental torture Africans were faced with on Jamaican workhouses while being placed on the mill.

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