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Patrick Riordan

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by PATRICK RIORDAN

THE entry of the lower south into a world marketplace wrought transformations on its European, native, and African American populations. As production demands increased after the turn of the 18th century, African laborers began to escape their European masters in greater numbers and more frequently sought permanent freedom. When they entered "Indian country," African Americans confronted native peoples with a difficult choice. Native Americans could assist them in escape, incorporate them into native groups, or return them to the Europeans with whom Native Americans maintained a delicate balance of diplomacy and trade.

The interpenetration of these populations created spaces where fleeing slaves might find an escape route, a temporary hiding place, and even a permanent home. Slaves in the British colonies of Carolina and Georgia became aware that, if they reached St. Augustine, they could achieve a degree of freedom. Eighteenth-century Native Americans, by contrast, discovered in Spanish Florida's uninhabited and fertile backcountry an escape from European influences. From the founding of Carolina in 1670 until the destruction of the Negro Fort in 1816, native and African people sometimes found in colonial Florida's remoteness a haven from white settlers.[1]

Patrick Riordan, who will receive his Ph.D. from Florida State University in August, is a lecturer in American Studies and History at Middlesex University, London.

1. The fear of a native-African alliance led colonists to ban Indian traders from using African Americans as laborers in Indian country. For the Georgia statute, see *An Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia,* January 9, 1734, British Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Class 5, piece 681 (hereinafter CO5/681) f. 34. Similarly, in April 1758, South Carolina colonists refused a Cherokee offer to trade two French POWs for black slaves, because of the policy against Indians owning slaves. Ludovick Grant, "Historical Relation of Facts Delivered by Ludovick Grant, Indian Trader, to His Excellency, the Governor of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10 (January 1909) 54-69, as cited in R. Halliburton, Jr., *Red over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians,* Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies 27, ed. Hollis R. Lynch (Westport, CT: 1977), 10.

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Migration varied over time, gradually increasing as working and living conditions worsened for laborers in the early 18th century. Initially South Carolina's agricultural economy was based on provision gardening, naval stores, and cattle raising rather than monocrop plantations. The social distance between blacks and whites was comparatively small at first. Blacks generally lived in accommodations similar to those of whites, experienced a relatively acceptable work regime, and some African Americans apparently even voted in 1703. After the 1710s, work regimes worsened and migration rates increased. For the remainder of the period under study, African American laborers in South Carolina generally faced conditions of life and work that tended to promote flight, if not outright rebellion.[2]

By the 1720s, the mix of the worker population was richer in newly-arrived Africans, who were more likely to run away. A recent study of the runaways advertised in South Carolina newspapers from 1732 to 1782 shows that of nearly 3,000 escaped slaves, two out of three were born in Africa. Significantly, the Stono uprising of 1739 was led by slaves fresh from Africa, who headed south toward Florida. A study of 453 runaways advertised in Georgia during a shorter period, 1763 to 1775, found that three of every four runaways were African-born.[3]

Word of Florida's potential as a sanctuary probably reached Carolina blacks as early as 1685, when several slaves captured by Spanish raiders returned and recounted their adventures in St. Au-

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2. Peter Wood expressed the ambiguity facing escaping African Americans in these terms: "The prospect of total absorption into a compatible culture had to be balanced against the risk of betrayal, captivity, or death." Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1975), 230-31. For the harsh conditions slaves experienced while escaping, see Daniel L. Schafer, "'Yellow Silk Ferret Tied Round Their Wrists:' African Americans in British East Florida, 1763-1784," in *The African American Heritage of Florida,* eds. David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers (Gainesville, FL., 1995), 93.

3. David Richardson, "The British Slave Trade to Colonial South Carolina," *Slavery and Abolition,* 12 (December 1991) 3, 125-171, esp. Table 2 and p. 160; Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition,* 6 (December 1985) 60; "An Account of the Negroe Insurrection in South Carolina," *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (hereinafter CRG) v. 22, part 2, 1737-1740, 232-236; John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *American Historical Review* 96:4 (October 1991), 1102; Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia 1730-1775* (Athens, GA, 1984), 173.

gustine. Runaways began arriving the following year and continued irregularly   thereafter.[4]

This migration led Spain to initiate the policy that made Florida a magnet for slave migration. In 1693 the Spanish king offered limited freedom to any slave escaping from British territory who would accept Christian conversion. To be sure, the Spanish restricted the freedom of movement of the former British slaves, and required them to work on the huge stone fort known as San Marcos. Other Carolina slaves petitioned for freedom upon arrival in 1688, 1689, 1690, 1697, 1724, and 1725. In the early years of the 18th century the number of African Americans rose and fell, reaching several hundred by the 1740s including free people of color.[5]

The apparent decline in migration between the late 1680s and 1724 may be due to missing records, but shifts in native American demography provide a likely explanation. In the 1680s Spain countered British military probes of its territory with violence against native settlements it considered as British allies. One such group, located north of the Spanish fort at St. Mark's in Apalachee, was trading with the British, who offered better goods, lower prices,

4. Edward Randolph to Council of Trade and Plantations, March 16, 1699, CO5/1258, ff. 88-89v; Lords Proprietors of Carolina to Governor James Colleton, March 3, 1687, CO5/288, ff. 53v-54; Lords Proprietors of Carolina to Governor James Colleton, London, December 2, 1689, CO5/288, f. 81. It is likely that the ten slaves of whom Governor Quiroga wrote were the survivors of the 13 taken from Governor Morton's estate. Two of the slaves are said to have escaped from the Spanish and returned to Governor Morton. Another may have died in the storm which killed the Spaniard, DeLeon, who seized them. It is also possible that the ten slaves were true runaways who arrived in September 1687. Juan Marques Cabrera a Su Majestad, April 15, 1685, as cited in Herbert E. Bolton and Mary Ross, *The Debatable Land: A Sketch of the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Georgia Country* (1925, reprint; New York, 1968), 40; John J. TePaske, "The Fugitive Slave: Intercolonial Rivalry and Spanish Slave Policy, 1687-1764," in Samuel Proctor, ed., *Eighteenth-Century Florida and its Borderlands* (Gainesville, FL, 1975), 3. See also "William Dunlop's Mission to St. Augustine in 1688," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 34 (January 1933) 24, 3.
5. Archivo General de Indias, Santo Domingo (Audencia de Santo Domingo), Legajo 842. Carta del gobernador de la Florida al rey, November 2, 1725, as cited in TePaske, "The Fugitive Slave," 3; Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990) 14-15; Robert LaBret Hall, " 'Do, Lord, Remember Me:' Religion and Cultural Change Among Blacks in Florida, 1565-1906" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1984) 26-7.

and a more reliable supply than the Spanish. Antonio Matheos, commander of St. Mark's, burned those villages which refused to switch their trade to Spain. When he torched the leading towns, Coweta and Kasihta, their leaders organized a general movement of Creeks, or Muscogulges, eastward.[6]

This Muscogulge relocation had three consequences. First, it removed them from the Chattahoochee River watershed, which flowed into Spanish territory, and put them outside the sphere of Spanish influence. Second, it placed them on the headwaters of the Altamaha River, within trading range of the British. Third, it placed them strategically between Carolina and Florida, where they or the British traders they attracted might cut off the flow of escaping slaves, if they chose to do so. The Muscogulges' new location was undoubtedly a factor in the drastic reduction in black migration between 1690 and 1724.[7]

Soon after their removal to British territory, the Muscogulges became involved in a three-way colonial fight for hegemony in North America that broke out in 1702, known as Queen Anne's War. The British formed an alliance with the Muscogulges to counter a French eastward advance. British and Muscogulge troops attacked Spanish Florida, and, in the words of Thomas Nairne, "destroy'd the whole Country, burnt the Towns, brought all the *Indians,* who were not kill'd or made Slaves, into our own Territories, so

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6. Mark F. Boyd, "Diego Peña's Expedition to Apalachee and Apalachicola in 1716," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 28 (July 1949) 2-4.

7. William Bartram wrote that the Muscogulges believed that their ancestors had migrated eastward in the mid-17th century, reaching the Ocmulgee River in central Georgia in the 1680s. Basing his accounts on elderly male oral informants, Bartram wrote that the Muscogulge first contacted the Spanish. After receiving abuse, "[t]hey joined their arms with the Carolinians," defeated native peoples allied with Spain, "and in the end proved the destruction of the Spanish colony of East Florida." Bartram, "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians," in Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathleen E. Holland Braund, eds., *William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians* (Lincoln, NE, 1995), 140. For a later version, heavily edited after Bartram's death, see *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society* V. III., Part 1. For the burning of Coweta and Cassita, see Mattheos to Cabrera, Caveta, January 12, 1686; San Luis, March 14, 1686; San Luis, March 14, 1868, and Cabrera to the Viceroy, March 19, 1686, as cited in Bolton and Ross, *The Debatable Land,* 51. For the movement to the Oconee and Ochese Creeks, see Crane, *Southern Frontier,* 35-36.

that there remains not now, so much as one Village with ten Houses in it, in all Florida, that is subject to the Spaniards. . ."[8]

The British had reason to believe that they had co-opted or destroyed all the native peoples within 700 miles of Charles Town. This British-native alliance had the effect of cutting off the escape route to Florida. In fact, net migration briefly ran in the opposite direction. The Carolina forces, including a thousand Yamassee Indians, burned Spanish missions and enslaved at least 1,000 and, according to some interpretations, up to 4,000 Apalachee and other Indians. As a result, many Florida Indians were taken to Carolina, the Apalachee territory was left virtually uninhabited, and Indian slaves became the fastest-growing segment of the South Carolina population in the 1708 census. North Florida was left with few if any Native American settlements where newly arriving refugee slaves could seek assistance.[9]

Violent conflict erupted periodically in the region until the war played out in a series of skirmishes between native allies of European powers. In 1713, the Tuscarora attacked colonists in North Carolina who encroached on their lands, opening a prolonged period of conflict. After years of abuses at the hands of Indian traders– ranging from rum-running to rape, enslavement, and murder– the leaders of Coweta inspired the Yamassee Indians to revolt. The Yamassee took many African Americans as captives, and carried some of them to St. Augustine. Although the Yamassee War

8.   [Thomas Nairne], *A Letter from South Carolina; Giving an Account of the Soil, Air; Product, Trade, Government, Laws, Religion, People, Military Strength, &c., of That Province; Together with the Manner and necessary Charges of Settling a Plantation there, and the* Annual profit *it will produce. Written by a Swiss Gentlemen, to his Friend at Bern* (London, 1710), 33-35.

9.   Col. Robert Quarry to the Council on Trade and Plantations, May 30, 1704, CO324/5, f. 51; Crane, *The Southern Frontier,* 80, 161; James Adair, *The History of American Indians* (1775, original; 1930, reprint; Samuel Cole Williams, ed., Nashville, TN, 1971), 277; Alexander Moore, ed., Nairne's *Muskhogean Journals:* The 1708 Expedition to the Mississippi River (Jackson, MS, 1988), 14. John Hann has noted discrepancies in published versions of letters from Moore in 1704. From these and his readings of various Spanish sources, Hann doubts that Moore captured many more than 1,000 native slaves. John H. Hann, *Apalachee: The Land Between the Rivers* (Gainesville, FL, 1988), 279. For the growing number of Indian slaves in Carolina, see Letter from the Governor and Council of Carolina [to the Board of Trade], September 17, 1708, CO5/1264 ff. 152-54, also Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier 1670-1732* (1928; reprint, New York), 113, and Wood, *Black Majority,* 143-45.

failed to achieve the goal of a pan-Indian rebellion to expel all Europeans from the southeast, it did result in the Muscogulges' capture of numerous African laborers and the reoccupation of north central Florida by native peoples.[10]

After the Yamassee War several important Muscogulge towns pulled up stakes a second time– relocating this time to the west, out of the path of black migration. Coweta, the town whose leaders had instigated the war, moved back to the headwaters of the Chattahoochee, along with Kasihta and several other towns. At about the same time, the British Lords of Trade and Plantations recast its policies toward Native Americans. Seeking to rebuild lost alliances, the board decided to liberalize the terms of Indian trade by supporting "honest and reasonable prices," and to require colonial governors to regulate traders, whose abuses had provoked the Yamassee War. While the new policy did reinforce British trade alliances, it came too late to prevent the Muscogulge from relocating. Their movement created a buffer zone between Muscogulge territory and British Carolina-one through which African American refugees could travel safely, particularly when native peoples aided them.[11]

After Coweta led the westward movement back to the Chattahoochee valley, they found themselves at the center of a three-cornered international power struggle. The Spanish sought to make peace with as many of the Muscogulge groups as possible and to isolate the British. In 1717, the French established Fort Toulouse near present-day Montgomery, Alabama, to facilitate trading with

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10. Letter from the Lords Proprietors of Carolina . . . relating to the massacre in North Carolina, St. James' Square, December 4, 1711, CO5/1265 f. 247; Wood, *Black Majority,* 144; *Journal of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade* (1955; reprint, Columbia, SC, 1992), September 12, 1710 1:4, July 27, 1711,1:11; David Crawley to William Byrd, July 30, 1715, CO5/1265, f.2; Lords Proprietors of Carolina to the Council of Trade and Plantations, June 4, 1717, CO5/1265, ff. 133-34; Copies of Certificates from Col. Robert Daniel, Deputy Governor of South Carolina, August 13, 1716, CO5/1265, f. 94; John H. Hann; "St. Augustine's Fallout from the Yamassee War," *Florida Histotical Quarterly* 68 (October 1989), 180-200; Bolton and Ross, *The Debatable Land,* 57-63, Crane, *The Southern Frontier,* 74-97.

Il. C. O. Maps, North American Colonies General 7, *c.* 1722; Copy of a Representation of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations to the King Upon the State of His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in the Continent of North America, September 8, 1721, Kings MSS 205 f. 39v; see also CO324/10, 296-431, and *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, American and W. I. 1720-1721,* 424-28.

the Muscogulges. The British, meanwhile, constructed Fort King George at the mouth of the Altamaha River in 172 1. The construction of these forts defined a triangular contest for native friendship that handed the regional balance of power to the Muscogulges. The Muscogulges developed internal factions, each oriented toward one of the European powers, learning its language and manipulating it to native advantage. Such power politics led native groups sometimes to help runaways and other times to capture and return them for pay.[12]

Uncertainty immediately following the Yamassee War created turmoil, generally unfavorable to black migration. Spanish records suggest that the flow of African Americans did not resume until well after the westward movement of native peoples. By 1724, freedom-seeking blacks once again found their way to St. Augustine and petitioned for freedom. In September 1725, Spanish negotiators came to Charlestown to discuss the return of runaway slaves, but talks failed.[13]

By the late 1720s, the barriers had become much less formidable, and St. Augustine's population of freedom-seeking blacks began to rise. British subjects returning from Spanish captivity to Carolina told tales of African Americans and Yamassees selling British scalps for 30 Spanish pieces-of-eight in St. Augustine. Sometimes the fugitives joined forces with the remnant of the Yamassees who lived near St. Augustine, and raided Carolina.[14]

In 1733, as the British established a new buffer colony in Georgia, Philip V formally restated the policy of offering runaways freedom at the price of conversion to Roman Catholicism, and a term of four years of public servitude. Georgia's founders initially banned slavery, realizing that conditions favored escape. If slavery had been permitted from the colony's outset in 1732, the Earl of Egmont wrote in his diary, "there would not be 50 out of 500 re-

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12. Marcel Giraud, *A History of French Louisiana,* Vol. 1 *The Reign of Louis XIV, 1698-1715* Joseph C. Lambert, trans. (1953, translation; Baton Rouge, LA, 1974), 201-212; Daniel H. Thomas, *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa* (1960, reprint; Tuscaloosa, AL, 1989), 1; Barnwell to Nicholson, July 21, 1721, in *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 27 (October 1926), 189-203.
13. Crane, *Southern Frontier;* 241-44.
14. Thomas Geraldino to Duke to Newcastle, enclosure in Duke of Newcastle to the Council of Trade and Plantations, September 21, 1736, CO5/365, ff. 120-23.

main in two months time, for they would fly to the Spaniards [in Florida] . . ." His colleague William Stephens, the colonial secretary, agreed that any slaves in Georgia "would march off when they pleased," southward to the Spanish. By the 1750s however, the slave population was growing as Carolina planters moved in.[15]

In a few years time, Georgia's leader, General James Edward Oglethorpe, successfully cultivated a military alliance with the Muscogulge. The Spanish reacted to the increasing British presence by establishing an outpost north of St. Augustine, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose. The town of Mose became home to 75-to-100 former English slaves, and the first self-governing community of free African Americans in North America.[16]

As new fugitives arrived, the Spanish governors placed them in Mose, under the care of the escaped Carolina slave known to the Spanish as Francisco Menendez. In November 1738, a group of 23 arrived from Carolina, including 19 who worked for a planter named Caleb Davis. Davis' experience demonstrated Spain's commitment to the policy of attracting British laborers. When Davis journeyed to St. Augustine seeking their return, his laborers laughed and jeered at his efforts to force them to return with him. Oglethorpe arrested and imprisoned Spaniards he found negotiating with blacks in Georgia, but the flow continued. In 1749, James Glen, the governor of South Carolina, complained that "both in peace and war, [the Spanish] protect the negroes that desert from

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15. The king lifted the labor requirement in 1740, and his successor, Ferdinand VI, broadened the policy to cover all Spanish provinces of the Americas in 1750. TePaske, "The Fugitive Slave," 5-7. For Georgia slavery laws, see *An Act for Rendering the* Colony *of Georgia more Defencible by Prohibiting the Impartation and use of Black Slaves or Negroes in the same,* January 9, 1734, PRO CO/5/681 ff. 39-44; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia,* 31. For commentary on likelihood of escapes, see Journal of the Earl of Egmont, February 20, 1738. *CRG 5:315:* Journal of William Stephens, December 15, 1738, *CRG* 4:248. For white Carolinians in early Georgia, see David R. Chesnutt, *South Carolina's Expansion into Colonial Georgia, 1720-1765* (New York, 1989), 56-9, 82, 125-26, 170-71, 211.
16. A Ranger's Report of Travels with General Oglethorpe, 1739-42, Stowe Manuscripts 792, British Library MSS Collection, f. 10v. The best accounts of the lives of blacks in Spanish and British Florida are those of Jane Landers, who has published two seminal articles: "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990), 9-30, and "Spanish Sanctuary: Fugitives in Florida, 1687-1790," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 62 (January 1984), 296-313; and J. Leitch Wright, "Blacks in British East Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976), 425-442.

this province." The black town of Mose was maintained until 1763, when Florida became British territory and its residents evacuated to Cuba.[17]

Throughout Florida's first Spanish period, the British encouraged the native peoples of the southeast to catch escaping slaves, offering rich bounties for live escapees and lesser goods for their scalps or severed heads. Results were inconsistent, however. A talk from the Cherokees in 1730 shows the thinking of some Native Americans, and demonstrates their unreliability as slave catchers. The Cherokees agreed to return slaves in general, for free, but balked at agreeing to return all runaways in exchange for payment. Their language is significant: ". . . [T] his small rope which we show you is all we have to bind our slaves with, and may be broken; but you have iron chains for yours; however, if we catch your slaves, we shall bind them as well as we can, and deliver them to our friends again, and have no pay for it. . . ."[18]

Such discourse– rejecting pay and retaining a measure of discretion– clearly should be read as a negotiating ploy intended to empower the speaker to make independent decisions. Impossible as it is to enter the consciousness of the Cherokee negotiators of 1730, nevertheless one can discern several levels of meaning in their representations of themselves and Europeans. First, the Cherokees were referring to differing social definitions of slavery. Their slaves were bound lightly (with small rope) while those of the British were more stringently secured, with metal chain. This distinction corresponds the contrast between Cherokee slaves or captives,

17. Journal of William Stephens, December 15, 1738, in *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia,* IV, 247-48; Charles C. Jones, *The History of Georgia,* (Boston, 1883) v. 2, p. 300, as cited in Chatelaine, *Defenses of Spanish Florida;* James Glen, Answers of James Glen, Esq., Governor of South Carolina, to the Queries Proposed by the Lords of Trade, 1749, Kings MSS 205, f. 302v.

18. In 1775, Gen. William Shirley instructed officials to offer "Certain Rewards" to Southern Indians in exchange for the scalps of Britain's enemies. General William Shirley to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of War, New York, December 20, 1775, WO1/4, ff. 5-9. In 1721, South Carolina colonists offered the Creeks four blankets and two guns for every slave captured beyond the Oconee River, half as much for those found closer to home, and if only the head could be provided, one blanket, redeemable at any trader. Wood, *Black Majority,* 260-61. For test of talk comparing rope and chains, see Answer of the Indian Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation, September 9, 1730, CO5/4, part 2, ff. 215-16. See also Crane, *Southern Frontier;* 300, and Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of Revolution* (New York, 1993), 103-04.

who might become free by adoption, marriage, ransom, or ex-
change, and English chattel slaves, whose condition was hereditary
and perpetual. Second, the speaker questioned how the Cherokees
could be expected to hold, with mere rope, slaves that had already
escaped their British chains. At this level, the speaker was underlin-
ing social differences, raising a practical question, and perhaps
making fun of the British.[19]

Crucially, the Cherokees were likening the "iron chain" to a
formal relationship which would bind them as surely as a chain
would secure an escaped slave. They preferred a looser, more infor-
mal relationship with the English. Significantly, the Cherokees' dis-
cussion of chains to bind slaves follows immediately a reference to
the "Chain of Friendship" between themselves and the British.
While the image of the chain of friendship is a common one in na-
tive American diplomatic rhetoric, this juxtaposition suggests that
the Cherokees saw similarities between their own relations with Eu-
ropeans and the situation of African Americans. In any case, the
agreement, as they amended it, did not require them to return ev-
ery escaped slave, but instead gave them the right to decide which
to capture and which to ignore.

The complex issue of the relationship between native peoples
and runaway slaves arose at the Augusta Congress in 1763, as the
British and the native peoples negotiated their new living arrange-
ments after the Seven Years' War. Speaking for the Upper, Middle
and Lower Creek towns, the native leader Captain Aleck proposed
a new policy. In the past, he said, Muscogulges returned "any ne-
gro, horse, etc." found on their side of the Savannah River. ". . . But
now the Ogeechee is the boundary, any negro, horse, cattle, etc.,
that exceeds such bounds he declares openly and in the presence
of all the governors he will seize and keep." The British representa-
tive offered £5 or the equivalent for the continued return of run-
aways, observing, "You know it is very difficult to prevent Negroes

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19. The Journal of Antoine Bonnefoy, 1741-42, describes a European's experience
   of Cherokee slavery. It can be found in Newton D. Mereness, ed., *Travels in the
   American Colonies* (New York, 1916), 241-260, and Samuel Cole Williams, ed.,
   Early Travels in the Tennessee Country, 1540-1800 (Johnson City, 1928). See also
   Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society* (Knoxville, TN 1979 3-
   18, and Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian
   Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore, 1992), 13.

from running away and cattle and horses from rambling." Although the final, English-language version of the treaty reflects agreement on the slave-catching plank, Captain Aleck's forceful position suggests that at least some of the Muscogulge continued to regard the practice of slave catching as optional– a potential source of income, but not an obligation.[20]

A third example of native attitudes comes from Seminole territory. In 1777, Seminoles living on the Flint River sent a highly direct message to British authorities in East Florida. Offering to support the British cause during the American Revolutionary War, the Seminoles set out their terms: "Whatever Horses or Slaves or Cattle we take we expect will be ours."[21]

For the black refugees from British colonies living in Florida in 1763, the coming of British rule had two significant implications. First, the racial attitudes of Florida's new rulers were very different from those of the Spanish. The British world included black slaves and white masters, but no in-between groups like free people of color, the middle social layer that two centuries of Spanish culture had created. Awareness of the new reality doubtless encouraged the acknowledged free blacks in Florida to emigrate. In Georgia, runaway slave advertisements only rarely reflect laborers joining existing backcountry maroon communities.[22]

Second, Florida ceased to be a territory where religious and diplomatic rivalry produced a policy of religious sanctuary. On the contrary, the leaders of British East Florida actively encouraged plantations on the model of Carolina, and British settlers brought slaves with them in large numbers. The result was a demographic shift in the African American population, which grew in numbers and declined in status. By July 1782 Governor Patrick Tonyn esti-

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20. Fenwicke Bull, Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta from the Arrival of the Several Governors at Charles Town South Carolina the 1st October to their Return to the Same Place etc. the November 21, 1763, CO5/65, part 3, ff. 51v-52, 55v-57; John Stuart to Lord George Germain, Pensacola, September 15, 1777, CO5/79, No. 19, p. 13.

21. Copy of a Talk from the Seminollie Indians dated Flint River 3d September 1777, in Stuart to Germain CO5/79, f. 37.

22. Betty Wood cited the Georgia *Gazette* of November 22, 1769, for the escape of two women– Minda, 20 and Esther, 21– who escaped from Governor Wright's Ogeechee plantation, crossed the Ogeechee River, and were believed to have joined "a parcel of Mr. Elliot's Negroes who have been runaway for some time." Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia,* 173.

mated the population of East Florida at 3,000 African Americans and 1,000 Europeans. During the chaos of the American Revolutionary War, the total official population expanded more than fourfold.[23]

By the time of the revolution, Florida's Indian country had been accumulating a population of African Americans and their progeny for many years. By mid-century, the Lower Creek Indians, in the process of differentiating into the Seminoles, had moved south from Georgia. Hemming in the Spanish between the St. John's River and the coast, these native peoples created a human screen that the British acknowledged by treaty. Their presence blocked both the Spanish and the British from controlling an immense, fertile, and well-drained territory, accessible from Georgia, into which some runaways obviously found refuge. They established several villages of maroons with a black population of at least 430, living alongside and among the Seminoles.[24]

Slaves on plantations in pre-war British East Florida lived under conditions similar to those of their counterparts elsewhere in the Lower South. Indeed, Governor James Grant recruited South Carolina planters to East Florida with the distinct goal of replicating the onerous Carolina plantation work regimes that pushed so many workers to flee. At least one insurrection occurred in British East Florida, resulting in the drowning of an overseer known as Mr. Hewie. Escapes were far more frequent. A slave named Peter was never found after fleeing James Penman's plantation in October 1769. A slave named Phyllis fled in 1780 in search of her husband whom her master Robert Robinson had sold. John Moultrie wrote, "It has been a practice for negroes to run away from their Masters and to get into the Indian towns, from whence it proved very difficult and troublesome to get them back." Despite a bounty of £2 a head, native peoples in Florida did not always return laborers who reached their territory. Not surprisingly, hundreds of East Florida

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23. The increase included working slaves but not escapees. Charles Loch Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province* 1763-1784 (Berkeley, CA, 1943), 8, 126.
24. Report of an Inspection Tour Made by Lieutenant-Colonel James Robertson late 1763, CO5/540 ff. 36-51; Carita Doggett Corse, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida* (Jacksonville, FL, 1919), 14. For black settlements between the Suwanee and Apalachicola Rivers, see Laurence Foster, "Negro-Indian Relationships in the Southeast" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1935), 20.

laborers were unaccounted for after the Revolutionary War, and may be presumed to have fled to Seminole country.[25]

Wartime chaos provided cover for escaping African Americans, and white colonists expected many to take advantage of it. Suspecting that some escapees reached Indian country, the British offered Native Americans a reward of 100 chalk marks per prisoner, white or black. (One chalk mark represented one pound of deer skins, convertible to British trade goods.) On the other side, both South Carolina and Georgia cited the fear of rebellion as an excuse for their lack of enthusiasm for the revolution. They reported to the Continental Congress that their militias could not be counted upon to fight the British, because they were needed to prevent slave rebellion and flight.[26]

Loss claims filed by British Loyalists after the war opened a window onto the lives of African laborers in British East Florida. At least 38 claimants mentioned slaves, although not all claimed slaves as lost property. If these African laborers are typical, then most workers in British East Florida spent their lives on large plantations. Of the 1,493 slaves mentioned in these 38 claims, 1,038 (representing more than two out of every three) lived on plantations with 100 or more slaves. Overall, 92 of every 100 of the laborers mentioned in these East Florida Loyalist claims worked on plantations with a total of least 20 laborers. Only 15 workers-one percent-worked with two fellow slaves or fewer, and only three worked on a farm where they were the only slave around.[27]

Those on plantations with 100 or more workers were likely to find a permanent mate or spouse. For them the odds were no worse than three to two, with sex ratios ranging from 1.52 to 1.16. On the

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25. Moultrie to Lord Hillsborough, June 29, 1771, CO5/552, ff. 55-56v (erroneously cited as CO5/551 in Schafer, "African Americans in British East Florida," 93; see also 73) ; Wilbur Henry Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida 1774 to 1785, The Most Important Documents Pertaining Thereto Edited with* an *Accompanying Narrative,* 2 vols. (Deland, FL, 1929), 2: 20-21. The originals of most of this material can be found in the British Public Record Office in Audit Office Class 12, piece 3. Citations will include a Siebert page number and an AO12/3 folio number where available. AO 12/3 ff. 13-18.

26. W. C. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress* 13:385, as cited in Herbert Aptheker, *America Negro Slave Revolts (1943,* 5th ed., New York, 1987), 22; Charles Lee to John Hancock, July 2, 1776, Conference with the Georgia Delegation, *The Lee Papers,* Vol. 2, Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1872 (New York, 1873), 115; Thomas Brown to the Superintendent, Chechaws, September 29, 1776, CO5/78, ff. 34-77b.

27. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida,* 2, *passim.*

other hand, those who lived on farms with ten or fewer workers faced highly uneven sex ratios ranging as high as four men for every woman. For those in between, sex rations were far from ideal: seven men and 13 women worked on Alexander Paterson's farm, one woman and four men on Stephen White's farm. Two farms were home to two women workers each, three others to two men each. Only one had exactly one man and one woman laborer.[28]

Some African Americans underwent involuntary migration as the result of war. Two women named Sarah and Asserina, claimed by East Florida settler Mary Webb, were seized on a voyage to New York in 1779, when an American privateer raided their ship and took them to Boston. Rebels carried off a shipwright named Tom and a laborer named Jacob when they raided John Imrie's homestead in East Florida. In September 1776, American Rebels seized 30 blacks from Florida plantations, and an American Man of War seized 200 slaves from Georgia. In 1779, the British captured 200 Georgia slaves and brought them to St. Augustine. Some slaves lost their lives when their masters evacuated. Claims show that 42 of Denys Rolle's workers and at least three laborers claimed by Francis Levett died en route to new homes in the Caribbean.[29]

After the war, the Commission for Sequestered Estates in South Carolina advertised for runaways in the East Florida Gazette. He wrote that he had "received information that many negroes, the property of gentlemen of Carolina whose estates were sequestered in my hands, have made their escape to this province" between September 1780 and May 1783.[30]

Black and white refugees poured into East Florida before beginning the long process of evacuating in 1783, and many slaves profited from the ensuing confusion to give their masters the slip. As Table 1 shows, approximately 42 percent of all blacks in British East Florida– some 4,745 people– were unaccounted for at the conclusion of the evacuation. These totals include the handful of documented escapes, such as that of three laborers who fled Alexander Paterson's farm as he prepared to evacuate, and Francis Le-

28. Author's analysis of Loyalist data.
29. Siebert, 2: 371,229, 61-2, 104, 162 (AO12/3 ff. 186v-'95v, 45, 75-7); Robert Rae to Samuel Thomas, May 3, 1776, CO5/77: 269-71, ff. 137-138v; Letter from Governor Patrick Tonyn to John Stuart, St. Augustine, December 20, 1779, CO5/559, pp. 211-15, ff. 106-108v.
30. *East Florida Gazette,* May 3, 1783.

vett's 24-year old "compleat servant" named Monday, who refused to evacuate without his wife.[31]

After the war, Florida's new Spanish government recognized the continuing presence of African Americans in Indian country, and sought half-heartedly to eject or recover them for their owners. In 1781, in peace talks at Pensacola, the Spanish requested that Creeks and Seminoles return fugitive slaves. Again in September 1789, the Spanish asked "that all negroes, horses, goods and American citizens, taken by the Indians, should be restored." And, in 1802, at the conclusion of hostilities with native warriors led by William Augustus Bowles, the Spanish sought to require Mikasukis and Seminoles to return blacks taken from Spanish owners during the conflict. For once, the Seminoles appeared to have complied: in September 1802, the Seminole leader Payne and Jack Kanard, the leader of the Hitchiti, met a Spanish official in the town of Mikasuki to turn over the blacks.[32]

Table 1.
Summary of British Out Migration from East Florida

Destination	Whites	Blacks	Totals
Europe/England	246	35	281
Nova Scotia	725	155	880
Jamaica	196	714	910
Dominica	225	444	669
Bahamas	1,033	2,214	3,247
United States	462	2,561	3,023
Other Foreign	61	217	278
Did Not Depart	450	200	650
Missing	2,692	4,745	7,437
Total	6,090	11,285	17,375

The "Missing" category reflects estimates by Governor Patrick Tonyn and others that approximately 4,000 people fled to the north and west in early 1784. The racial composition of this backcountry group is unknown. My estimate for missing blacks is computed by subtracting the number of blacks who remained or were reported as leaving East Florida for known destinations from the total who were resident in East Florida. Other estimates are taken from British emigration reports in Siebert, 1: 168, 174, 208.

31. Siebert, 1: 127-28, 232 (AO12/3 ff. 91-94, 186v-195v).
32. Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period,* 2nd ed. (Charleston, SC, 1851), Vol. 2, 61, 98; Juan Ventura Morales to Miguel Cayentano soler. Nueva Orleans, 30 Septiembre 1802, Archivo General de Indias, (Baltimore, 1979), pp. l-30, Santo Domingo 2645, fo. 177; Vicente Folch to Governor and Captain General, [Fuerte San Marcos de Apalache], 10 septiembre 1802, AGI, Santo Domingo 2569, ff. 662.

In Georgia, meanwhile, African laborers continued to make their way into Indian country, slipping away sometimes silently and occasionally after a fire fight. The *Georgia Gazette* of May 1, 1788 reported that, in Savannah, "a few Negroes, belonging to Mr. Girardeau, were carried off from Liberty County, by the Indians, the beginning of last week."[33]

Although the record furnishes little direct information about the lives of African Americans in Seminole country, certain inferences can be drawn. For example, once African Americans had lived in freedom among the Creeks and Seminoles, slave traders considered them a poor business risk, because– even when captured and reenslaved– they were extremely likely to run away. In 1794, the Panton Leslie Co. was sued when slaves shipped from Florida escaped from their New Orleans buyer, who sought reimbursement under Spanish law. When William Panton learned he might have to make good the loss, he expressed his frustration: "Pray was it not made known to the purchaser that the negroes were from the Indian Country[?]"[34]

Panton's comment sets blacks living in Seminole country apart from all others. Clearly, Panton's remark reflects his awareness that "negroes . . . from the Indian country" were likely to escape, and that a prudent trader would protect himself by disclosing their origin to a subsequent buyer.

Panton's comment further reveals his awareness of two realities. First, he was familiar with the everyday conditions of life for blacks among the Seminoles. Native American and African American villages extended from near St. Augustine to west of the Apalachicola River. Blacks lived in habitations similar to those of their Indian hosts, surrounded by fields of up to 20 acres. They dressed like the Seminoles, owned and used hunting rifles, and planted their fields in common as the native peoples did. Although some blacks were in submissive relationships to Indians, it is mis-

33. *The Gazette of the State of Georgia,* No. 275, Thursday, May 1, 1788, Savannah, PRO AO13/36A, 2.
34. G[uillermo] Butler to William Panton, New Orleans, March 19, 1794, University of South Florida Library, Special Collections, Cruzat Papers, MSS file 93-2; William Panton to [John Forbes], Pensacola, March 30, 1794, Cruzat Papers, MSS 93-2; Don Bartolome Fabre Daunoy Vs. Don Guillermo Butler, March 20, 1794, Judicial Records of the Spanish Cabildo, March 15, 1794 to April 7, 1794, micrcfilm: LDS #1290483, Roll #242.

leading to describe the relationships as slavery in the sense understood by Americans in the early 19th century. In some cases, these blacks merely shared their harvests with a dominant village, such as a tributary native village would do with its dominant neighbors.[35]

Panton also knew that many of these black Seminoles had not themselves escaped from plantation slavery, but were the children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of refugees. Capture would bring not the bitterness of slavery's return, but the shock of its first impression. It is hardly surprising that African American people who had grown up freely on Seminole lands would reject a life of slavery. What is significant is Panton's recognition that a competent slave dealer would protect his company's interest by acknowledging the deep hunger for freedom that such people had acquired.

If blacks in Seminole country were a high-risk business for William Panton, they were also a danger to the leaders of the new United States. The growth of settlements of runaways in conjunction with Indians, tolerable when Florida was a remote frontier, became unacceptable as American settlers drew near. During the period between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, such enclaves drew the attention of President George Washington, who noted them in his diary of 1791. The issue further occupied his secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, and was an element of this first treaty signed by the new United States government in 1790.[36]

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35. Joshua R. Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida, or, the Crimes Committed by Our Government Against the Maroons, Who Fled from South Carolina and Other Slave States, Seeking Protection Undo, Spanish Laws* (Columbus, OH, 1858), 97; William Hayne Simmons, *Notices of East Florida* (1822, reprint; Gainesville, FL, 1973), 44, 76; Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2d. ed. *passim;* Herbert Aptheker, "Maroons Within the Present Limits of the United States," in Price, *Maroon Societies,* 151-167; Jack D. Forbes, *Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (London, 1988), 62; Rebecca Bateman, "Africans and Indians: A Comparative Study of the Black Caribs and Black Seminole," *Ethnohistory* 37 (Winter 1990), 3; Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "Negroes and the Seminole War, 1817-1818," in *Four Centuries of Southern Indians,* edited by Charles Hudson (Athens, GA, 1975), 160-61.

36. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799* (Boston, 1925), May 20, 1791, 4:180-81; Thomas Jefferson to Jose Ignacio de Viar, October 27, 1790, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, as cited in *Diaries of Washington,* 4: *n.* 1,181. See Treaty of New York, 1790, between the United States and the Creek Nation.

Florida's attractiveness to runaways increased during the first two decades of the 19th century. During the War of 1812, the British attempted to entice slaves way from their American masters, offering them two alternatives– a job in a British regiment, or freedom, transportation to new homes, and free land. Many accepted: more than 60 abandoned the East Florida plantation of the American John Forbes, sailing on a British ship to Bermuda.[37]

After the war, British agents continued to undermine the United States by helping the Seminoles and their African American allies. About 1,000 escaped slaves and Native Americans lived along the banks of the Apalachicola River between Apalachicola Bay and the Georgia border, near a fort which the British had conveniently abandoned, fully armed and equipped. The maroons cultivated the fields on either side of the stronghold, known as the Negro Fort, for 50 miles on both sides of the river. Living in the fort or nearby were about 100 men and 200 women and children.[38]

The world of Florida maroons fell into eclipse on the morning of July 27, 1816, when the powder magazine of the Negro Fort exploded. United States Naval personnel bombarded the fort at five a.m., aiming for the maroon village located just behind it. When the fort exploded, the Naval officers in charge promptly took the credit; glowing reports expressed amazement at their lucky shot, although the Army version cautiously attributed the explosion to causes unknown. The Naval reports also contain evidence for the possibility that the blacks, themselves, were responsible for the destruction of the fort. Their leader, an African American man named Garson, threatened to destroy the fort if he could not hold it.[39]

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37. Sebastian Kindelán y Oregón to Rear Admiral George Cockburn, January 31, 1815 WO l/144:31-32, as cited in William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Gainesville, FL, 1986), 292; Kindelán to Thomas Llorente, St. Augustine, February 25, 1815, bundle 150G12, microfilm reel 62, East Florida Papers, Library of Congress (hereinafter, EFP); Llorente to Kindelán, San Nicolas, February 26, 1815, bundle 150G12, reel 62, EFP.
38. Patterson to Secretary of Navy, New Orleans, August 15, 1816; John Lee Williams, *A View of West Florida* (1827, reprint; Gainesville, FL, 1976), 98.
39. Lt. Col. D. L. Clinch wrote to his commanding officer that "The black chief heaped much abuse on the Americans and said he had been left in command of the fort by the British government– and that he would sink any American vessels that should attempt to pass it; and blow up the fort if he could not defend it." D. L. Clinch to Col. R. Butler, Adjutant General, Camp Crawford, August 2,

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One thing the military did destroy was the hopes of the ma-roons. For several years, Garson and the other maroons had in-vested their labor and dreams in an experimental, multicultural world. These marginalized people lived in a self-governing society of their own making, developing sufficient social order to plant and harvest a field crop. The maroons' population had grown; they were living in family groups, and their children were growing up in a richer, freer life than their parents had known. In the siege be-fore the explosion, the military destroyed their crops, trained 18-pounders on their stronghold, and made it impossible to leave or enter the fort.[40]

After the explosion, black and native peoples reestablished themselves precariously in the area between the Suwanee and the Apalachicola Rivers. More raids followed in 1818, causing the black population of north Florida to decline to approximately 430. By the mid 1830s, the number of African Americans living with Semi-noles was estimated to have climbed to 800, of whom 150 were men and 650 were women and children. Since many in this population

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1816, *Army and Navy Chronicle* 2:115, microfilm: American Periodical Series 1800-1850 A85 775 Vols. l-2, Reel 469. The official account of the "lucky shot" version is that of Jairus Loomis: "At 4 A.M., on the morning of the 27th, we began warping the gun-vessels to a proper position; at 5, getting within gunshot, the fort opened upon us, which we returned, and after ascertaining our real dis-tance with cold shot, we commenced with hot . . ., *first* [emphasis in original] one of which, entering their magazine, blew up and completely destroyed the fort." J. Loomis to Commodore Patterson, U. S. Gun-vessel No. 149, Bay St. Louis, August 13, 1816, in American State Papers: Foreign Relations (Washing-ton, DC, 1834), 559-60. Rebutting the "lucky shot" theory is a letter published by the *Savannah Republican* (reprinted by the *National Intelligencer),* and appar-ently written by Col. Clinch. It is signed "C," is accompanied by copies of per-sonal letters to Cal. Clinch, and offers a defense of Clinch's role. The letter states, "The commandant was requested to fire a few shots in order to ascertain the distance with more accuracy, and the practicability of bettering them from that point– four or five shots were accordingly fired, when the explosion took place; from what cause is unknown– opinions on that source are varied." "The Negro Fort in Florida," *National Intelligencer,* April 27, 1819, Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, Microfilm Reel 25. Adding to the improbability of a lucky shot in the predawn darkness is the uncertain distance of the bombard-ment. While some sources placed the Naval gun not far from the fort, one account located it at a distance of two miles away. Item entitled "New Orleans, Aug. 16," *National Intelligencer* September 18, 1816, Reel 20.

40. John D. Milligan, "Slave Rebelliousness and the Florida Maroon," *Prologue* 6 (Spring 1974): 7.

had a motive to remain in hiding, official estimates are probably low.[41]

The explosive destruction of the Negro Fort, then, serves as a violent punctuation point separating two epochs. After that point, the Muscogulge in North Florida were as good as "annihilated," in the words of trader James Innerarity, and so were their free black allies. White American settlers flowed in, established hegemony, and pushed the surviving native-black alliance southward. The cycle of American economic expansion, black escape, and native resistance began again, clashing in the violence of the Second Seminole War. Within a few years, involuntary laborers picked cotton on lands where native peoples and free blacks once had lived very different kinds of lives.[42]

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41. One source, with an obvious anti-British bias, states that the British were responsible for transporting 300-400 blacks from Louisiana to the Apalachicola River after losing the War of 1812. Deposition of Samuel Jervais, May 9, 1815, as cited in John W. Monette, *History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi by the Three Great European Powers Spain, France and Great Britain,* and *the Subsequent Occupation, Settlement and Extension of Civil Government by the United States Until the Year 1846,* Vol. 1, (New York, 1848), 88. Another possibility, supported by military correspondence of Andrew Jackson, is that the African Americans were runaways from East Florida, Georgia and Carolina. Andrew Jackson to Governor of Pensacola, April 23, 1816, *ASPFR* 4499. See also James Grant Forbes, *Sketches Historical and Geographical of the Florida; More Particularly of East Florida* (1821, reprint; Gainesville, FL, 1964), 121. For the extent of fields cultivated by runaways, see Monette, 90, and Williams, *A View of West Florida,* 98, 101-02. For population estimates, see Horatio Dexter to His Excellency William P. Duval, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs of the Territory of Florida, St. Augustine, August 20, 1823, in Letters Received by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823, S-4 (Microform, Library of Congress Publication M27-1, frame 508); and John T. Sprague *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War* (New York, 1848), 19.
42. James Innerarity to John Forbes, Mobile, August 12, 1815, in "The Panton Leslie Papers," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 12 (January 1934), 127.