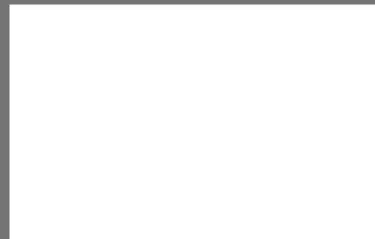
Tennessee Historical QUARTERLY

VOLUME LXV FALL 2006 NUMBER 3

A publication of the Tennessee Historical Society in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission.

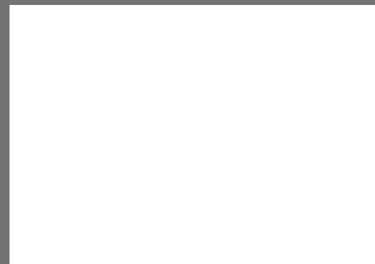
Front Cover:

X



Back Cover:

X



203 **Andrew Jackson: Chivalric Slave Master**
BY MATTHEW WARSHAUER

X

X

X

X **Contributors**

X **Book Reviews**

X **Guidelines**

The *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* (ISSN 0400-3261) is published quarterly for $35 per year by the Tennessee Historical Society, Ground Floor, War Memorial Building, Nashville, TN 37243-0084. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN.

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or membership should be addressed to Membership Director, Tennessee Historical Society, Ground Floor, War Memorial Building, Nashville, TN 37243-0084. Phone: 615-741-8934. This number may be obtained at $7.50 per copy, plus tax and postage, if applicable.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Tennessee Historical Society, Ground Floor, War Memorial Building, Nashville, TN 37243-0084.

Correspondence concerning contributions and manuscripts for the quarterly should be addressed to Carroll Van West, THQ Senior Editor, Box 80 MTSU, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

The Tennessee Historical Commission and the Tennessee Historical Society disclaim responsibility for statements, whether fact or of opinion, made by contributors.

Copyright ©2006 by The *Tennessee Historical Society*

Andrew Jackson: Chivalric Slave Master

by Matthew Warshauer

In 1839 Andrew Jackson engaged in a surprising legal battle. During a Christmas party, several of his slaves were involved in a brawl that resulted in the death of a bondsman from another plantation. When the man's owner pressed for an indictment, four of Jackson's slaves were arrested and jailed in Nashville. On trial for a capital offense, the men would have suffered hanging if found guilty. Tennessee law stipulated free legal counsel for slaves, yet Jackson hired three top defense attorneys, placing himself in debt to raise the legal expenses. In going to such lengths, Jackson saved the lives of his bondsmen.[1] Why would a slaveholder, let alone the iron-willed general, engage in such actions?

Jackson certainly never questioned the morality of slavery. He firmly believed in the peculiar institution, he supported the institution's constitutionality, and he had harsh words for those who attempted to incite revolt through abolitionist publications.[2] The seventh president viewed slavery as a means of economic enrichment and a way to establish himself in the aristocratic planter class. Surprisingly, historians have engaged in little systematic investigation of Jackson as slaveholder,[3] even though he owned upwards of one hundred and fifty slaves, making him one of the state's largest slave owners. Archeologists have plumbed the depths of Jackson's plantation, the Hermitage, to unearth the story of material conditions among the slaves. More than a dozen years of digs have revealed over a million artifacts, giving scholars an amazing albeit still limited understanding of plantation slave life.[4]

The question of Jackson as slave master, however, remains unanswered. What kind of master was the indomitable Jackson? His notions of loyalty and duty, his legendary temper, and his willingness to punish those who crossed him make one wonder how slaves at the Hermitage faired. The question of Jackson as slave master is of particular interest considering a renewed study of American presidents and slavery, beginning with the founding fathers George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.[5] A recent work on James K. Polk as slave master found that Young Hickory focused more on the economic self-interest of slavery than on questions of morality. Slavery on his plantation was often brutal and deadly. Polk's will noted that he "hoped" for his slaves' freedom, though this never occurred.[6]

This recent research makes the question of Andrew Jackson as slaveholder all the more intriguing. He never achieved the degree of introspection that Jefferson and Washington entertained, nor did he consider emancipation. Jackson did join earlier slaveholding presidents in attracting the rumor that he fathered a mulatto child, though it does not appear that the charge surfaced during his lifetime. It remained a feature of oral history among Hermitage slave descendents and has yet to be confirmed.[7]

The available evidence indicates that Jackson as slave master epitomizes the story of southern paternalism.[8] Indeed, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, in their latest work, *The Mind of the Master Class*, recently included Jackson within a chapter entitled "Chivalric Slave

Historians have engaged in little systematic investigation of Andrew Jackson as slaveholder. What kind of master was the indomitable Jackson? Part of the answer lies in the accounts of his slaves such as Hannah and Aaron Jackson. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

Masters," describing him as a "model," and explaining the traits of such a master: "While managing the work of his slaves, supervising their lives, paying bills, and getting the crop out, he was simultaneously to be gentle, forbearing, and kind – but stern, even severe, when duty, dignity, and preservation of authority required."[9] Jackson epitomized such a master. Viewing Hermitage slaves as his black "family," he expressed a degree of concern, made sure slaves had adequate medical attention, counseled overseers on good treatment, and exacted punishment only when "necessary." Some of this can be explained in terms of economics and social control. As an asset, healthy slaves who were treated humanely worked harder, posed fewer problems, and were less apt to revolt. Within this framework all interactions between slaves and masters were about good business. The only reason a slaveholder might reveal feeling for a slave was to maximize profit and control. Yet the issue of good treatment also orbits the larger complexity of human bondage. The fact that owners possessed legal title over slaves necessarily reduced any relationship to one of sheer power, yet does such a fact dissolve the possibility of the full range of human emotions, including affection, between master and slave? Can the actions of some slaveholders be seen in the light of caring that is either beyond or in conjunction with pecuniary motives?

Andrew Jackson as slave master helps to address some of these questions, for there are numerous instances—especially two judicial proceedings—when he paid particularly close attention to the welfare of his bondsmen and apparently defended the rights of slaves. The first of these instances may have been a turning point in his concern for Hermitage slaves.

Andrew Jackson purchased his first slave, "a Negro Woman named Nancy," on November 17, 1788, shortly after his arrival in Tennessee. The acquisition was as much, if not more about establishing himself as a man of standing as it was an actual need for a slave. The youthful Jackson traveled the court circuit with other lawyers, many of whom were accompanied by their slaves. Jackson desired the same mark of status.[10] Within just four years Jackson purchased six more slaves, and by 1798 tax records indicate that he owned fifteen, five of whom were most likely under the age of twelve. Part of the rapid increase in slave numbers was due to an inheritance from the father of his wife, Rachel Donelson Jackson.[11] This number of slaves placed Jackson in the upper percentile of owners in Tennessee. Even by the 1850s the largest group of slave masters in the state held four or less slaves, and just under 70 percent owned less than ten. Jackson had not yet achieved the status of "planter," which, according to one Tennessee historian, required thirty or more slaves.[12]

Records also indicate that during these early frontier years Jackson acquired and at times delivered slaves as commodities to settle debts and purchased slaves on behalf of friends.[13] Slave owners separated this common practice from the occupation of "slave trader," a position that was, with no irony, held in abhorrence. Even Jackson showed disgust for such men, denouncing Charles Dickinson, who Jackson killed in a duel, as one who made "a fortune off speculating on human flesh." In later years Jackson too was charged by a political opponent with slave trading. The charge was true to the extent that on one occasion he acted as a silent partner in a transaction involving the sale of slaves, but untrue in the sense that he would not have fit the definition of the time as one who made his living from slave trading.[14]

By 1804, Jackson experienced the same problem encountered by many slave owners: runaways. The remedy was posting an advertisement in local papers offering a reward and payment of costs for capture. Jackson, however, went a step further, promising additional money for punishment:

Stop the Runaway
50 Dollars Reward

Eloped from the subscriber, living near Nashville, on the 25th of June last, a Mulatto Man Slave, about thirty years old, six feet and an inch high, stout made and active, talks sensible, stoops in his walk, and has a remarkable large foot, broad across the root of the toes—will pass for a free man, as i am informed he has obtained by some means, certificates as such—took with him a drab great-coat, dark mixed body coat, a ruffled shirt, cotton home-spun shirts and overalls. He will make for Detroit through the states of Kentucky and Ohio, or the upper part of Louisiana. The above reward will be given any person that will take him, and deliver him to me, or secure him in jail, so that I can get him. If taken out of the state, the above reward, and all reasonable expences paid—and ten dollars extra, for every hundred lashes any person will give him, to the amount of three hundred.[15]

Stop the Runaway.
FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.
ELOPED from the subscriber, living near Nashville, on the 25th of June last, a Mulatto Man Slave, about thirty years old, six feet and an inch high, stout made and active, talks sensible, stoops in his walk, and has a remarkable large foot, broad across the root of the toes—will pass for a free man, as I am informed he has obtained by some means, certificates as such—took with him a drab great-coat, dark mixed body coat, a ruffled shirt, cotton home-spun shirts and overalls. He will make for Detroit, through the states of Kentucky and Ohio, or the upper part of Louisiana. The above reward will be given any person that will take him, and deliver him to me, or secure him in jail, so that I can get him. If taken out of the state, the above reward, and all reasonable expences paid—and ten dollars extra, for every hundred lashes any person will give him, to the amount of three hundred.
ANDREW JACKSON,
Near Nashville, State of Tennessee.

In 1804, Jackson experienced the same problem encountered by many slave owners: runaways. He posted an advertisement in local papers offering a reward, and went a step further when he promised additional money for punishment. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

Though it is unclear if the sentence was carried out, advertising payment for punishment was brutal and inhuman; three hundred lashes were tantamount to a death sentence. Acts such as this are one reason that some historians believe Jackson to have been vengeful and mean spirited.[16] Jackson, however, was hardly alone in reacting harshly to runaways. George Washington sentenced three of his slaves who had runaway to a virtual certain death on a West Indian sugar plantation.[17] There is little question that Jackson advocated the punishment of slaves, but there exists no records that parallel the shocking nature of this 1804 advertisement.

In the same year, Jackson purchased a four hundred and twenty-acre parcel of land with two cabins that he named the Hermitage. In ensuing years he slowly added property until it reached some twelve hundred acres, built a new mansion, and ultimately owned upwards of one hundred and fifty slaves. Jackson's rise to the status of one of the largest slaveholders in Tennessee occurred steadily. A tax list for 1812 noted that he owned twenty taxable slaves, which meant that he may very well have had many more who were not taxable because their ages were less than twelve or more than fifty.[18] Even though there were economic problems along the way, Jackson's fortunes continued to progress so that in 1825 he possessed some eighty slaves, of whom forty-one were taxable.[19] The tax list also indicates that there existed a large number of slave families at the Hermitage. Most entries include a male slave by first name, followed by "wife" and the number of children.

From 1810 into the 1820s, a variety of correspondence about Jackson's slaves reveals the remarkable duality of slave/master relationships. On one level, Jackson expressed concern for the slaves' treatment, and, along with other owners, attempted to keep slave families together. Other letters, however, reveal the reliance upon coercive violence that characterized the peculiar institution. In two letters Jackson expressed personal concern for slaves. The first came in 1814 and is surprising not so much because of what Jackson said, but, rather, due to the circumstances in which he was writing. Camped in the middle of the southern frontier while battling the Creek Indians, Jackson wrote to his wife Rachel telling her of the campaign's many hardships, and briefly concluded, "I have only time to add that I do not wish you to permit Fields [the overseer] to abuse clum." The general expressed similar sentiments in an 1823 letter, writing, "I do not wish my hands laboured too hard — & if you think thay are, I know when you name it to him [the overseer] he will moderate—I wish them well fed, & warmly cloathed and they will be contented & happy This is my wish—I do not want them in any way oppressed and if they behave well I am sure Mr Parsons knowing my wishes, will treat them well."[20] One might conclude from such brief comments that the general was merely following accepted ideas about slavery economics and social control. This could certainly be accepted for the second letter, which remarks on "contented & happy" slaves. The previous letter is more puzzling. Why did Jackson single out the welfare of one slave, and why did he do so in the midst of fighting on the southern frontier?

Clear answers are not easily found. The same is true regarding Jackson's views towards slave families. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the slave system, the separation of families was fairly common. Whether such sales were forced due to a slave owner's debts or the result of maximizing profits, the threat of sale always loomed and Jackson was no different than other slave owners in confronting these issues.[21] Typically, Jackson was on the buying end of such transactions. In November 1819, for example, he made arrangements with James Houston to purchase the family of a Hermitage slave named Old Peter. Houston owned Peter's daughter, Betsy, who was about twenty-two years old, her three children ages four, five, and six, and Peter's son, Bob, who was about eighteen. Jackson agreed to purchase the entire family for $1,800, and although Houston felt the price low, he agreed "for the sake of accomedateing [sic] the family."[22] In this case it may very well have been that Jackson saw an economic opportunity to acquire a number of slaves for below market value and that it was actually Houston who deserves credit for maintaining the family. Yet it is not unfair to surmise that Jackson also looked to their welfare, making specific arrangements to purchase the children and grandchildren of a slave he already owned. Circumstances such as this potentially merge the pecuniary and human motivations of slave owners.

On another occasion, Jackson again purchased a slave in an apparent attempt to accommodate a slave he already owned. During the Indian campaigns of 1813, Jackson captured a runaway slave named Polydore from St. Augustine, and placed him in army service until arrangements could be made for his return. For some reason this took several years and during the interim Polydore married one of Jackson's slaves, Sally. Rather than separate them, Jackson purchased Polydore in 1822 for $500.[23] Such a price remained within market value, thus the only economic incentive for Jackson was the possible production of slave offspring.[24] Although this certainly may have been a consideration, it is also likely that Jackson made his decision based on the desires of the slaves in question, as evidence in another case indicates.

In 1830, now President Jackson learned of a domestic disturbance between two of his slaves, Charles and Charlotte. Charlotte had approached Robert J. Chester, Jackson's nephew through marriage, and requested that Chester purchase her. Jackson wrote Chester to make the arrangements, explaining, "I bought her [Charlotte] being the wife of Charles at his request," but noted "he appears now desirous that she with her children be sold. I have therefore come to the resolution to part with her." Jackson sold Charlotte and her three children for $800, and the evidence indicates that he was motivated, in both the purchase and sale of Charlotte, directly in relation to her and Charles's desires. Jackson wrote that Charlotte's sale would leave him short-handed, but concluded, "I think I have placed Charlotte and her children as low as they could be bought now here…but I do so that she may be contented."[25]

Jackson on occasion made significant efforts to keep families together. His daughter-in-law Sarah Yorke Jackson (here circa 1833) asked Jackson to purchase Gracey while they were in the White House. Jackson purchased not only Gracey but her two sisters, a brother, and their mother. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

On another occasion President Jackson was again disposed towards maintaining a slave family. Sarah Yorke Jackson, the president's daughter-in-law and acting first lady, was approached by a free black woman who worked as the White House pastry chef. She explained that her sister Gracey was owned by a Colonel Hebb of Virginia who, experiencing financial difficulty, was forced to sell his slaves and encouraged them to suggest

potential owners. Sarah Jackson met with Gracey and later approached the president to request that she be purchased as a seamstress and personal maid. Jackson purchased not only Gracey, but all of her relatives owned by Hebb, which included two sisters, a brother, and their mother.[26] It is unclear how much Jackson paid for the family; moreover, the story comes from a less than critical source. Still, such a humanitarian purchase is possible considering Jackson's other attempts to preserve slave families. Even a former slave, Hannah, when interviewed in 1880, commented on Jackson's unwillingness to split families, noting, "they used to pick us up and sell us in those days, even little children not higher than your cane; but old master never did."[27]

One might dismiss Jackson's consideration of slave families as little more than another attempt at social control — the idea that "contented & happy" slaves produced more and caused less trouble. It is difficult to accept this factor as the only basis because doing so denies the possibility that slaves and masters managed to forge a relationship, no matter how unequal, in which slaves could request and masters grant certain accommodations. If Jackson did provide his slaves with such accommodations, whether solely as social control or as mild acts of humanity towards his slave "family," he also engaged the more draconian measures of plantation rule. Often away from home due to military or political duty, Jackson nevertheless remained updated on the Hermitage. In 1814, Rachel Jackson complained that she was having "a greate Deal of trouble with" some of the slaves.[28] In the early 1820s, while serving as governor of the Florida territory, Jackson learned that Rachel's maid, Betty, was "putting on airs, and been guilty of a great deal of impudence." Jackson thus instructed his overseer that "the first impertinence she uses, or the first disobedience of orders, that she be publicly whipped." The overseer is "to take her to the public whipping post and give her fifty lashes, and that she may save herself of this disgrace you may assure her of her danger, for I have ordered and am determined that she shall in all things behave herself *well* or receive exemplary punishment. It is humiliating to me to have to resort to this….I am determined to cure her." In another letter, Jackson again demanded that Betty and all of his slaves behave, noting that the overseer "must use the cowhide whenever any of them depart from proper conduct."[29] There is no record of what occurred regarding Betty, but she did remain under Jackson's ownership. Though allegedly "humiliating" to Jackson, the sentence, if carried out, epitomized the brutality of the slave system.

At the same time, however, Jackson held rather rigid notions of hierarchy, social station, and duty within white society as well. As much as he expected slaves to obey and remain respectful, Jackson followed similar proscriptions for social and military underlings. One example, a dispute between Jackson and Silas Dinsmore, a United States agent to the Choctaw Indians, also happened to involve a slavery-related matter. Stationed on the road between Nashville and Natchez in the Mississippi Territory, Dinsmore continually pressed slave owners for documentation proving that they legally owned the slaves in their possession. If the evidence was not produced, Dinsmore seized the slaves. His duty was to stop runaways from slipping into Indian Territory, but these measures were somewhat extreme and garnered complaint. Jackson took it upon himself to put Dinsmore in his place. The general embarked on a journey to provoke conflict by failing to carry the required documents. Fortunately, Dinsmore was not pres-

In 1821, Rachel Jackson complained to her husband that her maid Betty was guilty of impudence while the family was staying in Pensacola. Jackson ordered that Betty be publicly whipped if she continued the impertinence. Many years later she posed with her great-grandchildren. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

ent when Jackson arrived and the Indian agent was later removed from his post. Jackson's actions fit neatly into his larger conception of social hierarchy and the belief that Dinsmore had overstepped his station.[30]

Numerous examples of Jackson's views regarding hierarchy and duty abound within his role as military commander. Jackson had soldiers arrested, court martialed, punished, and even executed for failure to obey orders, impudence towards officers, mutiny and desertion. One of the most extreme instances was the execution of a militiaman named John Woods for mutiny, disobedience of orders, and disrespect to a commanding officer. Writing of the matter in a similar tone to that of punishing his slave, Betty, Jackson insisted on "order & subordination… observed with the most punctilious exactness," noted Wood's "disobedience to orders," and though the general "may deplore your unhappy situation," "punishment" must be carried out. Even Jackson's military aide John Reid described the general's feelings about his decision as "painful" but "essential to the preservation of good order."[31] Thus Jackson's expectations and demands for obedience and control were not tied to slavery alone. He held the same views towards whites, especially soldiers, who failed to remain within carefully proscribed duties. Additional similarities exist regarding Jackson's sense of paternalism; consider how he applied fatherly, albeit condescendingly protective, views to Native Americans and even some South Carolinians in the midst of the Nullification Crisis.[32]

One aspect of Jackson's belief in duty involved remaining at one's post. Whether it was soldiers who deserted or a slave who ran away, the iron-willed general bristled at disloyalty. Clearly, service in the military was hardly akin to the perpetuity and subservience of slavery, yet Jackson viewed the duty of each on similar terms. And to be sure, he was faced with runaways on numerous occasions. In 1822, seven slaves ran away from Jackson's Alabama plantation, Big Spring. Four of the slaves ran away at the same time and Jackson lamented that his corn crop would be poor as a result. In a letter to his nephew, Andrew Jackson Donelson, the general related, "[I] was fortunate in regaining my negroes, and although I hate chains, was compelled to place two of them in irons, for safe-keeping untill an opportunity offers to sell or exchange them."[33]

One of the Big Springs slaves who caused Jackson considerable trouble was Gilbert, who ran away on at least three occasions. The first was in April 1822. Writing from the Hermitage, Jackson penned a letter to overseer Egbert Harris requesting that notice of the escape be posted in the Florence *Gazette*. The general added, "If he can be got, I wish him well secured with irons, until an opportunity may offer to send him down the river, as I will not keep a negro in the habit of running away." Jackson's statement was apparently bluster, for Gilbert was recaptured and, along with other slaves, moved to the Hermitage in late 1822 or early 1823.[34]

Gilbert found the conditions in Tennessee no more hospitable than in Alabama and made another unsuccessful escape in 1824, and again in 1827.[35] On the run for some two months during the final attempt, he was once again captured and returned. This time, however, actions followed resulting in Gilbert's death, a criminal investigation, and some puzzling actions on Jackson's part. Tired of such misbehavior Jackson apparently considered having Gilbert whipped but instead opted to sell him. This information comes from an affidavit in which overseer Ira Walton swore "on all previous occasions Gen. Jackson had forgiven him [Gilbert] for all these offences, without chastisement, upon his promises of better behaviour; which so far from reforming him, had made him much worse and more difficult to be controlled." Walton disagreed with Jackson's decision, explaining, "I gave as my opinion, that this would not do, for several of his negroes had been injured by indulgence, and that if some example were not made I could not control them—that Gilbert was

Jackson was attacked for his dealings with slaves during his presidential campaigns. He is known to have ordered whippings with rods. However, the death of his slave Gilbert in 1828 at the hands of an overseer deeply troubled Jackson. (From *A Brief Account of General Jackson's Dealings in Negroes*, 1828)

the most insolent slave he owned, and therefore the most fit subject for punishment." Jackson ultimately agreed and ordered that Gilbert be whipped "moderately with small rods."[36]

Although one needs to consider Walton's testimony as an official statement made in the course of a criminal investigation, the assertion that Jackson had always forgiven Gilbert without chastisement is puzzling. It did not match the general's disciplinary views, either with slaves or soldiers. Jackson certainly understood that obedience among a large slave population was integral. Thus the truth of Jackson's "indulgence" can be questioned, though it is difficult to be conclusive without further evidence to the contrary.

Nevertheless, Walton attempted to carry out punishment by walking the bound Gilbert through the woods to be whipped in the presence of the field slaves. While in the woods, Gilbert slipped the rope and attempted to strike Walton with a piece of wood. A general melee ensued that was as fantastic as it was ghastly. In his official account, Walton stated that he and Gilbert struggled for some time, during which the overseer was beaten and choked. He ultimately pulled out a dirk and stabbed at Gilbert, who succeeded in knocking the knife from Walton's hand and the two struggled to gain control of the weapon. Witnessing the battle was a ten year old slave boy who was called by both combatants to aid in recovering the dirk. The boy picked up the weapon and upon Walton's order plunged it into Gilbert's thigh. When Walton commanded the boy to stab again, this time in the side, the boy was kicked to the ground and threatened by Gilbert with death if he interfered again. Still,

the boy succeeded in passing the dirk to Walton, who thrust it into Gilbert's back. Walton then attempted to make several additional stabs but found that the dirk was nearly bent over. He managed to pull a smaller knife from his pocket and explained, "I then threw my arm around his neck and tried to cut the great artery; and, without touching it, did cut a deep gash in the back and side of his neck." Walton testified that Gilbert rose, walked a distance, "gave me a most horrible look," and then lay down. Upon learning of the incident, Jackson ordered Walton to summon the physician and though the overseer said it would do no good, was told by the general, "whilst life remains there is hope." Dr. Miles McCorckle arrived shortly thereafter, but Gilbert died from his wounds.[37]

On the same day the death occurred, August 28, Jackson contacted William Faulkner, a justice of the peace for Davidson County, and requested a coroner's inquest. A seven member jury was quickly assembled, several of whom were Jackson's relatives by marriage, and the matter was ruled self-defense after testimony from Walton, the inspection of numerous bruises on his body, and corroboration from the slave boy who witnessed the battle. Jackson nevertheless remained concerned. Walton was summarily dismissed as overseer and, on August 30, Jackson wrote to Andrew Hays, a state prosecutor: "You have…been apprised that a jury of inquest has been held over his dead body, by the Coroner of the county; and that the jury reported that Walton killed him '*in his own defence.*' I communicated to you yesterday, all the facts relative to that unfortunate event. I wish to know of you, from the statement of facts I have detailed, whether you think, from a consideration of them, there has been such a violation of the laws as requires a further prosecution of the matter." The general closed the letter, insisting, "I have no wish to prosecute Mr Walton should you think justice does not demand it, but being the guardian of my slave, it is my duty to prosecute the case so far as justice to him may require it."[38]

Hays replied the next day, suggesting that Jackson seek an indictment of murder against Walton: "My opinion is, from the full consideration of the evidence, that there exists a considerable doubt as to the absolute necessity of killing the slave Gilbert, at the time that he received the mortal blow." Hays believed that Gilbert was "stabbed in the back whilst running" and that his hands remained tied. "I have no hesitation in saying," continued Hays, "that I think public justice, as well as your duty as a master and guardian of your slaves, requires that you should have Mr Walton before the circuit court to answer a bill of indictment for the death of Gilbert." Jackson subsequently signed a bill to indict Walton for murder, but a grand jury returned a verdict of "Not a True Bill" and Walton was released from further prosecution.[39]

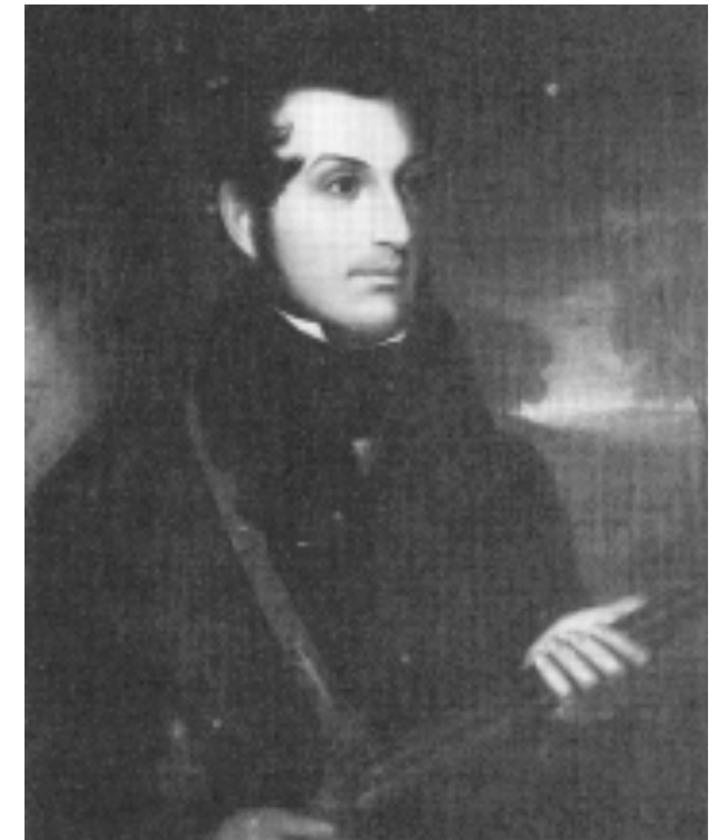
It might seem odd that the district attorney and Jackson engaged in such strict legal proceedings in the case of a slave. Slaves were, after all, property with severely restricted rights in a white-dominated society. Yet histories of southern courts insist that both slaves and free blacks were accorded a rather striking degree of formality and fairness. Still, the key to the grand jury hearing was Jackson. He could have let the matter rest with the coroner's inquest, but instead chose to pursue the matter by signing a bill of indictment as required by state law in order for the case to move forward.[40]

The question is why did Jackson execute the indictment? There are numerous possible answers. As the district attorney noted, Jackson had a "duty" as "master and guardian" to protect his slaves' rights. This was another institutional paradox. At the same time that masters could steal a slave's freedom, force service, and utilize barbarous methods to exact obedience, the slave system's paternalism necessitated certain guidelines, including protection from murder. It is also possible that Jackson indicted Walton as a means of maintaining social control among his slaves, showing that they would be protected from vengeful

overseers. Jackson may also have had a more calculating, political motivation. Since his loss due to the alleged Corrupt Bargain during the 1824 election, Jackson had worked feverishly in preparation for the 1828 contest. With every scrap of intrigue capitalized on by opponents, Jackson may have thought it prudent to treat Gilbert's death very carefully. As it turned out, Andrew Erwin published an article in the *National Banner and Nashville Whig* in August 1828 entitled "Gen. Jackson's Negro Speculation, and His Traffic in Human Flesh…" in which he discussed Gilbert's death. The Nashville *Republican* quickly came to the general's defense, but the knowledge that exactly this type of polemic could feed from Jackson's treatment of slaves may have convinced him to proceed with caution.

There is also the possibility that Jackson was genuinely troubled by Gilbert's death. As subsequent letters and a later judicial proceeding reveal, Jackson expressed what seemed to be genuine concern for the treatment and rights of his slaves. A member of his Hermitage family had died under horrid circumstances and, at the very least, Jackson wanted to ensure that such occurrences would not happen again or go unpunished. He fired Walton and pursued judicial proceedings. It is also not beyond the realm of reason that a component of all the aforementioned motivations spurred Jackson to action, but it does seem clear from correspondence in the aftermath of Gilbert's death that Jackson was affected by what had happened.

Finding a responsible overseer was always a problem and became even more of a concern once Gilbert died and Jackson left the Hermitage to serve as president. In June 1829 he wrote his brother-in-law John Donelson, Jr., requesting that the new overseer, Graves Steel, write often about the stock at the plantation "and of the health of my negroes. I learn old Ned and Jack are both dead. Jack was a fine boy, but if he was well attended to, I lament not. he has gone the way of the earth."[41] Subsequent letters the next month revealed a deeper concern over the death of another slave, Jim. "I pray you my son," Jackson wrote to Andrew Jackson, Jr., "to examine minutely into this matter, and if the death was produced by the cruelty of Mr. Steel, have him forthwith discharged….My negroes shall be treated humanely. When I employed Mr. Steel, I charged him upon this subject, and had expressed in our agreement that he was to treat them with great humanity, feed and cloath them well, and work them in moderation. if he has deviated from this rule, he must be discharged." Jackson continued:



While President Jackson served in Washington, he depended at times on Andrew Jackson, Jr., to run the plantation (here circa 1833). Jackson wrote his son several times concerning the overseer, insisting "My negroes shall be treated humanely." (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

> Since I left home I have lost three of my family. Old Ned, I expected to die, but I am fearful the death of Jack, and Jim, has been produced by exposure and bad treatment. Your Uncle John Donelson writes, that *Steel has ruled with a rod of iron.* This is so inconsistent to what I expected, that I cannot bear the inhumanity that he has exercised towards my poor negroes, contrary to his promise and has impaired my confidence in him. Unless he changes his conduct, dismiss him, and employ another.[42]

This letter is the longest to date in which Jackson wrote about the treatment of Hermitage slaves. There is clearly a tone of urgency and apprehension for the welfare of his "family." Jackson also revealed his continued distress by eliciting information from friends who visited the plantation. Only two weeks after sending the first letter to his son, Jackson penned another and advised Andrew, Jr., to look into Steel's conduct:

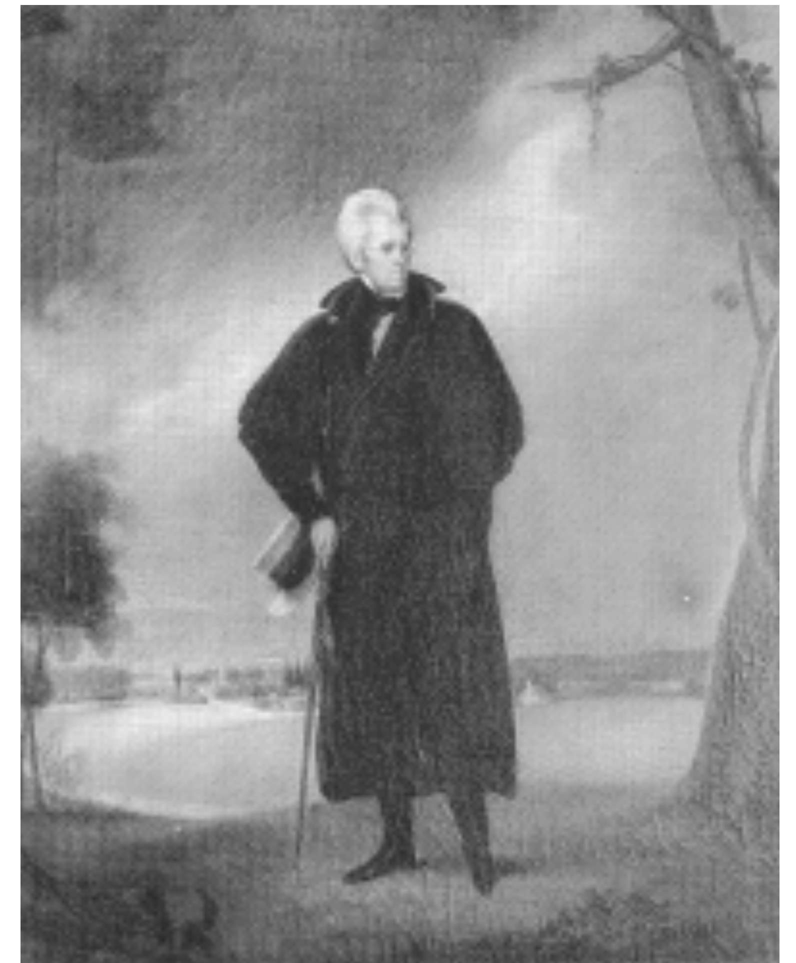
> I have recd. since you left me a letter from Col Charles J Love informing me of my negro man James death. I was fearful that his death might have been produced by the illtreatment of the overseer and wrote you immediately on the subject to enter upon an enquiry and if you found it did, to remove him. This letter you will have recd. before this reaches you, and as I have received another letter from Col Love which speaks of Mr Steel in warm terms, I wish you to consult with him and Dr. Hogg upon this subject. I hope Mr. Steel will treat my negroes with humanity as I have requested him[.] I have confidence in him, have no wish to remove him, if he will only treat my slaves with humanity."[43]

Andrew, Jr., did as his father requested and found no cause for concern. A relieved Jackson expressed satisfaction that the overseer "has treated my negroes humanely. So long as he treats my negroes well, I have no wish to remove him." Jackson continued, "The death of Jim was a mortifying circumstance to me, and if it had proceeded from the cruel treatment of the overseer, he must have been discharged."[44] Though Jackson seemed pacified regarding Steel, he by no means forgot the matter of treating his slaves, as he continually put it, with "humanity." In November he penned a letter to Steel explaining that the overseer was accountable for all neglect that resulted in losses at the plantation, both in stock and negroes. Jackson noted that he was renewing Steel's contract "on the express conditions that you treat my negroes with humanity, and attention when sick; and not work them too hard, when well—that you feed and cloath them *well.*" Fixated on the slaves' proper treatment, Jackson then wrote another letter, this time to his friend Charles Love, imploring him to keep watch over Steel: "I will turn him away unless he pays more attention to their health, by sending for Doctor Hogg in due time after they are taken sick, and my Dr Sir I authorize you to assure him of this fact." Love did as Jackson requested, writing, "at first he [Steel] was somewhat offended with me, I told him I should do my duty and he must go agreeably to your Orders."[45] As these various letters reveal, it seems that Jackson looked to the welfare of his slaves with a new urgency in the aftermath of Gilbert's death. Far from the Hermitage, the president experienced anxiety over the slaves' well being and was ready at an instant to dismiss Steel. One might conclude that Jackson's motives were mainly economic, but the tone of the letters and Jackson's recurrent theme of "humanity" points to more than a purely business interest.

While in Washington serving as president, Jackson continued the practice of slavery. Gracey and her sister Louisa remained in the nation's capital to serve Sarah Jackson. Another slave, Charles, was greatly favored by Jackson and served as the president's carriage driver as early as 1814. Jackson also had great affection for George, who served as a personal servant. Jackson's granddaughter Rachel noted that George always slept in the general's room. When Jackson was reinvigorating his national political career in 1823 as a senator in preparation for the 1824 presidential race, he realized that George needed to look the part of servant to a future president and requested a tailor named Martin to clothe George accordingly. For Jackson, there also existed a significant level of trust for Charles, George, and at least one other slave named John Fulton. All three served as couriers for Jackson and had a significant degree of autonomy in traveling. George periodically journeyed alone from Washington to the Hermitage.[46]

Although busy with presidential duties, Jackson continued to thirst for news of his plantation. In the summer of 1832, his new overseer Burnard Hotzclaw informed the president, "I Git alongue With you Negrows Verer will indeede," and Jackson hoped that the overall conditions at the Hermitage would steadily improve. His nephew Andrew Jackson Donelson reported shortly thereafter, "I found your farm in excellent order and well superintended, Your manager a good one, although several of the negroes complain of great severity, which mr [sic] William Donelson and Stockly [Donelson] says is not the case."[47]

In the spring of 1833, Jackson was faced with the death of more slaves. Writing to his nephew Andrew Jackson Hutchings, the president noted, "I sincerely regret the loss of the two Sampsons, as I do the rest, but where it does not arise from neglect, or inhumanity, but from the will of our creator…I submit to it, with an humble resignation. I was fearful from a letter I had received from a connection, that there might be neglect and particularly in the death of Titus, and Anake, Ben's daughter." His concern over the possibility that Hotzclaw may have been treating the slaves poorly was ameliorated by a letter from Dr. Miles



Jackson continued to thirst for news of his farm while in office. In 1833 he was gratified to learn from his friend William B. Lewis that his overseer "had not, and would not" treat his slaves with "*unnecessary* cruelty." (Tennessee Historical Society)

McCorckle, who informed Jackson, "there has been more sickness among them [the slaves] for some months, than usual. The cause I can not well imagine." McCorckle went on to explain the symptoms, noting that Titus had died from what presented as cholera. "I was with him until he died," reported the doctor, "but our efforts were in vain." The doctor added that the other slaves were recuperating, claiming, "I think I have been unremitting in my attention." Finally, McCorckle stated that Hotzclaw was doing a good job: "I think that the Negroes are becoming quite reconciled, and he tells me he finds no difficulty with them, having rarely to chastise."[48]

Shortly after hearing from McCorckle, Jackson received a lengthy letter from his old friend William B. Lewis, who provided a detailed account of conditions at the Hermitage. He spoke with the overseer about the death of the slaves and informed Jackson of the situation:

> I have heard at Nashville that Mr. Hotzclaw was very severe with the negroes, but from my own observation and what the negroes themselves told me while there I think, probably, he is not more so than is necessary. Where there are so many negroes, there must be a pretty rigid police. I told him what I had heard of his severity; but hoped he had given no foundation for such reports about him. I added that you knew the necessity of keeping order on the place and among the negroes, but that I was sure that you did not wish, nor would you permit, your negroes, knowingly, to be treated with *cruelty*. I hoped therefore that he would not use towards them any *unnecessary* severity. He assured me that he had not, and would not.[49]

Jackson was gratified by the news, explaining he had experienced "great anxiety and pain" from the rumors of Hotzclaw's severity. "He has promised me to treat them with kindness and humanity so far as their conduct would permit," wrote Jackson, "holding them to strict subordination. Your letter with one just recd. from Doctor McCorckle, has relieved me from those apprehensions of cruelty to the negroes."

Jackson also asked Lewis to arrange special medical accommodations for a slave named Hanna, the daughter of Sally, who had injured her hip and needed treatment from Dr. Hogg. The president expressed concern that Betty, the Hermitage cook, had been the source of the injury and requested Lewis to speak to Hotzclaw about her:

> I will thank you to say to the overseer to prevent Betty from beating, or cruelly abusing the little negroes, that are under her about the kitchen. A small switch ought to be used, but some times she uses any weapon she can get, and chokes and abuses them, and brings on disease. Give such directions about the negro girl [Hannah], as tho she was your own, and if convenient please visit the Hermitage again before you set out on your return….[50]

These various letters reveal both the cruelty of the slave system and a seemingly sincere concern for the treatment of Jackson's slaves. On the one hand, the very idea that a "rigid police" was necessary and permissible, and that Jackson condoned "strict subordination" is anathema to contemporary sensibilities. At the same time, Jackson thirsted for news of his plantation's and slaves' prosperity. Away from the Hermitage for long stretches of time, Jackson could rely only on the news from friends and family to ensure that his

In 1838, some forty to a hundred slaves gathered at what may have been a Christmas party. A fight broke out that left one slave dead and four of Jackson's slaves charged with murder. Jackson went to great effort in their defense. ("The Christmas Week," Library of Congress)

property, including slaves, was well managed. Although one might be inclined to dismiss Jackson's desire for "humane" treatment solely as the words of a business man protecting assets, to do so ignores his clear change in tone and interest following Gilbert's death.

Jackson's commitment to his slaves' well being can also be seen in a case involving four of his slaves in 1838. As Jackson explained the story, some forty to one hundred slaves had gathered at what may have been a Christmas party. It is unclear where the gathering occurred, but the likelihood, as a result of Jackson's comments, is that it was not at the Hermitage. There was considerable drinking and dancing, and at some point one of Jackson's slaves, Alfred, "cryed out he was the best man in the House and altercation ensued. Alfred and cancer got afighting, and George and Walis got in contact." The fight was temporarily broken up, but soon moved outside where a number of other slaves got involved. One, named Frank and owned by Jackson's nephew Stockley Donelson, attempted to stop the fight but was attacked by at least five others. According to one female slave, "Frank picked up a bench or plank and retreated back and that she saw Alfred strike Frank with a rock in the breast, Frank bent forward, when Jack struck him on the head with a rock and dashed his brains out, that she heard the scull break, that George never touched Frank, that she saw Squire with a rail but did not see him strike Frank…." Another account stated that both Alfred and Frank picked up rocks and Frank challenged Alfred to throw his.[51]

The various owners who had slaves involved in the fight questioned the participants and witnesses. Jackson insisted, "I more than once in a friendly manner expostulated with Stockly Donelson to hear the testimony first before he took out a warrant against my four Negro men alone, that they were many in the riot, and it was right to hear all the testimony and see where guilt lay."[52] Stockley nevertheless moved ahead, signing out a warrant against George, Alfred, Jacob, and Squire.

The charge of murder, even for a slave, was a serious matter. A capital offence under Tennessee law, if the four men were found guilty they would have been hanged. As it was, all four were arrested and incarcerated in the Nashville jail up to and during the trial. Slaves were subject to release on bond, but state law dictated that an owner must put up double the value of the slave, money that Jackson did not have. And though state law also provided a court appointed lawyer, Jackson opted to retain his own counsel.[53] As owner, Jackson was expected by society to superintend the trials of his slaves, but no law required him to hire three of Nashville's top criminal defense attorneys.[54] To save the lives of his slaves, Jackson chose Thomas H. Fletcher and brothers Edwin and Andrew Ewing. Fletcher had served with Jackson during the Creek Wars of 1813 and later as a representative in the state legislature as well as secretary of

state. One sketch of his career noted, "There have been great criminal lawyers in Tennessee, but few his equals and none his superior." The Ewing brothers, who were also partners in the law, held equally impressive credentials. Edwin was noted as "a hard-working, energetic, brilliant lawyer; an untiring investigator, leaving nothing unturned." Andrew was considered "a speaker of great persuasiveness and force…and was an excellent case lawyer." "No name in Tennessee," declared one author, "shines with a more steady radiance than that of the Ewing family."[55]

With his team in place, Jackson traveled to Nashville to observe the trials. For some reason George was tried separately, in *The State vs. George (a man of colour)*, and appeared only before a grand jury that determined that the indictment was "not a true bill" and ordered "the said defendant to be discharged." The other three slaves appeared in court on Monday, January 28, 1839, in *Alfred, Jacob, & Squire versus the State; men of colour*; *Indictment for the murder of Frank*. Also present were the attorney general, Jackson's lawyers, and the Honorable James Rucks, judge of the sixth circuit. During this initial court date the three were arraigned, pled "not guilty," and a jury of twelve was chosen and sworn. As owner, Jackson had the legal right to challenge a number of the jurors during the voir dire, but most certainly left this to his lawyers.[56] Over the next five days jurors heard testimony and lawyers' arguments. At the end of each court day the defendants were remanded to the county sheriff and the jury sequestered. Finally, on Saturday, February 2, the attorney general and defense attorneys closed their arguments and turned the matter over to the jury, who, after deliberating, "on their oath do say the Defendants are not guilty."[57]

Alfred, Jacob, and Squire's defense did not come cheap. John Spencer Basset, editor of Jackson's correspondence, related a rumor that Jackson spent some $1,500 to save his slaves from the death penalty, an amount that is certainly close to the mark. The general lamented to his nephew, Andrew Jackson Hutchings, "The conduct of William and Stockely in selecting and prosecuting my negros have run me to considerable expence, which I must meet." He explained further that the trial costs "makes it necessary that I should sacrifice some property to clear me of this unexpected expence. let me hear from you the prospect of a sale." In a subsequent letter to Hutchings, Jackson again explained his need to sell several lots: "I was anxious to have sold them as a few hundred dollars would have aided me in meeting the expence of the persecution of my negroes." Jackson ultimately related that he was "compelled" to "borrow $1000 to meet the expence of the negro indictment."[58]

The fact that Jackson hired three of Nashville's top defense attorneys, attempted to sell property, and finally placed himself in debt to defend the lives of slaves is no small matter. He had the option of accepting the court appointed lawyer and in doing so incurring no expense whatsoever. Had his slaves been found guilty, Jackson would have lost assets in the amount of some $1,500.[59] This certainly would have been a considerable financial loss, but he had well over one hundred slaves at this time and the loss of four would not have broken him. Moreover, he could have used the same $1,500 spent on defense to purchase three additional slaves. One must also consider the fact that the monetary loss was on paper in the form of assets, whereas Jackson had to actually procure the cash for legal defense. Additionally, there is evidence to show that Jackson was annoyed with his nephew Stockley Donelson, some bad blood existed between them, and this may have contributed to Jackson's ardor in defense of his slaves. To explain away all of the general's actions on this point, however, is simplistic. Jackson's motivations revealed perhaps the ultimate intermingling of a feeling of paternalism and commerce.

The court case occurred during Jackson's retirement at the Hermitage. He had come home in 1837 after serving two presidential terms.

Tired and afflicted by numerous medical complaints, he hoped that his last days on the plantation would be trouble free. Jackson enjoyed the mornings by riding around the Hermitage with his grand-daughter Rachel, who in later years described there daily jaunts: "He would stop and talk awhile with old Dunwoody [a slave who ran the stables], at the negro's cabins, about the colts; then to the fields where the servants were at work picking cotton; and as soon as he came up and spoke to them, always kindly and gently, they would give three loud cheers for 'old master.'"[60]

Certainly an idyllic view from a young woman who adored her then deceased grandfather, Rachel's reminiscence also provides a very brief glimpse into the workings of the plantation. A lover of horses, Jackson had a considerable stable. The main market crop was cotton, though the Hermitage produced some eighteen additional crops. In 1833 the overseer ran seventeen plows to tend the fields and could add another two if necessary. Jackson also had an extensive fruit orchard, and at least seven different types of livestock, the most important of which was pigs to feed the slave and white families. With the wide variety of crops and livestock, Jackson attempted to make the plantation self-sufficient. There was also a sawmill, cotton gin, and brick kiln from which all of the bricks used to create both the main mansion and slave quarters were fired.[60] A traveler in 1834-1835 commented on the expanse of Jackson's operation: "Everything was neat and clean around it, the fences were well kept up, and it looked like the substantial residence of an opulent planter. The estate is said to be a very nice one, to consist of from seven to eight hundred acres of cleared land, two hundred acres of which are in cotton at this time, and to extend to the Cumberland River." The visitor, G.W. Featherstonehaugh, spoke with one of Jackson's neighbors who had lived nearby for some thirty years and remarked, "The General was an industrious, managing man, always up to all undertakings, and most punctual in the performance of his business engagements: that his private conduct was remarkable for uniformly inclining to justice, generosity, and humanity: that he was an excellent master to his slaves, and never permitted his overseers to ill-treat them…."

The comments from Jackson's neighbor paint the perfect picture of a southern farmer who embodied the most "noble" traits of slave paternalism, an image that slave holders embraced and one to which Jackson constantly strove. Another account, related by the family tutor, embodied the same pleasant, innocuous portrait of Jackson as the beneficent master: "General Jackson was a very kind master, and fully recognized all of his Christian obligations in that relation. Under his rule slavery appeared in its least offensive form, and his dependents regarded him more in the light of a friend than a task master."[62] Such rosy depictions are replete with paradox considering the force utilized to maintain control and obedience. Yet even in considering the harsh nature of the peculiar institution and how Jackson interacted with his slaves, one must look at their material conditions to determine both his conception of social control and how the enslaved African Americans shaped their own existence.

Jackson's larger conception of hierarchy and social station was embodied in the structural layout of the Hermitage. Not all slaves held the same status; house servants were held in higher esteem than field slaves, and their proximity to the mansion highlighted the standing of each. Archeologists have located some nineteen slave dwellings, all of which measure a standardized 20 x 20 foot construction, and were placed in small groupings in different locations. The practice of geographic placement and thus social grouping was common among slave owners and discussed in numerous agricultural manuals located in Jackson's library. Keeping with this notion of community engineering, Sarah Jackson once wrote that the children of house slaves will be "taken into the house," but those of field slaves will not. Even though Jackson and other slave

The structural layout of the Hermitage embodied Jackson's larger conception of hierarchy and social station. Archaeologists have located nineteen slave dwellings, all of which have living units measuring a standard 20 x 20 feet. This triplex was to the rear of the Hermitage. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

Jackson's slaves found ways to create lives of their own, including their own forms of spirituality. Three fist-shaped amulets recovered by archaeologists suggest a cultural continuity with West Africa. (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

owners made such attempts at social stratification, archeologists believe that slaves refused to abide by such notions of social interaction, engaging instead in considerable activity among all "classes" on the plantation.[63]

Evidence in and around the various slave quarters reveals that the occupants created a life of their own in addition to the one dictated by master and overseer. There exist clearly defined yard spaces signified by hard-packed surfaces, fence lines, and, in one area, a definite back yard. As archeologist Larry McKee put it, these areas are "evidence of the kind of minor but pervasive alterations made by residents to their assigned living areas."[64] In some small way, these additions made the quarters a home. This is where life away from work was spent. Evidence exists of an outdoor cooking area, tobacco pipes, writing slates and slate pencils, eyeglass lenses, gaming pieces made from shards of European pottery, playing dice, stone and clay marbles, some marked with an "x," as well as china dolls, at least one of which was black. All of this reveals evidence of leisure and play, social activities that were essential to life. There were also, of course, gatherings with slaves from other plantations.[65] The Christmas party at which the fight occurred is one example. Slaves also celebrated marriages, though they were not state sanctioned and could be broken on the whim of an owner who sold a spouse. Tax records reveal that many Hermitage slaves were married and had large families. One union in particular was apparently celebrated by both blacks and whites. When Sarah Jackson returned from Washington in early 1837, she brought Gracey, the slave purchased from Colonel Hebb. Alfred, who had been born on the plantation and was the son of Betty the cook, met Gracey and by the fall of that year married her. One account related that Mrs. Jackson "took the greatest interest in the affair. She had the couple stand in the large hall [at the Hermitage] while they were married and gave them a fine wedding supper. These two favorite servants were given a cabin near the house. They reared a family and lived an exemplary married life for over fifty years."[66] Though the source from which this story is derived is not particularly critical, the actual information was gleaned from Alfred himself who lived his entire life at the Hermitage and gave tours of the property long after Jackson's heirs had left.

In addition to these many social outlets slaves were also active in their own forms of spirituality, many of which may have been influenced by African customs. Numerous items have been found that lead to such conclusions, including three small brass fist-shaped amulets, pierced coins made into medallions, quartz crystals, and numerous glass beads that indicate cultural continuity with West Africa. Archeologists have also found a single polished raccoon ospenis bone that may have been used as an amulet. Such finds reveal that slaves created their own sense of place. There is also evidence that slaves could choose their own religion. In Hannah's reminiscence she notes that the Hermitage church was Presbyterian, but she and Alfred were Baptists.[67]

Hermitage slaves also owned considerable amounts of what might be considered fine goods, including bone handled cutlery and combs, ceramic earthenware vessels made in England, porcelain serving vessels, tea cups, and fancy glass tableware. House slaves had these items in greater quantity than field slaves, but both groups possessed them. There is some speculation regarding how slaves acquired such things. Some were undoubtedly passed down from the main house, but archeologists surmise that slave trade networks stretching across the south may have existed.[68] Another possibility is that slaves who had a greater degree of autonomy, couriers such as George, Charles, and John Fulton had the ability to trade or purchase various goods. There is no doubt that slaves had some money to engage in such transactions. A Hermitage farm journal from 1829 notes that some slaves were paid for extra work and excavations have found a considerable number of coins in and around slave quarters.[69]

Slaves on Jackson's plantation were also active in supplementing their diets. The main fare included pork and cornmeal, but archeological digs have revealed significant quantities of varying animal remains, including fish, turtle, raccoon, possum, turkey, chicken, goose, and deer. A number of slaves were evidently allowed to possess firearms and to hunt. The remains of various gun parts, lead shot, flints, and even one bullet mold have been unearthed. Tennessee law allowed that, "at the request of the master, the county courts permitted one slave on each plantation to hunt with a gun."[70] Enough gun parts have been found at the Hermitage to indicate that more than one slave may have possessed a firearm. One question is whether these were guns given to slaves or hidden by them. With so many slaves in residence on the plantation it would have been virtually impossible to police them at all times. Yet by the same token, it is doubtful that even semi-frequent gunfire would have been missed. Property lines and poaching were serious matters and anyone hunting on the plantation without permission would have been noticed.

Perhaps the find that has most intrigued archeologists are the root cellars found in every slave house. Ostensibly used for storage, they may also have been used to hide certain items, hence the nick-name "hidey-hole." Each has a different design and placement. Some are multi-chambered and some lined with brick or stone. They are particularly interesting because they are not original to the design of the slave quarters. Rather, they were the slaves' creations. Archeologists theorize that the root cellars represented the ability of slaves to have some sort of control in an otherwise controlled existence. Larry McKee offers, "Beneath their facades, the cabins hid evidence of less regimented lives, conducted in near secret. The most direct gateway to those secret lives was found under each cabin floor." These were "places for items that had to be kept hidden from master and overseer." Though such a theory is possible, the degree to which these were truly "hidden" areas is debatable. McKee acknowledges in another article: "The near constant presence of the cellars suggests that Jackson was aware of these additions, and probably gave at least indirect approval if not outright encouragement for the construction of these utilitarian storage facilities." As with the use of firearms, there were so many slaves living on the plantation that as long as nothing was overtly amiss there was most likely no special reason for ransacking a slave's home in search of hidden contraband. Moreover, archeologists have documented the existence of root cellars at numerous white owned sites.[71]

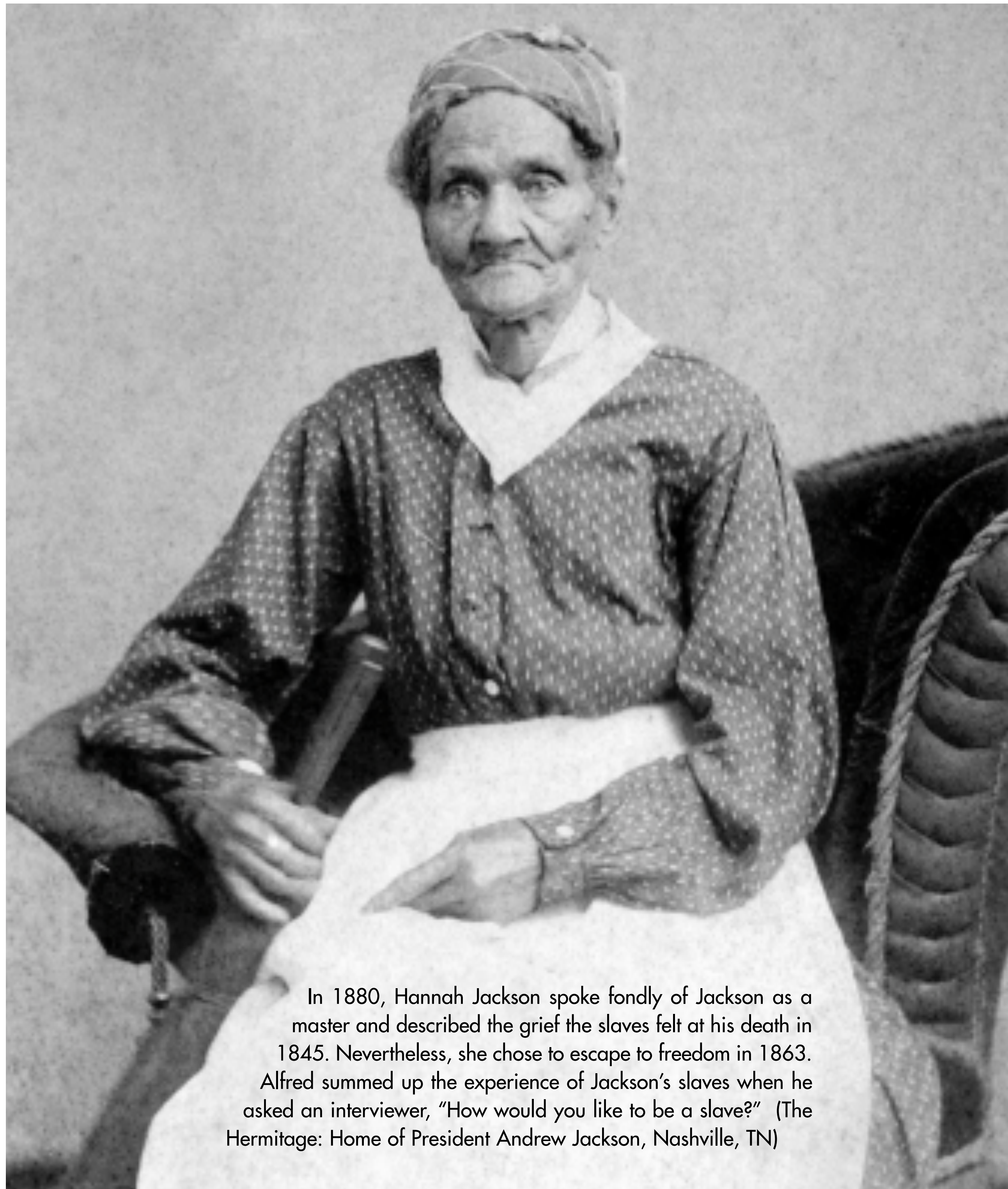
The documentary and archeological evidence indicates that the Hermitage was a bustling, diverse place. It had to be in order to sustain the sizable population, both white and black, that depended upon its resources. Jackson expected the plantation to supply the inhabitants' material needs and reap a profit as well. And though Jackson suffered financial difficulty at the end of his life, this was due to absorbing his adopted son's debts rather than failed management at the Hermitage.[72] Jackson's numerous letters regarding the plantation make clear that he observed the happenings with great care; this included business dealings and the welfare of slaves. Indeed, the two were often intertwined.

Before Jackson passed away on June 8, 1845, his interaction with Hermitage residents depicted the larger complexity that existed in a slave society. The general called his black and white family to his bedside, and with his servant George holding the pillows behind Jackson's head, he croaked, "God will take care of you for me. I am my God's. I belong to him, I go but a short time before you, and I want to meet you all in heaven, both white & black." Hannah remembered, "The doctor said to Mistus Sarah to send the servants out of the room; but we refused to go. One of the servants went on so cryin' and lamentin' she had to be carried out of the room….The darkies could not be driven out. Our master, our father was gone. We looked upon him as though we had as much right there as Master Andrew." At Jackson's funeral, just two days later, a visitor noted "that there was a thing that struck me very forcibly; he has always been charged with being tyrannical; but if the evidence of his slaves is testimony to the contrary, I am a witness that there was sorrow universal, among what I suppose must have been some seventy or eighty slaves." The funeral-goer continued, "You would see them standing around the Hermitage in groups of fifteen to twenty, (dressed in their Sunday dress,) in silent grief, the tears falling down their dark faces. The house servants were immediately around the foot of the coffin…" and when the reverend Mr. Edgar motioned towards them "there was one gush of grief" from the slaves.

The emotion displayed on the part of Jackson's slaves epitomized the paternal, contradictory nature of slavery. Referring to the general as "father," Hannah revealed both the commanding and familial role that Jackson embodied among the slaves. At the same time that slaves wept for the general's loss, they may have been weeping for the uncertainty that his death represented. Jackson did not emancipate a single slave and with the economic turmoil at the plantation slaves may very well have been crying at the possibility of being sold to satisfy debts. One Whig newspaper hit on this point quite clearly, noting, "We presume they [the slaves] would have felt less grief if their free papers had been presented to them on the occasion."[73] Yet whittling Hannah's comments and the reactions of other slaves down to a single motivation removes the larger complexity of slave/master relationships. Hannah had been with Jackson since the age of eight and remained on the Hermitage property until midway through the Civil War. Giving her reminiscences in 1880 at the age of eighty-nine, she commented not only on the general's death but on her childhood memories and the time that Jackson bought her a new red dress.[74] With such a long history on the plantation, indeed her entire life and the lives of many other slaves had been spent there, it is virtually impossible to believe that she and others felt no sense of belonging or affection for Jackson, and he for them. This is not to deny that power roles were wholly lopsided in favor of the master, but much the way that slaves negotiated the material surroundings to have some degree of autonomy, they appear to have done the same in relating with Jackson. This is shown minimally by Jackson's willingness to abide by his slaves' desires in relation to marriage.

There is no denying that Jackson embraced slavery as a moral institution, that he profited from it, and, at times, that he maintained control through barbaric measures. He had no qualms about maintaining order with the "cowhide." Moreover, his orders to cure Gilbert of running away resulted in that slave's death. This fact, along with Jackson's orders to whip Betty, as well as the 1804 runaway advertisement, are all indicative of a brutal, inhumane system of bondage. Yet combined with this brutality, there also existed a paradoxical paternalism. Jackson's letters indicate that he was unquestionably affected by Gilbert's death and from that point on attempted to ensure that Hermitage slaves were treated with "humanity." Jackson's attempts to keep slave families together, his willingness to act on the requests of slaves, and perhaps most surprisingly, his defense of four slaves in a criminal proceeding, all indicate that slavery was more to Jackson than a pecuniary, labor related matter. There existed between Jackson and his slaves a rather complex, but very real relationship marked by a give and take on both sides.

To be sure, Jackson and all slave holders took more than they gave. A slave's freedom was something that could not be replaced by any measure of material comfort or paternal care. This is obvious by the sheer fact that slaves ran away. The thirst for liberty is also emphasized by the comments of Alfred, who had lived on at the Hermitage his entire life and was, perhaps more so than any other slave, treated with special con-



In 1880, Hannah Jackson spoke fondly of Jackson as a master and described the grief the slaves felt at his death in 1845. Nevertheless, she chose to escape to freedom in 1863. Alfred summed up the experience of Jackson's slaves when he asked an interviewer, "How would you like to be a slave?" (The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson, Nashville, TN)

sideration and privilege. Speaking to the family tutor in the 1840s after the president's death, Alfred responded to a comment that he did not have it so badly and that freedom too had its burdens: "How would you like to be a slave?" he responded. That ended the conversation.[76]

1. *Alfred, Jacob & Squire versus the State*, Davidson County Minute Books, First Circuit, vol. K, September 1838-Spetember 1840, p. 242, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville (hereafter TSLA)

2. Most well known is Jackson's involvement in the 1835 Charleston, S.C., abolitionist mailing episode. See William W. Freehling, *Prelude to War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York, 1966).

3. James Parton noted Jackson "was the most indulgent, patient and generous of masters." See *Andrew Jackson*, vol. 1, (New York, 1860), 249; John Spencer Bassett wrote, "Jackson was an ideal slave-owner." See *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York, 1931), 723. Marquis James held similar opinions, see *Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President* (Indianapolis, 1937), 30. See also, Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire,1761-1821* (New York, 1977), 133-4; *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845* (New York, 1984), 50-1; and *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery* (Baton Rouge, 1988).

4. Larry McKee, "The Archeological Study of Slavery and Plantation Life in Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 34 (Fall 2000): 188-203; "The Earth Is Their Witness," *The Sciences* (March 1995): 36-41; Elizabeth Kellar, "The Pit, the Press & the Postholes: Excavation of Andrew Jackson's Cotton Gin," paper delivered at Tennessee Conference of Historians, 27 September 2003.

5. Annette Gordon-Bennett, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville, 1998); Jan Lewis, Peter S. Onuf, and Jane E. Lewis, eds., *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville, 1999).

6. Henry Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America* (New York, 2003); William Dusinberre, *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (New York, 2003).

7. Dorothy Haskins, the descendent of Hermitage slaves, alleges that Jackson fathered a child with "House Hannah." The liaison supposedly produced a girl named Charlotte, born in July 1826. Haskins states, "Charlotte was very adamant about passing down to her children and grandchildren the fact that she indeed was the blood heir to Andrew Jackson." This information was placed on a website that is no longer functional. Copies of the site are available in the slave files at The Hermitage, Nashville, Tennessee. The author attempted, without success, to reach Haskins.

8. For southern paternalism, see David Donald, "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered," *Journal of Southern History* 37 (Feb. 1971): 3-18; Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge, 1982); Paul Finkelman, ed., *Proslavery Thought, Ideology, and Politics* (New York, 1989); Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves* Made (New York, 1974); Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, (New York, 1976; Stuckey Sterling, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York, 1987); Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens, 1987.)

9. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge, 2005), 369.

10. Record of Slave Sale, in Sam B. Smith, et al., *The Papers of Andrew Jackson,* vol. 1, (Knoxville, 1980), 15; hereafter *Jackson Papers*. For Jackson's early years, see Hendrik Booraem, *Young Hickory: The Making of Andrew Jackson* (Dallas, 2001), 186.

11. List of Taxable Property, 1792, in *Jackson Papers*, vol. 1, 34; Tax Assesment, 1798, ibid, 211. Only ten of Jackson's slaves were between the ages of twelve and fifty, and as such taxable. "Inventory, Appraisal, and Division of John Donelson's Estate," 1791, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 1, 425-7.

12. Chase C. Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee* (Bloomington, 1957), 87.

13. Power of Attorney from James Buchanan, 8 November 1790, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 1, 23-4; John Overton to AJ, 8 March 1795, ibid, 54; AJ to Robert Hays, 12 December 1796, ibid, 102; Squire Grant to AJ, 25 November 1799, ibid, 224; Samuel Jackson to AJ, 9 June 1802, ibid, 298; Samuel Jackson to AJ, 25 October 1802, ibid, 316; Lemuel Henry to AJ (with enclosure), 14 June 1803, ibid, 332; Agreement with Mark Mitchell, 12 December 1803, ibid, 409.

14. AJ to Thomas Eastin, June 1806, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 2, 106-7. Andrew Erwin, of Tennessee, published an anonymous letter in the *National Banner & Nashville Whig* in which he accused Jackson of slave trading. A letter war ensued. See ibid, 15 July 1827, 25 July 1827, 5 August 1827, and 19 August 1827. Some of these letters were republished in "A Brief Account of General Jackson's Dealings in Negroes," TSLA. Jackson involved himself in the partnership of Coleman, Green, and Jackson, originally formed in 1811 to purchase and resell cotton and tobacco. Coleman and Green later arranged for the sale and purchase of several slaves. Though not a key figure in the transaction, Jackson fully understood the agreement and was aware that the commodity to be speculated in was slaves. Andrew Burstein notes, "Jackson was more active in the slave trade than most," but provides no evidence for such an assertion. See, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson* (New York, 2003), 24.

15. Advertisement for a Runaway, 26 September 1804, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 2, 40-1; see also, Robert H. Hay, "'And Ten Dollars Extra, for Every Hundred Lashes Any Person Will Give Him, to the Amount of Three Hundred': A Note on Andrew Jackson's Runaway Slave Ad of 1804 and on the Historian's Use of Evidence," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*

36 (Winter 1977): 468-478; Jackson had previously made a comment in a letter to Rachel about a slave's punishment, noting that he hoped the overseer Henry Gowery "has brought Aston to a perfect state of obedience." See AJ to Rachel Jackson, 22 March 1803 in John Spencer Bassett, ed., *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson,* vol. 1, (Washington, D.C., 1933), 65, hereafter *Correspondence*.

16. See for example, Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers & Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York, 1975); James C. Curtis, *Andrew Jackson and the Search For Vindication* (New York, 1976); Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson.*

17. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God,* 132.

18. For purchase of the Hermitage, see Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire,* 131-2; Jackson noted in an 1839 letter that he owned "about one hundred and fifty negroes, old, middle aged, and young." See AJ to Francis P. Blair, *Correspondence,* vol. 6, 138. One historian estimated that Jackson may have owned as many as two hundred slaves. See Ada Walker, "Andrew Jackson: Planter," *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications* 15 (1943): 19-34. From 1818 to 1822 Jackson owned property on the Cypress River, north of Florence, Alabama. In later years, he backed his adopted son, Andrew Jackson, Jr.'s, purchase of a Mississippi plantation called Halcyon. See AJ to Isaac Shelby, 24 November 1818, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 4, 250-1; Walker, 20.

19. List of Jackson's Taxable Property, 1 January 1812, in *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 212; Memorandum of Slaves and Land in Davidson County, Tennessee, 1 January 1825, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 6, 3.

20. AJ to Rachel Jackson, 28 January 1814, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 3, 20; AJ to Rachel, 11 December 1823, ibid, vol. 5, 324.

21. Herbert Gutman and Richard Sutch estimate that slaves had a 49.3 percent chance of sale at least once in the course of a 35-year lifetime, noting, "The threat of sale touched every American slave family." See Paul A. David, et. al., *Reckoning with Slavery* (New York, 1976,) 110-111.

22. James Houston to AJ, 17 November 1819, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 440.

23. Catalina Mir Sartorios to AJ, 16 April 1822, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 5, 174.

24. Kenneth Stampp discusses slave values in *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956.)

25. AJ to Robert J. Chester, 7 November 1830, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, 198.

26. Mary C. Dorris, *Preservation of the Hermitage, 1889-1915* (Nashville, 1915), 124-5; see also, Gracey Bradley file, Slave Files, The Hermitage, Nashville, Tennessee.

27. "Old Hannah: Reminiscences of the Hermitage," recorded by William G. Terrell, published in the *Cincinnati Commercial,* 22 June 1880. There exists one additional item related to Jackson and slave families, a short addendum to a letter in which Jackson discusses the sale of "Sampson" and his family. Burstein concludes from this that Jackson was "expressing awareness of the emotional consequences of trading in human beings." Yet the information related to this sale is so sparse that such a conclusion is highly speculative. See, Andrew Jackson to Rachel Jackson, 18 September 1816, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 4, 62; Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*, 255 note 55.

28. Rachel Jackson to AJ, 7 April 1814, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 498.

29. AJ to Andrew J. Donelson, 3 July 1821, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, 87; James Craine Bronough, 3 July 1821, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 5, 66; Rachel Jackson apparently experienced additional difficulties with slaves at the Hermitage in 1816. See AJ to Rachel Jackson, 18 September 1816, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 4, 62.

30. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821,* 162-3; see also, AJ to George Washington Campbell, 15 October 1812, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 2, 334-6.

31. For Jackson and militiamen, see Matthew Warshauer, "The Battle of New Orleans Reconsidered: Andrew Jackson and Martial Law," *Louisiana History* 39 (Summer 1998): 261-291; for the Woods case, see Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire,* 211-213; for Jackson's comments, see Andrew Jackson to John Wood, 14 March 1814, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 3, 48-49; Burstein notes that Jackson's treatment of certain slaves was "paternalistic in a sense comparable to his starkly demanding, occasionally punitive, yet consistently fatherly approach to his white soldiers. See Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*, 225.

32. Rogin, *Fathers & Children;* William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War:The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York, 1966.)

33. AJ to Andrew Jackson Donelson, 28 June 1822, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 5, 195; two other runaways were Tom and Ned. See James Jackson to AJ, 28 May 1821, ibid, 50.

34. AJ to Egbert Harris, 13 April 1822, ibid, vol. 3, 158. Also see "Advertisement by John Coffee for AJ's runaway slave Gilbert from the Big Spring farm," 24 April 1822, printed in the Nashville *Whig*, ibid, vol. 5, 525; on Jackson's decision to bring his slaves to the Hermitage, see Andrew Jackson Donelson to AJ, 14 December 1822, ibid, 533.

35. AJ to John Coffee, 20 September 1824, ibid, 440. Jackson had difficulty with another slave during this time period. Cyrus came to the Hermitage in 1823 on a test basis, but was troublesome. He was flogged by the overseer and later attempted to run away. Jackson informed Cyrus's owner of the problem, stating, "It is such an example as

cannot be tolerated by me, it would ruin all my negroes." AJ to Hardy Murfree Cryer, 12 July 1824, ibid, 284-5.

36. "Affidavit of Ira Walton," taken by W.M. Smith, Justice of the Peace for Davidson County, in *National Banner & Nashville Whig*, 15 August 1828.

37. "Affidavit of Ira Walton." See also the editor's notes, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 6, 384.

38. AJ to William Faulkner, 28 August 1827, ibid, 384; AJ to Andrew Hays, 30 August 1827, ibid, 385-6.

39. Andrew Hays to AJ, 31 August 1827, ibid, 386; *Ira Walton vs. The State*, Davidson County Circuit Court Minute Books, 1st Circuit, Vol. F, November, 1827, 229, 248, TSLA.

40. Arthur F. Howington, *What Sayeth the Law: The Treatment of Slaves and Free Blacks in the State and Local Courts of Tennessee* (New York, 1986); Thomas D. Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law, 1690-1860,* (Chapel Hill, 1996); A.E. Keir Nash, "Negro Rights and Judicial Behavior," (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1967); Daniel J. Flannigan, "The Criminal Law of Slavery and Freedom, 1800-1868," (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 1973).Howington notes, "Ordinarily, the attorney general would not send a bill of indictment to the grand jury unless it was signed by some private individual as prosecutor," 191.

41. AJ to John Donelson, 7 June 1829, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, 41-2.

42. AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 4 July 1829, ibid, 49-50.

43. AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 20 July 1829, ibid, 54.

44. AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., ibid, 62.

45. AJ to Graves Steel, 7 November 1829; ibid, 85-6; AJ to Charles J. Love, 7 December 1829, ibid, 105; Charles J. Love to AJ, 15 January 1830, ibid, 119-20.

46. Dorris, *Preservation of the Hermitage,* 125; "House Servants," Slaves Files, The Hermitage; Rachel Jackson Lawrence, "Andrew Jackson at Home," *McClure's Magazine*, (1897): 792-4; AJ to George Washington Martin, 18 October 1823, *Jackson Papers,* vol. 5, 548; Account with Woodruff & Smiley for tailoring for George and AJ, 6 November 1823, ibid, 549; for slaves as messengers, see AJ to John Coffee, 29 September 1822, ibid, 219; AJ to John Coffee, 11 May 1821, ibid, 42; "House Servants," Slaves Files, The Hermitage.

47. Burnard Hotzclaw to AJ, 6 March 1833, *Jackson Papers*, vol. 5, 29-30; Andrew J. Donelson, 19 August 1832, ibid, 468.

48. Andrew J. Hutchings to AJ, 18 April 1833, ibid, 59; Dr. M. McCorckle to AJ, 19 April 1833, ibid, 61. That Jackson mentioned the death of the two Sampsons points to the fact that one of the Sampsons, and perhaps his family, was never sold, as indicated by Andrew Burstein. Records show that only two Sampsons lived at the Hermitage. See note 25.

49. William B. Lewis to AJ, 19 April 1833, 61-65.

50. AJ to William B. Lewis, 4 May 1833, ibid, 73-4.

51. AJ to John A. Shute, 3 January 1839, ibid, vol. 6, 1-2.

52. Ibid; Remini discusses this matter briefly in *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy,* 452-3.

53. Howington, *What Sayeth the Law*, 189, 193.

54. Caleb Perry Patterson, *The Negro in Tennessee* (Austin, 1922), 34.

55. The lawyers retained by Jackson are listed in "Alfred, Jacob & Squire versus the State," Davidson County Minute Books, First Circuit, vol. K, September 1838-September 1840, p. 242, Nashville State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee; for biographical data on Fletcher and the Ewings, see W.W. Clayton, *History of Davidson County, Tennessee*, (reprint, Nashville, 1971), 109, 120-2; William S. Speer, *Sketches of Prominent Tennesseans,* (Nashville, 1888), 138-41; Robert M. McBride, *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly,* vol. 1, (Nashville, 1975), 252.

56. *State vs. George (a man of colour),* Davidson County Minute Books, 207; "Alfred, Jacob & Squire versus the State," ibid, 242; Howington, *What Sayeth the Law*, 197.

57. *State vs. George (a man of colour*), Davidson County Minute Books, 246, 248, 250-1.

58. AJ to Andrew J. Hutchings, 5 March and 18 March 1839, *Correspondence*, vol. 6, 7; AJ to Andrew J. Hutchings, 20 May 1839, ibid, 14; see also AJ to James K. Polk, 11 February 1839, ibid, 4.

59. The average value of a slave in 1840 was $543. See Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee,* 122.

60. Lawrence, "Andrew Jackson at Home," 793.

61. Walker, "Andrew Jackson: Planter," 25-6; see also, AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 1 November 1833, *Correspondence,* vol. 5, 222; AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 13 November, ibid, 225; William B. Lewis to AJ, 21 April 1833, ibid, 64; AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 12 February 1834, ibid, 248; AJ to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 30 October 1834, ibid, 303-4; AJ to J.M. Parker, 11 May 1844, ibid, vol. 6, 289; for a list of Jackson's crops in 1850, see also, Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee*, 198-9.

62. G.W. Featherstonehaugh, *Excursion through the Slave States* (New York, 1844); Roeliff Brinkerhoff, *Recollections of a Lifetime,* (Cincinnati, 1900), 61.Brinkerhoff claimed that Jackson was adverse to slavery but that he could see no solution to the problem. John F. Gray also claimed that Jackson denounced slavery in regards to both humanity and the future of the nation. There is no evidence to support either of these views. See "Jackson's Views on Slavery," *Missouri Republican,* 17 December 1882.

63. "House Servants," Slaves Files, The Hermitage; Brian W. Thomas and Larry McKee, "Twenty Years of Research on the Hermitage Slave Community, Interpreting

the Archeological Findings," 4-5, 8, 10, Paper presented at the 1996 Society for Historical Archeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archeology, Cincinnati, Ohio, paper held by the Hermitage, Nashville, Tennessee; Brian W. Thomas, Community Among Enslaved African-Americans, 1820-1850s, (PhD dissertation, State University of New York, Binghamton, 1995); Larry McKee, "The Earth is Their Witness," 38.

64. Larry McKee, "Consistency and Variation in Slave Housing at Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Plantation," 10, Paper presented at the 1996 conference, "Housing Slavery in the Age of Jackson: Comparative Perspectives," Charlottesville, Virginia, paper held by the Hermitage.

65. McKee, "The Earth is Their Witness," 40-1.

66. Dorris *Preservation of the Hermitage,* 125.

67. McKee, "The Earth is Their Witness," 40; Aaron E. Russell, "Material Culture and African-American Spirituality at the Hermitage," *Historical Archeology,* 31 2 (1997): 63-80; "Old Hannah: Reminiscences of the Hermitage."

68. McKee, "The Earth is Their Witness," 40.

69. Ibid, 39; AJ to Andrew J. Donelson, 3 July 1821, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, 87.

70. McKee, "Bread in Captivity," 9-10; Return J. Meigs and William F. Cooper, eds., *The Code of Tennessee. Enacted by the General Assembly of 1857-8,* (Nashville, 1858), 506-7; Patterson, *The Negro in Tennessee,* 25.

71. McKee, "The Earth is Their Witness," 39; McKee, Consistency and Variation, 11, 14-15;Kevin E. Smith, "Bledsoe Station: Archeology, History, and the Interpretation of the Middle Tennessee Frontier, 1770-1820," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 35 (Fall 200): 174-187.

72. AJ to William B. Lewis, 28 February 1842, ibid, 141; Walker, "Andrew Jackson: Planter," 21.

73. Lawrence, "Andrew Jackson at Home, 793; Robert Remini, "The Final Days and Hours in the Life of General Andrew Jackson," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 39 (1980): 167-77; see also, Remini, *The Course of American Democracy*, 524; "Old Hannah: Reminiscences of the Hermitage;" "General Jackson and His Slaves," *Albany Evening Atlas,* 25 June 1845; "Gen. Jackson and His Slaves," *Syracuse Journal*, in *Madison County Whig* (New York), 9 July 1845; also see ibid, 23 July 1845; Jackson's Will, *Correspondence,* vol. 6, 220-223.

74. Hannah noted that Jackson was often very kind to the slaves, especially children: "Old master was mighty good to us all. When I was a child ole mistress used to pin me to her dress at her side to learn me to sew….Sometimes she would fall a nappin', when I would loosen the pin and steal away from her….When I come back, she would ask me where I had been. If ole master was there he would say, 'O, let the little thing go out and play whenever she wants to.'" There were also special acts of kindness that Hannah remembered warmly. On one occasion she was combing Jackson's hair, "he had a heap of hair," she explained, and he told her that she would be rewarded for any "buggers" that she found. Hannah pretended to kill some bugs by clicking her fingernail and when Jackson asked her to produce the bugs she admitted that she was "foolin'." Jackson knew that she was "tellin' a story" and said that he would buy her a new dress if she promised to never tell another. "I promised," said Hannah, "and he bought me the dress. I remember that it was red." Hannah ultimately remarked, "Ole Master was gold to us." See "Old Hannah: Reminiscences of the Hermitage," *Cincinnati Commercial*, 22 June 1880. Despite Hannah's warm memories, Sarah Yorke Jackson wrote in a letter on 11 June 1863, "Hannah and Martha [her daughter] have gone to the Yankees. Hannah has been very insolent for some time." Letter on file at the Hermitage.

75. Brinkerhoff, *Recollections of a Lifetime*, 61.