

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Thomas Jefferson and Slavery in Virginia: A Comparative Approach

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Doctor of Philosophy

April 2019

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for a postgraduate degree of the University of Winchester.

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Acknowledgements

There are many people who have helped me significantly during the production of this thesis. Principally, special thanks must go to my supervisory team of Neil Curtin, Professor Chris Aldous and Dr Xavier Guégan for their support, dedication and vital input throughout the process. From first to last their advice has been invaluable. I would like to thank Neil, in particular, for overseeing my interest in Jefferson all the way from a second-year undergraduate presentation to a full PhD thesis. I would also like to acknowledge all the staff in the History department, who have been friendly and supportive throughout this process.

I am extremely grateful to the University of Winchester for giving me the opportunity to study again. Since starting the thesis in 2016, various departments at the University have assisted me. In particular, the PGR team deserve much credit for their help and efficiency on the many occasions I have needed support with the administrative side of the degree. Judith McCullough, Helen Jones, Kay Carter, Dawn Thompson and many others have always been welcoming and quick to respond to my queries. The staff at the Martial Rose Library have been equally accommodating in ordering books through the inter-library loans system and directing me to journal articles at the University and on-line resources. Thanks, too, to Paula Green and Rosie Johnson in the Academic skills department, who offered useful tips on presenting information to a scholarly audience. Finally, I'd like to thank the students I have taught in the Perspectives on the Past module, all of whom have helped increase my confidence in a University environment.

Many other institutions have aided the development of this thesis. First, the British Library and the Institute of Historical Research in London have provided easy access to their substantial American history collections. I am extremely grateful, too, to Jennifer Huff at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia, who directed me to important documents in their vast collections and photocopied and dispatched relevant material with remarkable efficiency. Furthermore, gratitude must be extended to the staff and volunteers at the Library of Virginia for providing digitalised access to an array of Virginian legislative manuscripts that have enriched the content of this thesis. Staff at the Library of Congress, University of Virginia, Haverford College and the William and Mary College have been comparably helpful in granting access to their digital library contents. The advice

provided by Whitney Pippin and Andrew O'Shaughnessy of the Thomas Jefferson International Centre at Monticello, Charlottesville, was equally valuable. Moreover, digital libraries such *Hathi Trust*, *Archive.org*, *Google Books* and *Google News* have enabled me to access rare published material that would otherwise have been unobtainable.

I'd also like to express my gratitude to Dr Doug Hamilton, whose examination at the Upgrade viva in March 2018 increased my confidence in the project and highlighted areas of weakness that needed addressing before final submission. I hope this final copy reflects the rich feedback Doug provided. Similarly, I'd like to thank Professor John Oldfield and Dr Emiliano Perra for their thorough assessment of the thesis at the final viva and for their advice on how to advance the research in future.

Away from University, staff and patients at Farnham Hospital have ensured that I have had a nice distraction from the thesis. Colleagues in the Surrey Diabetic Eye Screening Programme Administrative Office have been especially supportive throughout the process. Thanks, too, to Mark and Kyle for their friendship both before and during the thesis.

Finally, thank you to my family for their love and encouragement throughout the last three years. Without you all I would not have had the motivation to start studying again.

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ABSTRACT

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Thomas Jefferson is one of the most important figures in American history. A man who served as Secretary of State, Vice President and - between 1801 and 1808 - third President of the United States, Jefferson is best known for authoring the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Despite proclaiming the right of all men to freedom in the celebrated document, Jefferson owned over 200 slaves for most of his adult life. Moreover, he famously declared black people inferior to whites. For these reasons, he is an increasingly controversial figure amongst historians and the public. Jefferson's prominence in the early years of the American Republic has led many scholars to claim that his beliefs about slavery and race were representative of general Virginian views during his life. This thesis questions previous historians' reliance on Jefferson as a gauge for broader perspectives by placing his opinions on the topics of slavery, ownership, race and colonization within the context of Virginian society in the era spanning from 1769 to 1832. To achieve this objective, the research employs an original comparative approach that evaluates the perceptions of other leading Virginian figures from the era - including George Washington and James Madison - as well as those from lower social classes. This method produces a range of conclusions that must change the way we consider both Jefferson and the society in which he operated.

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Introduction

Since authoring the American colonies' Declaration of Independence from Great Britain in July 1776, Thomas Jefferson has been one of the United States' most prominent figures. Born in April 1743 at his father's estate in the Virginian town of Shadwell, Albemarle County, Jefferson initially trained as a lawyer and started practising as a member of the bar in 1765.¹ Even at this early stage, however, Jefferson had displayed an interest in public service and natural rights philosophies. Consequently, he was elected as Albemarle County's representative to the Virginia House of Burgesses in May 1769.² Jefferson rose to national prominence seven years later when his composition at the second American Continental Congress became the mantra by which the former British colonies liberated themselves from Parliamentary rule. In the following thirty-three years, Jefferson served in various roles for the New Republic, including ambassador to France (1785-1789), Secretary of State (1789-1793), Vice President (1796-1800) and, finally, third President of the United States (1801-1809).³ These accomplishments have meant that 'Thomas Jefferson still survives' in the American psyche nearly two centuries after his death.⁴

Despite being deified as an 'Apostle of Freedom' for his leading role in the American Revolution, Jefferson possessed a substantial quantity of slaves throughout his life.⁵ In fact, he oversaw 'one of the largest slave populations in Virginia' for much of his adulthood. More damningly, he only freed eight labourers, a figure which represented less than two percent of those who toiled for him.⁶ His views on race were equally controversial. In his only published book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson declared African-Americans mentally and physically 'inferior' to white men. Indeed, he believed that the differences between the two races were such that blacks needed to be removed from Virginia to prevent them 'staining the blood' of their white contemporaries.⁷

¹ F. Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.1; Library of Congress, '1743 to 1774', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/the-thomas-jefferson-papers-timeline-1743-to-1827/1743-to-1774/>.

² Library of Congress, '1743 to 1774', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers*; Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.1.

³ J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), p.120.

⁴ F. D. Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.260.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.262.

⁶ G. Wood, 'The Ghosts of Monticello', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.21; B. Fehn, 'Thomas Jefferson and Slaves: Teaching an American Paradox', in *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 14, No. 2, The Early Republic (Winter 2000), p.25; L. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.148; P. Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery: "Treason Against the Hopes of the World"', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.204.

⁷ T. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Wells & Lilly, - Court Street, 1829), pp.150 & 151. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008651842>.

This thesis analyses Jefferson's complex opinions on slavery and race by placing them - as well as his actions as an owner - within the context of Virginian society in the era between 1769 and 1832. By pursuing this ambition, the study evaluates the view that Jefferson was 'a representative figure of his day'.⁸ In particular, it challenges the popular contention - first voiced by Winthrop Jordan in 1968 - that Jefferson 'may be taken as accurately reflecting common presuppositions and sensitivities even though many Americans disagreed with some of his conclusions'.⁹ Furthermore, Jefferson's actions as a slaveholder are compared and contrasted with those of his peers to discern whether he was a reliable gauge of tendencies amongst planters in post-Revolutionary Virginia, as recent critics have suggested.¹⁰ Pursuing these goals will both increase our understanding of Jefferson and heighten our knowledge of the culture in which he operated.

This analysis is required for numerous reasons. First, the desire to see Jefferson as a mirror of eighteenth and nineteenth-century values has placed 'an inappropriate burden' on America's third President.¹¹ In fact, it is not overstating the point to suggest that large amounts of scholarship in the last half century has abided by the view - first voiced in the nineteenth century - that 'if Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right'.¹² This reliance has neither helped Jefferson or those studying him, for it has created a culture in which he is portrayed as 'all racist or all liberator'.¹³

Recent calls for extra work to be undertaken to situate Jefferson's beliefs in their correct framework further demonstrate the urgent need for this type of research. Following a conference attended by leading Jefferson academics in 2007, Andrew O'Shaughnessy certainly noted his fellow historians' 'frustration with the current state of the scholarship' and highlighted 'the need for a major re-evaluation of Jefferson that seeks to go beyond merely treating him as contradictory and hypocritical and rather places him in his historical context and avoids the implicit anachronism of much of the current historiography'.¹⁴ Equally, Ari Helo called for greater emphasis to be placed on context in Jefferson studies in 2014. Helo affirmed that - on the subject of race in particular - 'The problem' with evaluations of Jefferson 'is historical. No sane person today would agree

⁸ G. Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p.38.

⁹ W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p.429.

¹⁰ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.186; Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.40.

¹¹ J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf, 'Introduction', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.3.

¹² P. S. Onuf, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.19.

¹³ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.210.

¹⁴ A. J. O'Shaughnessy, 'Afterword', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.196.

with Jefferson's racist grounds for arguing that African Americans should establish themselves as a distinct nation. Neither do many people share Jefferson's outspoken belief that 'rocks grow'.¹⁵ The following chapters answer such appeals by placing Jefferson's perceptions alongside those of his peers. By doing so, the thesis furthers scholarship by demonstrating that Jefferson was often not indicative of Virginian views. Indeed, the core message of this evaluation is that the changes evident in Virginian society after the American Revolution were caused by an amalgamation of different forces that cut across social class, rather than one coherent and unified worldview. As such, Jefferson should neither be lauded for every success of the era or lamented for the failures of early national America.

To achieve these objectives, Jefferson's behaviour as a master and his affirmations concerning slavery, race and colonization are placed alongside those of other prominent statesmen and planters from his generation. These figures include James Madison, George Mason, James Monroe and George Washington, in addition to less lauded Virginian leaders, such as Robert Carter, Richard Henry Lee, John Randolph, St. George Tucker and George Tucker. This method has been employed as it is recognised that an accurate evaluation of Jefferson's life 'must compare him to his peers - the intellectual, political, and cultural leaders of his generation'.¹⁶ The aforementioned figures undeniably qualify for this status. For instance, Madison, Washington and James Monroe all served as President of the United States, while St. George Tucker was a leading Virginian judge. Furthermore, John Marshall was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1801 and held the post for the remaining thirty-four years of his life. John Randolph and George Tucker, meanwhile, represented Virginia in Congress.¹⁷

These statesmen were also like Jefferson - and, therefore, represent an ideal gauge against which he can be measured - because they owned a large quantity of African-American workers. James Monroe's slaveholdings certainly expanded to a comparable extent to Jefferson's. Monroe inherited his first slave in 1774. By 1820, when he was American President, Monroe possessed over seventy-five labourers.¹⁸ Similarly,

¹⁵ A. Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.9.

¹⁶ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.186; P. Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* - 2nd ed. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p.134.

¹⁷ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.197; J. E. Smith, *John Marshall: Definer of a Nation* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1996), p.1; Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), pp.129, 151, 158, 166 & 197-198 contains information on all the above figures; G. E. White, 'Review: Reassessing John Marshall', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 2001), pp.673 & 685; M. K. Curtis, 'St. George Tucker and the Legacy of Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), p.1158.

¹⁸ A. Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1999), p.568.

Washington and Madison - who both kept in excess of 100 slaves for most of their adult lives - inhabited plantations that were amongst the largest in Fairfax County and Orange County respectively.¹⁹ Additionally, St. George Tucker lived alongside a sizeable quantity of slaves throughout his life, having been born in Bermuda as the son of a wealthy planter.²⁰ The one exception to this trend was John Marshall, who never held a substantial amount of African-American workers. Records suggest that Marshall owned just 'six tithable slaves' in June 1788.²¹ Nonetheless, Marshall's views on slavery are worth comparing with Jefferson's, for his lengthy tenure as Chief Justice of America's Supreme Court has meant that he is hailed as a member of America's 'gallery of greats'.²²

By focusing on slavery, ownership and race, the project advances existing scholarship on Virginia's Revolutionary generation, for Jefferson's stance on these themes has received far more scrutiny than the opinions of his fellow leaders. For instance, Joseph Ellis postulates that slavery has often 'not received the scholarly attention it deserves' in evaluations of George Washington.²³ Likewise, most academic pieces regarding George Mason 'have offered little more than a passing mention of Mason's slavery-related conundrum'.²⁴ Perhaps even more extraordinarily, Robert Carter - who emancipated over 500 slaves in the decade after 1791 - has been subjected to sparse analysis. Indeed, the coverage afforded this little-known emancipator had amounted to less than one hundred pages before a survey was undertaken by Andrew Levy in 2005.²⁵ Barely any scholarship has since been produced on the Cumberland County planter. Carter is not the only liberator whose deeds have been overlooked. As the following chapters demonstrate, numerous manumissions were undertaken by small and middle-ranking slaveholders that alter the

¹⁹ K. Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), p.281; D. R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.230 & 308; L. S. Walsh, 'Slavery and Agriculture at Mount Vernon', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.48; S. J. Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher: James Madison, Republicanism, and Slavery* (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2008), p.99; see map 1.3 in appendix, p.328 for the location of Madison and Washington's plantations.

²⁰ P. Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker's Plan to End Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), p.1214.

²¹ C. T. Cullen & H. A. Johnson (eds.), *The Papers of John Marshall, Vol. 2: Correspondence and Papers, July 1788 - December 1795. Account Book, July 1788 - December 1795* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1977), p.338, footnote 23.

²² J. J. Ellis, 'Introduction', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.1; S. Dunn, *Dominion of Memories: Jefferson, Madison and the Decline of Virginia* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), p.4.

²³ J. J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (London: Faber, 2005), p.311, footnote 22.

²⁴ L. Bellamy, 'George Mason: Slave Owning Virginia Planter as Slavery Opponent?', *Top Scholar: The Research and Creative Database of WKU*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1524&context=theses>, p.8.

²⁵ A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp.xii-xiv.

complexion of slavery in the post-Revolutionary epoch. Such events raise important questions about whether Jefferson could have done more to challenge the institution.²⁶

Similarly, Jefferson's contemporaries have not had their outlook on race as frequently critiqued. Henry Wiencek rightly contends that George Washington's perception of the topic has not been analysed in enough detail, while Andrew Burstein and Nancy Isenberg affirm that James Madison's comments on African-Americans are seldom 'examined under the sharp lens that history has focused on Jefferson'.²⁷ In fact, Richard Bernstein thought that Madison had not received the overall scholarly attention that was due to him.²⁸ Additionally, when he had been studied - in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War - Madison was falsely portrayed 'as an advocate of state sovereignty and even as an ally of the alleged prophet of secession, Jefferson'.²⁹

Although much emphasis is placed on the observations of these statesmen, the perspectives of those further down the Virginian social hierarchy are also evaluated. Adopting this approach challenges previous scholarship produced by the constitutional historian Paul Finkelman, who asserts that Jefferson should only be contrasted with other leaders of the early American Republic. Finkelman reasons that any study of Jefferson's legacy needs to be limited to comparing him with elite figures, for 'It will not do to defend Jefferson on the ground that he was a southerner, a slaveowner, and a man of his times'.³⁰ Additionally, it is arguable that analysing a broad range of characters from multiple backgrounds increases the risk of Jefferson's voice losing its prominence.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to survey a greater sample of Virginians, as such men and women lived in the same historical context as Jefferson and represent an effective gauge from which to investigate how characteristic his philosophies were. Equally, part of the problem with existing scholarship - as exemplified by Finkelman's appraisal - has been the tendency to assume that less prominent Virginians agreed with Jefferson, rather than test whether such a hypothesis is true. This evaluation, consequently, seeks to demonstrate that analysing lower-profile individuals provides a more accurate context in which to situate Jefferson's legacy. For instance, if it is found that Jefferson was a greater opponent of the institution than most Virginians, it would be reasonable to conclude that some criticism of his inability to oversee the abolition of slavery has been overstated and that his later inaction was merely an acknowledgement that Old Dominion's citizens were against

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.180-181.

²⁷ H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: Macmillan, 2004), p.220; A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.200.

²⁸ R. B. Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.116.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.142.

³⁰ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.186.

abolition. Paradoxically, if Jefferson only matched or fell below the standards of ordinary Virginians, then it will become clear that his main legacy concerning the system was his failure to act.³¹

Using this comparative approach provides the thesis with originality, for - despite the large amount of work that has already been produced on Jefferson's relationship with slavery - such a broad study has rarely been attempted. Thus, while it is true that Jefferson's opinions on slavery and race have been unfavourably contrasted with those of high-profile Northern statesmen of the founding generation like John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, a comparative methodology like the one outlined has 'attracted relatively little attention from historians' of either Jefferson or his Virginian peers.³²

Despite arguing that it is misleading to view Virginian society through the beliefs of one man, this thesis recognises Jefferson's unique importance in American history. Consequently, although the project seeks to contextualise his thoughts, it endeavours not to detract from Jefferson's status as a figurehead of the early American republic. There are many reasons why Jefferson's opinions on slavery and race remain significant almost two centuries after his death. As Winthrop Jordan contends, in the years following 1776, 'the speculations of Thomas Jefferson were of great importance because so many people read and reacted to them'.³³ Jefferson's pre-eminence was maintained well into the nineteenth century, during which his statements concerning the topics of slavery and race 'were more widely read, in all probability, than any others'.³⁴

This viewpoint has enjoyed almost unchallenged currency since Jefferson's death in 1826. Indeed, 'In books, articles, blogs, and websites, he strides across the American stage as a potent, overpowering actor'.³⁵ Jefferson's famous musings on natural rights have seen him assume a 'cult hero' status amongst generations of citizens from all political standpoints. This versatility has led one scholar to label him America's 'Great Sphinx'.³⁶ It is certainly true that a survey of American political perspectives in the 1960s demonstrated

³¹ J. J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), p.241.

³² Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.280.

³³ W. D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.165.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.271.

³⁶ J. J. Ellis, 'American Sphinx: The Contradictions of Thomas Jefferson', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/american-sphinx-the-contradictions-of-thomas-jefferson/>.

that seven different ideologies could claim Jefferson as their torchbearer.³⁷ More recently, Annette Gordon-Reed has illustrated 'that Thomas Jefferson can be cited to support almost any position on slavery and the race question that could exist'.³⁸

Of the many contradictions presented by Jefferson's life, perhaps the most tragic was his strained relationship with slavery. Jefferson's complicated association with the institution started from the moment he was born. In fact, one of his earliest memories 'was of "a trusted slave carrying him ... on a pillow"' whilst travelling from Shadwell to Richmond.³⁹ Jefferson obtained his first slaves - inherited from his deceased father - on his twenty-first birthday in 1764. His holdings swelled again seven years later, when his father-in-law - John Wayles - passed away, bequeathing Jefferson another 135 slaves.⁴⁰ Accordingly, in 1776, while he was penning the mantra by which Americans asserted their right to self-governance, Jefferson owned somewhere in the region of two-hundred African-American labourers.⁴¹ Jefferson's Monticello plantation - situated at the top of a mountain on the outskirts of Charlottesville, Albemarle County - embodies his reliance on slave labour, for his bondsmen both constructed the 'palace' that hosted dignitaries from across America and Europe and provided him with the finances required to live the extravagant life of a Virginian aristocrat.⁴²

This contrast between his lifelong ownership of human beings and the egalitarian message conveyed in the Declaration of Independence has perplexed historians and the public alike. Of equal significance to contemporary debates are Jefferson's uncompromising perspectives about African-Americans.⁴³ The continued divisions caused by Jefferson's assertions of black inferiority were highlighted in 2017, when students at the William and Mary College in Virginia defaced a statue of the former President by painting the word 'racist' on the construction.⁴⁴

³⁷ M. D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.445.

³⁸ A. Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.109.

³⁹ G. R. Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans: "An American Dilemma" from Slavery to the White House* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.37.

⁴⁰ A. Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), p.5.

⁴¹ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.1.

⁴² M. Bayard, 'Visit to Monticello and Montpelier', Monticello, 1 August 1809, in G. Hunt (ed.), *The First Forty Years of Washington Society: Portrayed by the Family Letters of Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith (Margaret Bayard) from the Collection of her Grandson J. Henry Smith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.68. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001263225>; P. Finkelman, 'Review: [untitled]', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (Winter 1999), p.104 details the geographical situation of Monticello.

⁴³ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.150.

⁴⁴ D. Ernst, 'Thomas Jefferson Statue at William & Mary Vandalized with fake blood: "Slave owner"', *The Washington Times*, Monday 13 February 2017, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/13/thomas-jefferson-statue-vandalized-at-william-mary/>.

Virginia's eminent role in the early days of the American Republic means that the attitudes of its citizens towards slavery and race are comparably important to our understanding of how the institution survived and eventually expanded throughout the South after the Revolution. Indeed, it is not overstating the point to suggest that Virginia's influence on post-Revolutionary America was greater than that exercised by any other state. As well as boasting the author of the Declaration of Independence, the decisive battle of the subsequent War of Independence was fought in Yorktown, Virginia, and won by a General from the colony (George Washington). Another Virginian, James Madison, was then one of the principal architects of the American Constitution, which was ratified in Philadelphia in 1788.⁴⁵

Old Dominion's dominance in the thirty years following 1788 was further emphasised by the fact that four of the first five American Presidents originated from the state.⁴⁶ In terms of overall population, moreover, Virginia dwarfed most American states at the turn of the nineteenth century. If one is to include the area that later became West Virginia, the 1810 census showed that the former colony contained a greater number of people - 983,000 - than any other in the American Union.⁴⁷ Virginia's position as America's leading state gradually diminished in the nineteenth century, as the economic centre of the Republic shifted towards the industrialised states of New England. Even these developments, though, had a profound impact on national politics. As northern regions increased in importance, Virginia started to align with the Deep South states of South Carolina and Georgia on critical issues, including slavery. This created sectional divisions that ultimately culminated in the American Civil War.

Just as Virginia's influence in America was inestimable, so, too, was slavery's role in the formative stages of the new nation. The firm entrenchment of the system at the time of the Revolution was highlighted by the fact that many of the statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence possessed slaves. These included the Virginian trio of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Accordingly, the greatest difficulty facing those seeking the nationwide abolition of slavery was the fact that much of the wealth possessed by the largest planters in southern states was 'contained in the value of' their slaves and the products of their labour.⁴⁸ For instance, when the Quaker John Pleasants died in 1771, his 212 slaves were valued at £10,000 of an overall estate worth

⁴⁵ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.23.

⁴⁶ E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p.1; R. S. Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life and Labor in Jamaica and Virginia* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2014), p.5.

⁴⁷ Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations*, p.68.

⁴⁸ R. McColey, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* - 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.79.

£12,000.⁴⁹ This dilemma was magnified in Virginia, which held forty percent of America's slaves in 1790.⁵⁰ Moreover, nearly all members of the Virginian Senate and House of Delegates were slaveholders at the turn of the nineteenth century. The same was true of Governors of the state.⁵¹

This thesis is predominantly concerned with the themes of slavery, ownership and race in Virginia in the sixty-three years between 1769 and 1832. The era under consideration is of special significance to the history of American slavery. In fact, this so-called 'middle period' of slavery in the New World represents a defining epoch in the nation's struggle with the institution, for it occurred between the initial settling of slaves in the colonies and the pro- and anti-slavery debates that defined the thirty years prior to the American Civil War.⁵² The analysis commences in 1769, as it is the year in which Jefferson made his first public comments on slavery and race while acting as a lawyer for the Virginian slave Samuel Howell. Moreover, tensions between Britain and the American colonies were heightening, leading to the Continental Congress' Declaration of Independence in 1776. 1832 forms a convenient point at which to conclude the study as it marks the end of a month-long discussion in Virginia on the twin subjects of slavery and abolition. When delegates agreed not to seek the gradual abolition of the system in 1832, it is arguable that battle-lines had been drawn that would culminate in the outbreak of the American Civil War less than three decades later.⁵³ 1832 is also the year in which Thomas Roderick Dew published his *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832*. Dew's work is widely viewed as a turning point in Virginia's evolution into a pro-slavery state, for it presented a comprehensive defence of slavery that would form the cornerstone of the pro-slavery position in the Antebellum era.⁵⁴ This evaluation questions the importance placed on Dew's appraisal by illustrating that he was drawing on many arguments that had emerged in the previous seventy years.

However, the period examined is flexible, for proceedings before 1769 influenced perceptions of the topics being analysed during the Revolutionary era. Equally, events following 1832 have affected the way we consider the epoch. For instance, no discussion of slavery after the American Revolution is complete without recognising how opinions

⁴⁹ W. F. Hardin, "'This Unpleasant Business': Slavery, Law, and the Pleasants Family in Post-Revolutionary Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 125, No. 3 (2017), p.212.

⁵⁰ J. B. Lee, 'Mount Vernon Plantation: A Model for the Republic', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.37.

⁵¹ For a list of Virginian delegates and Governors throughout the period, see E. G. Swem & J. W. Williams (eds.), *A Register of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1776-1918, and of the Constitutional Conventions* (Richmond: Davis Bottom, 1918).

⁵² Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.10.

⁵³ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, pp.105 & 136.

⁵⁴ T. R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832* (Richmond: T. W. White, 1832), p.8.

surrounding abolition and race developed following the settling of Virginia's first Africans in 1620.⁵⁵ Similarly, it is important to recognise that many of the disputes surrounding slavery and race between 1769 and 1832 had an immense impact on the nature of the arguments presented by abolitionists and pro-slavery activists during the Antebellum period. Indeed, Jefferson's example was frequently used by opponents and advocates of slavery in the years before the Civil War.

The existence of slavery in a Republic founded on the principles of liberty and natural rights posed an obvious moral dilemma to America's early leaders. The manner in which the system vexed prominent figures is exemplified by the extensive debates that occurred at the American Constitutional Convention of 1787 'about how to draft a founding document that championed natural rights without threatening the institution that held two hundred thousand black Virginians in bondage'.⁵⁶ Eventually legislators chose not to mention slavery in the Constitution, leaving many who were present 'ashamed' of the charter.⁵⁷ This situation worsened in the thirty years after 1790, during which the slave population of America almost trebled. Thus, there were an estimated 1.5 million African-American bondsmen labouring in the country by 1820. These slaves were almost exclusively confined to southern states.⁵⁸

Virginia possessed a sizable slave population throughout the epoch. Indeed, the American government's 1790 census demonstrated that '293,427 chattels' were held in Virginia.⁵⁹ This created a demographic situation in which enslaved African-Americans outnumbered white citizens in many areas of the former colony. In fact, in every Virginian County barring Loudon, Pittsylvania and Bedford, 'Slaves made up at least 30 percent and often 50 or 60 percent of the population' in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁰ In Albemarle County, where Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home was located, nearly forty-five percent of the population were slaves in 1790.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.xi; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.276.

⁵⁶ E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.1.

⁵⁷ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.124.

⁵⁸ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.106.

⁵⁹ A. Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility: Manumission in Brunswick County, Virginia, 1782-1862', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (Nov., 2004), p.541; A. Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.105.

⁶⁰ B. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.172.

⁶¹ Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.105; J. L. Cooper, *A Guide to Historic Charlottesville & Albemarle County, Virginia* (London: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), pp.77 & 78.

Consequently, slavery receives a lot of attention throughout the thesis. The institution assumes even greater importance because the changing nature of slavery created many of the dynamics that influenced popular perspectives on race and colonization. Fluctuating attitudes towards the system even changed how bondsmen were treated by their masters. Indeed, one of the tragic paradoxes presented by slavery is that improvements in slaveholder conduct towards the end of the eighteenth century actually tightened the chains of bondage in Virginia.⁶² Equally, the subjugated position of African-Americans affected white perceptions of the black race, even if some slaveholders - Jefferson included - dismissed claims that slavery negatively affected the intellectual capacity of their possessions.⁶³ The colonization movement, too, gained much of its early support amongst anti-slavery elements because it offered a means of abolishing slavery whilst ridding Virginia of its black population.⁶⁴ Furthermore, those who opposed expatriation generally did so because they saw it as a challenge to their slaveholding rights. Finally, slavery is important because it has been - alongside race - the facet of Jefferson's life that has caused him most damage in post-1960s scholarship, with numerous historians stressing that his inconsistent perspectives on the issue represented 'the supreme embodiment of a generation's travail' on the topic.⁶⁵

That is not to say that the remaining themes are not pivotal to the study. For instance, our knowledge of slavery is buttressed by considering the way Jefferson and his peers treated their slaves. The limitations of Jefferson's anti-slavery ideals are undoubtedly charted in his plantation diaries, which show that he became more concerned about profit margins than emancipation in the years immediately following the American Revolution.⁶⁶ Ownership is important for two further reasons. First, Jefferson's actions as a slaveholder have been adjudged to have reflected those of 'an ordinary southern gentleman and master'.⁶⁷ Reviewing the ownership methods employed by Jefferson and his fellow statesmen also provides this dissertation with a unique angle, for the subject has been relatively understudied amongst his eminent peers. A common criticism of George

⁶² P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.295.

⁶³ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.148; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, pp.22-23 discusses the impact of slavery on racial perspectives.

⁶⁴ J. B. Allen, 'Were Southern White Critics of Slavery Racist? Kentucky and the Upper South, 1791 - 1824', in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May 1978), p.180.

⁶⁵ W. W. Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Feb., 1972), p.82.

⁶⁶ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.8.

⁶⁷ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.186; Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.41.

Washington biography is that his role as a slaveholder has been 'mostly ignored'.⁶⁸ Similar is true of fellow Presidents James Madison and James Monroe.

The amount of emphasis that recent scholarship has placed on this facet of Jefferson's life - largely because of the discovery that he fathered children with one of his slaves, Sally Hemings - also makes the issue worth analysing. In fact, Henry Wiencek persuasively argues that examining Jefferson's management of his plantation may take 'us closer to the truth of slavery than anything he wrote in *Notes* or his other explications of slavery'.⁶⁹ Despite the attention that has been afforded the controversy, this thesis does not evaluate Jefferson's relationship with Hemings in detail because so little is known - or discernible - about the liaison. Without this knowledge it is difficult to place the relationship within the context of similar events in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁰

Like ownership, the topic of race merits discussion for various reasons. Principally, historians such as Winthrop Jordan and Noble E. Cunningham have claimed that Jefferson was 'speaking for many' Virginians when he made his negative avowals about African-Americans. Furthermore, the theme is of great importance in the broader narrative of the United States, for 'Race prejudice ... has strongly influenced the course of American history'.⁷¹ Understanding the manner in which prejudice increased at the founding of the nation gains further relevance because of contemporary issues. As recently as 2014, the Mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, claimed that the death of a local black man at the hands of state police forces could be linked to centuries of racism that had commenced with America's Founding Fathers.⁷²

The significance attributed to the role of race in the post-Revolutionary epoch has grown inexorably since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Recent work has increased this emphasis, with Eva Sheppard Wolf calling for a re-evaluation of the subject after highlighting the negative impact racial prejudice had on the anti-slavery cause.⁷³ Henry

⁶⁸ P. J. Schwarz, 'Introduction', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.1 contains the quote; E. G. Medford, 'Beyond Mount Vernon: George Washington's Emancipated Laborers and Their Descendants', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.137; J. C. Rees, 'Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Changing Interpretation of Slave Life on the Mount Vernon Estate', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.160.

⁶⁹ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.86.

⁷⁰ The difficulty of discerning the nature of the relationship - and the many possibilities on how it unfolded - are outlined in Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, pp.112-115.

⁷¹ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.455 contains the first quote; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.4 holds the second; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.206 & 210 discusses Cunningham and the wider significance of race in Jefferson studies.

⁷² J. Fermio, 'De Blasio on lack of indictment in Eric Garner case: "This is based on centuries of racism"', *New York Daily News*, Thursday 4 December 2014, accessed Sunday 5 March 2017, <http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/de-blasio-called-eric-garner-death-unnecessary-blog-entry-1.2032884>.

⁷³ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.88.

Wiencek has echoed Sheppard Wolf's appeal, but for different reasons. Wiencek postulates that scholarly perceptions of race in the late eighteenth century have been adversely influenced by the disproportionate attention that has been placed on Jefferson's extreme opinion of African-Americans.⁷⁴ Accordingly, he suggests that if we were to study George Washington's verdict on race in greater detail, we may move nearer to uncovering mainstream eighteenth-century perspectives about the topic.⁷⁵ By doing so, Wiencek makes a common mistake amongst Jefferson scholars by using one figure as a lens through which we can perceive wider Virginian society. By contrast, this thesis investigates popular opinions on race in order to place leaders like Washington and Jefferson in context.

Closely related to Jefferson's thoughts on race was his belief that free African-Americans could not live peacefully with their white contemporaries. Consequently, he appealed for all emancipated labourers to be removed from Virginia.⁷⁶ Scholars have, again, been inclined to see Jefferson's comments on colonization as indicative of popular opinions. Some have even gone so far as to label expatriation 'the Jeffersonian Solution'.⁷⁷ For instance, Erik Root affirmed that the principal factor behind Jefferson's advocacy of repatriation - namely the fear of attack from emancipated blacks - was 'the reason why most of the Founders supported colonization'.⁷⁸ The nationwide popularity of expatriation undoubtedly increased in the era under investigation. Indeed, schemes to exile free African-Americans received such backing that an American Colonization Society was founded in 1816.⁷⁹ Numerous auxiliary branches were fashioned throughout Virginia following the organization's creation. Yet there are abundant examples that can be cited to suggest that many Virginians of the founding era did not support colonization. Equally, some of those who favoured expatriating free blacks did not agree with key tenets of Jefferson's proposal on the topic.⁸⁰ To complicate matters further, Jefferson did not place his faith in the plans adopted by repatriation societies.

These themes are all explored in a main body that has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter surveys previous Jefferson and slavery literature to provide a context into which the thesis can be placed. Broadly speaking, the project engages with three categories of Jefferson and slavery historiography. For well over a century following

⁷⁴ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.219.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.220.

⁷⁶ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.144.

⁷⁷ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.178.

⁷⁸ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.67.

⁷⁹ E. Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), p.2.

⁸⁰ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.105 discusses some of the differences between Jefferson's colonization proposal and that forwarded by the ACS.

his death in 1826, appraisals of Jefferson were complimentary. Those who espouse favourable sentiments are termed 'emancipationist historians'.⁸¹ During the 1960s, however, positive interpretations were contested by revisionist academics, who - heavily influenced by the American Civil Rights movement - attacked Jefferson's derogatory view of African-Americans. Critics, too, used Jefferson's lifelong reliance on slave labour to conclude that he 'had only a theoretical interest in promoting the cause of abolition'.⁸²

Despite the continued popularity of revisionism, a third category of historiography emerged in the 1970s. So called 'contextualizers' dismiss suggestions that Jefferson failed to challenge slavery, while also refuting the anti-slavery Jefferson portrayed by early biographers.⁸³ As well as providing a middle ground between the emancipationist and revisionist camps, contextualists frequently call for Jefferson's views to be placed in their correct setting.⁸⁴ The objectives of this thesis mean that it will add to this category of Jefferson historiography, particularly as its principal endeavour is 'to situate Jefferson in his time and place'.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the analysis furthers the contextualist category by challenging the view that Jefferson reflected Virginian perspectives on slavery and race in the American Revolution. Additionally, it surveys a broader range of Virginians than previous comparative work on Jefferson has done.

The remaining chapters deal chronologically with Jefferson and slavery in Virginia in the years between 1769 and 1832. A chronological structure has been preferred to a theme-based approach as it is felt that the format makes it easier to place Jefferson's opinions and conduct within the context of the upheavals Virginian society underwent after the American Revolution. Each period represents a significant stage in the development of thought on the aspects under investigation. For instance, the second chapter looks at slavery and race in Virginia - and Jefferson's perceptions on these issues - between 1769 and 1789. By doing so, the chapter covers the tumultuous events of the American Revolution and its aftermath, which culminated in the ratification of a national constitution in late 1788. Moreover, using these dates allows examination of Jefferson's conduct throughout his time as a representative in the Virginian Assembly. The period has generally been considered one in which both Jefferson and Virginia reached the height of their anti-slavery powers. Jefferson certainly published numerous denunciations of the institution

⁸¹ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.210.

⁸² Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.178; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.206-208 & 210.

⁸³ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.217-221 discusses 'contextualizers' and contextualist literature. See p.218 for the quote.

⁸⁴ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.207; D. L. Wilson, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Character Issue', *The Atlantic Online*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96oct/obrien/charactr.htm>; J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall, 'Introduction', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.3.

⁸⁵ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.8, 200 & 217-218 discusses this approach. See p.8 for the quote.

during the epoch, while state leaders abolished the slave trade in 1778 and legalised private manumissions in 1782.⁸⁶ Yet, despite these advances, Virginia's enslaved population continued expanding after the Revolution. Finally, Jefferson's assertions on race in *Notes on the State of Virginia* have been utilised to suggest that he was illustrative of wider attitudes towards blacks or, worse still, behind his time on the topic.⁸⁷

This investigation supports some existing historiography but reveals a more nuanced outlook than many scholars have previously thought. While making clear that Jefferson was a vocal critic of slavery in the years immediately before and after the Revolution, the research finds that he was not at the forefront of abolitionist activity in Virginia, even at this early stage. Principally, religious Dissenters - generally Quakers, Methodists and Baptists - were more active against the institution than Jefferson. Furthermore, many from a less privileged background found the motivation to end their association with slavery by freeing their labourers following the introduction of the 1782 manumission bill.⁸⁸ In another dent to Jefferson's reputation, his avowals on race and colonization in *Notes on Virginia* are found to be extreme when placed alongside the perspectives of his fellow Virginians. Overall, these conclusions illustrate the limitations inherent in assuming that Jefferson was a reliable gauge of broader Virginian perceptions.

Chapter three covers the epoch spanning Jefferson's time as a national statesman between 1789 and 1809. As well as witnessing Jefferson's rise in the public sphere, the era saw crucial developments on both state and national levels. In 1789, George Washington was elected as the first President of America in a move that underlined Virginia's prominent role in the New Republic. Although another Virginian, James Madison, succeeded Jefferson as President in 1809, it is undeniable that Old Dominion's importance on the national stage was gradually diminishing. During the previous two decades, increasing numbers of farmers had left Virginia for the sparsely populated states of Kentucky and Tennessee. Moreover, the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin had started to move the centre of the slaveholding economy towards the Deep South states of Georgia and South Carolina.⁸⁹ The epoch also witnessed a turning point in Virginian perspectives on the topics discussed in this thesis. For instance, black rebellions in French-owned Saint Domingue (1791) and Southampton County, Virginia (1800) had a negative influence on the

⁸⁶ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, pp.174 & 197.

⁸⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.206 & 210; R. P. Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness': The Early American Republic and the Construction of Race", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2012), p.165; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.455.

⁸⁸ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, pp.180-181 discusses the importance of these manumissions and the reaction to them.

⁸⁹ Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations*, p.70.

anti-slavery movement and perceptions of free African-Americans.⁹⁰ This change in outlook culminated in an 1806 bill that effectively repealed previous liberal manumission statutes by ensuring that all slaves subsequently emancipated would not be permitted to stay in Virginia without legislative approval.⁹¹ Finally, the alleged danger posed by the increasing free black population encouraged the publication of colonization proposals that borrowed from Jefferson's appeal in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.⁹²

This thesis finds that Jefferson's opposition to slavery declined between 1789 and 1809, but that his stance on race and colonization remained static. This again suggests that it is unhelpful to assume that Jefferson was fully indicative of wider trends on race, for - despite the undeniable maintenance of prejudice - figures from all social classes showed more faith in blacks than he did in the late eighteenth century. Further, although the decay in Jefferson's anti-slavery ideals was largely matched by the Virginian legislature, there were important exceptions to this trend. These included the large-scale emancipations undertaken by Robert Carter and George Washington in 1791 and 1799.⁹³ Such examples question whether Jefferson was an opponent of slavery at all by the turn of the nineteenth century.

The final chapter places Jefferson's position on slavery, ownership, race and colonization within the context of Virginian society in the years between his retirement in 1809 and the Virginian legislative debates of 1832. Important events again profoundly impacted the thoughts of white Virginians and the lives of African-Americans. For example, the state witnessed the flight of hundreds of slaves to enemy forces during America's conflict with Britain in 1812.⁹⁴ The resulting scare surrounding rebellious slaves and free blacks led to the creation of the American Colonization Society in 1816. Moreover, national divisions flared in 1819 and 1820 when the issue of whether slavery should be permitted in the new state of Missouri was discussed in Congress. Economic difficulties also afflicted Virginia in 1819. Indeed, negative market forces sent many wealthy planters, including James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, into heavy debt. This made them increasingly dependent on the capital produced by their slaves.⁹⁵ Matters settled for a decade, until slavery was discussed during a convention to revise the Virginian constitution in 1829. Two years later, a rebellion led by the Southampton County slave Nat Turner killed fifty-six

⁹⁰ The significance of the rebellions can be found in A. G. Crothers, 'Quaker Merchants and Slavery in Early National Alexandria, Virginia: The Ordeal of William Hartshorne', in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 2005), p.68; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.109; Jordan, *White over Black*, pp.xi-xii.

⁹¹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.xvi.

⁹² Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.107; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.139.

⁹³ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.144; Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, pp.274-275.

⁹⁴ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.3.

⁹⁵ McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.257.

civilians and caused Virginians to reflect on the future of the institution in their state. In January 1832, representatives from across Virginia met again to deliberate the future of the system. A month later, leaders decided that no attempt should be made to abolish slavery, a verdict that entrenched the system in Old Dominion until the Civil War of 1861-1865.⁹⁶ Finally, the epoch is important because historians have claimed that Jefferson's perceptions on the Missouri crisis were widely held amongst his fellow Virginians.⁹⁷

While agreeing with previous scholarship regarding the popularity of Jefferson's stance on the Missouri question, the analysis demonstrates that it is erroneous to view the era through a Jeffersonian prism. The survey, instead, finds that Jefferson stood on neither side of the pro- and anti-slavery divide that emerged in the 1820s. Equally, although he remained a theoretical supporter of colonization, Jefferson failed to match the backing that his peers afforded the repatriation movement. Paradoxically, numerous Virginians still held little faith in colonization, even after the formation of the ACS. Many more from all social backgrounds defied Jefferson's negative perception of African-Americans by offering legal support to local free blacks seeking to remain in Virginia.⁹⁸ This highlights the flaws in assuming that Virginians held a united view on race.

The research has principally been reliant on collections of written primary sources. Jefferson's most notorious perspectives on the aspects analysed in the thesis are contained in his only published book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.⁹⁹ Jefferson started writing *Notes* in 1780 after receiving an invitation from Francois Barbé-Marbois, a French diplomat serving in America, to answer twenty-two queries about the environment and traditions of Virginia.¹⁰⁰ The work was eventually released in Paris during May 1785 following the appearance of an unauthorized manuscript in France. After receiving positive feedback from contemporaries in Europe and America, Jefferson decided that *Notes* should be

⁹⁶ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.136.

⁹⁷ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.7; T. Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 2015), pp.122 & 129.

⁹⁸ R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbris, 2013), p.82.

⁹⁹ Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.38; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.201; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.96.

¹⁰⁰ P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: An Anthology* (St. James, N.Y: Brandywine Press, 1999), p.59; S. T. Joshi (ed.), *Documents of American Prejudice: An Anthology of Writings on Race from Thomas Jefferson to David Duke* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p.3.

distributed on a wider scale, leading to further publications in London (1787) and Philadelphia (1788).¹⁰¹

Notes on Virginia appears in the form of twenty-three chapters, with each answering one of Marbois' questions. Of these sections, just two discuss slavery; chapters fourteen - 'Laws' - and eighteen - 'Manners'.¹⁰² Nonetheless, historians have placed great importance on Jefferson's statements in the book. For instance, leading biographer Merrill Peterson asserted that *Notes* provided 'a virtual manual of Jefferson's political opinions'.¹⁰³ Likewise, Paul Finkelman affirmed that *Notes* 'has all the marks of Jefferson's mature views on slavery and race and emancipation' in 1993.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Jefferson's perspectives in *Notes* have been considered an accurate portrayal of prevailing opinion in Virginia. Writing in 2002, Rick Halpern claimed that 'No document better illustrates the ambiguous attitude of the post-Revolutionary generation toward slavery than Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*'.¹⁰⁵

The letters of all the statesmen surveyed in the project have been equally pivotal. Jefferson's correspondence undoubtedly represents his 'major literary output'. This is unsurprising, given that he wrote at least 18,000 letters during his life. Comparably, Kenneth Morgan demonstrates that George Washington's observations on many topics were 'confined mainly to private remarks in his diary and in correspondence'.¹⁰⁶ Most of the letters penned by statesmen of the era have since been published in collections that are used throughout this thesis. From an abolitionist perspective, Robert Pleasants' *Letterbook* grants an insight into the workings of the Quaker anti-slavery movement. Pleasants, who composed dispatches to such luminaries as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Patrick Henry, also rebuked members of the Society of Friends who refused to emancipate their bondsmen and wrote numerous denunciations of slavery to Virginia's newspapers. All of these can be found in the *Letterbook*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ This is shown in Jordan, *White over Black*, p.441; D. Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson and the Stony Mountains: Exploring the West from Monticello* (London: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p.26 discusses the publication of an unauthorised version.

¹⁰² W. D. Richardson, 'Thomas Jefferson & Race: The Declaration & Notes on the State of Virginia', in *Polity*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring 1984), p.452 has information on the chapter numbers, p.453 details the chapters discussing slavery and race.

¹⁰³ M. D. Peterson, 'Thomas Jefferson: A Brief Life', in L. Weymouth (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: the Man...His World...His Influence* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p.23.

¹⁰⁴ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.200; W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.512.

¹⁰⁵ R. Halpern & E. Dal Lago (eds.), *Slavery and Emancipation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p.92.

¹⁰⁶ Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.9 holds the first quote; J. Appleby & T. Ball, 'Introduction', in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.xiii highlights the extent of Jefferson's correspondence; Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.280.

¹⁰⁷ R. Pleasants, *Letterbook of Robert Pleasants. 1754-1797*. Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/168, passim. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/11435.

Published books and broadsides are another invaluable source of information. A pamphlet produced by St. George Tucker - titled *A Dissertation on Slavery* (1796) - is particularly useful for those endeavouring to ascertain the nature of eighteenth-century abolitionist thought. In fact, Paul Finkelman believes the tract incorporates the first 'concrete proposal for ending slavery' formulated in Virginia.¹⁰⁸ Other printed works, including the Virginian lawyer George Tucker's *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia on the Subject of the Late Conspiracy of the Slaves with a Proposal for Their Colonization* (1801) and Caroline County planter John Taylor's *Arator* (1814) address the topics of abolition, race, colonization and the treatment of slaves. Finally, keynote speeches from the debates on slavery in 1832 were recorded and circulated to the wider public.¹⁰⁹

Plantation diaries are comparably crucial. Jefferson's *Farm Book*, which chronicled daily events on his Monticello plantation, is undeniably 'a pivotal document' for those analysing his treatment of his bondsmen.¹¹⁰ Planter records often contain valuable information concerning the clothing and diet of labourers, in addition to details of slave transactions between owners. Consequently, these are used throughout the analysis. Similarly, the 'abundant testimony' provided in the journals of visitors to America is utilised.¹¹¹ The records kept by travellers to the New Republic, including the Marquis de Lafayette, Julian Niemcewicz and Harriet Martineau, undoubtedly hold useful details. Many interested observers from Europe commented on the nature of slavery in the state and the treatment afforded to Virginia's bondsmen. While biases unquestionably existed, these testimonies often recorded elements of daily life that Old Dominion's planters preferred not to be publicised. For instance, the Methodist anti-slavery preachers Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury chronicled George Washington's refusal to support the abolitionist cause, despite claiming to agree with the motives of the movement.¹¹² Individuals from neighbouring states, like Philip Vickers Fithian and John Davis - who served as tutors on large Virginian plantations - offered equally thought-provoking observations on the system, with both highlighting incidents that demonstrated the cruelty of slavery.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, pp.1216-1217.

¹⁰⁹ J. Taylor, *Arator: Being a Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical & Political, In Sixty-One Numbers* (Georgetown: J. M. Carter, 1814); G. Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia, on the Subject of the Late Conspiracy of the Slaves; with a Proposal for their Colonization* (Baltimore: Bonsal & Niles, 1801). Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008677246>.

¹¹⁰ A. Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), p.15; Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.9.

¹¹¹ McColey, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.57; the importance of visitor diaries appears in L. Stanton, 'The Other End of the Telescope: Jefferson Through the Eyes of His Slaves', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), p.139.

¹¹² T. Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London: Paramore, 1793), p.45.

¹¹³ P. V. Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia, 1773-1774', in J. Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters, 1767-1774: Student at Princeton College, 1770-72, Tutor at Nomini Hall in Virginia, 1773-74* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University

Memoirs of slaves are also incorporated where possible. Three of these are particularly significant. First, Madison Hemings and Isaac Granger's accounts of life at Monticello are essential when evaluating Jefferson's conduct as an owner, for they are the only surviving sources that detail slaves' view of the way America's third President treated his bondsmen.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Paul Jennings' *A Coloured Man's Reminiscences of James Madison* (1865) gives a revealing illustration of life as one of James Madison's labourers.¹¹⁵ Other recollections, such as those produced by Olaudah Equiano and Frances Fedric, highlight the suffering African-Americans endured by outlining incidents of extreme cruelty on plantations. Consequently, both documents were frequently cited by nineteenth-century abolitionists.¹¹⁶

Two further sources are particularly valuable. First, Virginia's courts regularly heard cases of slaves claiming their freedom from planters who had either abused them or held them in bondage unlawfully. On other occasions, justices presided over distressing cases in which slaves had lost their lives through ill-treatment by masters and overseers.¹¹⁷ Additionally, newspaper advertisements for runaway labourers frequently contained details about the circumstances surrounding a workers' disappearance from their plantation, including incidents where violence had been meted out by white employers.

The printed press is equally important, especially when scrutinizing the widespread trading of slaves. Indeed, it is unusual to read a newspaper of the period and not see at least one announcement detailing an upcoming auction of slave property. Moreover, discussions surrounding slavery, race and - after 1816 - colonization can be found in issues of the *Virginia Gazette*, *Virginia Argus*, *Petersburg Republican* and other regional publications. Finally, newspaper extracts that highlight the mutually beneficial relationships that were formed between African-Americans and white Virginians are of great

Press, 1900), p.69; J. Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p.366.

¹¹⁴ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.170; Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, pp.2 & 43-44.

¹¹⁵ P. Jennings, 'A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison', in J. Mitchell (ed.), *A Coloured Man's Perspectives of James Madison with a Discussion of Slave Life: Or, Illustrations of the Peculiar Institution an Original Compilation* (Washington: Historic Publishing, 2017), p.18; McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, pp.22-23.

¹¹⁶ O. Equiano, *The Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African: From an Account Written by Himself* (New York: Samuel Wood & Sons, 1829), p.12. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101686767>; see appendix 1.6, p.333 for information on Equiano; F. Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky; or Fifty years of Slavery in the Southern States of America by Francis Fedric an Escaped Slave. With Preface, by the Rev. Charles Lee, M. A.* (London: Wertheim, MacIntosh, and Hunt, 1863), p.2. Retrieved from *Documenting the American South*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/fedric/fedric.html>.

¹¹⁷ For examples, see Dinah: Freedom Suit, Arlington County, 1802, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4; Will: Coroner's Inquisition, Albemarle County, 1796, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1. Both these cases are covered in chapter three; These sources - and others in the African American Narrative Digital Collection at the Library of Virginia - can be accessed online at 'Virginia Untold: African-American Narrative Collection', *Virginia Memory: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, www.virginiamemory.com/collections/aaan/. The sources will now be referenced in the style used in this footnote as recommended by the LVA's citation guide.

importance. As Philip Morgan demonstrates, a small, yet consistent, stream of appeals for information about runaways alleged that absconding labourers had been aided in their departures by local whites.¹¹⁸

Various other sources are appraised to discover the opinions of lesser known Virginians. Many of these are records collected by the Virginian legislature. First, petitions delivered to the Virginia General Assembly reveal the tensions inherent in popular attitudes towards all the topics examined in the thesis. For instance, more than 1,200 Virginians - largely of lower-to-middle ranking backgrounds - demanded that manumissions be ceased throughout the state in 1785.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, a batch of appeals in 1831 and 1832 called for Virginia's black population to be removed to Liberia.¹²⁰ Paradoxically, petitions were a pivotal resource for those seeking to bolster the rights of free African-Americans. In December 1810, almost 450 citizens from Petersburg advised state Governors to permit three local free blacks to remain in Virginia due to their 'integrity' and good service. All the appeals have been accessed from the Library of Virginia's extensive collections, which have been digitalised and placed on the institution's website.¹²¹

More pertinently, petitions are one of the few documents that offer a consistent voice to Virginia's African-Americans. Appeals served multiple functions. In the immediate aftermath of the American Revolution, slaves asked lawmakers for consent to be emancipated after conducting 'meritorious services' for the former Commonwealth. Similar occurred following the tightening of Virginia's manumission laws in the early nineteenth century.¹²² Legislation passed in 1806 even made it mandatory for free blacks to obtain permission to remain in Virginia from state lawmakers. Therefore, many post-1806 memorials were delivered by former slaves asking for leaders to grant them the right to stay with family members and friends. These were generally sponsored by local whites, who testified to the important role the applicant played in the community.¹²³ This was not the only function of petitions. For instance, free blacks in Richmond requested permission to build a Church in the Virginian capital in 1823. On another occasion, four free African-

¹¹⁸ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.306.

¹¹⁹ M. A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), p.490.

¹²⁰ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.205-206.

¹²¹ These petitions can be found at 'Legislative Petitions Digital Collection', *Virginia Memory: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, www.virginiamemory.com/collections/petitions. From now on I have referenced the petitions as required by the Library's citation guide, e.g. Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; also see Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession Number 36121, Box 271, Folder 101, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.; see Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. for the examples cited in the text.

¹²² McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.487.

¹²³ For an example, see Johnson, Samuel: Petition, Fauquier County, 1826-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

American landowners appealed for lawmakers to alter state laws to enable black residents to testify against white citizens in court.¹²⁴

The Library of Virginia's 'African-American Narrative' is another pivotal collection. Containing court judgements, manumission documents and free black taxation lists, the sources detail the legal history of the state's black population in the era between the American Revolution and the Civil War. By doing so, they highlight the persecution that African-Americans were regularly subjected to by Virginian law.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, manumission documents highlight the multiple factors that motivated planters to emancipate their workers. A brief search of these documents shows that economic concerns were often as important as anti-slavery sentiment in the minds of those who liberated their slaves.¹²⁶

Finally, census returns have been employed to complement the evidence garnered from petitions. For example, data from the decennial surveys of 1810, 1820 and 1830 is analysed in an endeavour to gather more information about the many individuals who signed petitions directed to the Virginia General Assembly. State-wide surveys of heads of households conducted between 1782 and 1784 are employed for similar purposes.¹²⁷ Combining the contents of petitions with analysis of census data arguably provides the best means of gauging the perspectives of small and middle ranking slaveholders, as well as those who possessed no human property. This method produces some interesting findings. Principally, those owning less than fifteen slaves appear to have been especially likely to register their opposition to manumissions in the late eighteenth century.¹²⁸ Paradoxically, many signatories of appeals made on behalf of free African-Americans only held a small number of slaves. This demonstrates that popular opinions on slavery and race were never uniform across any social class. Indeed, they were often subject to startling

¹²⁴ Free People of Color: Petition, Norfolk County, 1809-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Richmond Free Persons of Color: Petition, Richmond (City), 1823-12-03, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3-4.

¹²⁵ The African American Narrative Digital Collection can be found online at 'Virginia Untold: African American Narrative Collection', *Virginia Memory: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, www.virginiamemory.com/collections/aan/.

¹²⁶ This is explained further in chapters two and three of the thesis; Roger: Deed of Manumission, Louisa County, 1794, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Sam: Deed of Manumission, Louisa County, 1794, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 are examples of manumission documents.

¹²⁷ The 1784 details appear in [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Records of the State Enumerations: 1782 to 1785 - Virginia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908); census records have been derived from 'Family Search' census archives and will be referenced as recommended by the website. See 'United States Census, 1810.' Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <http://FamilySearch.org>, accessed Monday 1 January 2018, Citing NARA microfilm publication M252. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

¹²⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.46.

contradictions.¹²⁹ It is argued that these variations undermine the view that a figure like Thomas Jefferson can be considered representative of broader Virginian perspectives.

Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that the above sources contain flaws. For example, censuses are restricted in the amount of information they offer, as only the head of a household and the number of African-Americans they owned are listed. Consequently, anyone trying to discern the lives of labourers on a plantation will not gain much insight from studying these records in isolation. Further, some of those who signed petitions do not appear on census returns, meaning that a wholly accurate appraisal of memorialists remains elusive.

Moreover, newspaper coverage is limited in the late colonial and early post-Revolutionary epochs. Prior to the conclusion of the American Revolution, the *Virginia Gazette* was the only newspaper title in the state. Three copies of the *Gazette* - all with different editorial stances - were published in Williamsburg and another in Norfolk before Lord Dunmore seized the printed press during the war.¹³⁰ Even though new publications like the *Virginia Herald* and *Virginia Argus* were gradually released following the conclusion of the conflict, these pose further difficulties. Principally, the content of most newspapers was decided by editors, who frequently 'printed stories to serve their political sensibilities and allegiances' and relied on word of mouth, rather than proven sources of information. Equally, because newspapers were expensive to produce, they were generally only purchased by the wealthy. Although it is likely that the stories covered in the printed press were discussed among lower ranks, this makes it difficult to gauge how widely distributed the materials were and how popular the opinions within them were.¹³¹

The documents used to determine the beliefs of elite Virginians are equally imperfect. For example, Annette Gordon-Reed contends that Thomas Jefferson's *Farm Book* 'is not a good guide to Jefferson's relationships with individual slaves', for it only offers a snapshot of life at Monticello through the eyes of its author. Indeed, the majority of slaves are only mentioned as a date of birth, date of death or price of purchase and sale in the journal.¹³² Similarly, academics note that George Washington's writings offer little

¹²⁹ J. Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.9.

¹³⁰ For more information regarding the *Virginia Gazette* and the Virginian press in general, see Library of Virginia, 'Eighteenth Century Virginia Newspapers', *Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/va9_18thnews.htm.

¹³¹ B. Gabriel, *The Press and Slavery in America, 1791-1859: The Melancholy Effect of Popular Excitement* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), pp.17-18. The quote is p.18.

¹³² A. Gordon-Reed, "'The Memories of a Few Negroes': Rescuing America's Future at Monticello", in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.249.

chance for the historian 'to get a sense of the difficulty of the slaves' lives'.¹³³ Furthermore, James Madison's papers do not provide full coverage of life on his estate, for he destroyed a number of his manuscripts in 1817.¹³⁴ In fact, a lack of source material has hindered endeavours to analyse many of the figures studied in this work. This may make adequate comparison with the prolific Jefferson difficult. George Mason is one figure for whom a dearth of resources exists, for he 'failed to leave an edifying written record' having 'left no autobiography, kept no journal, published no articles and few essays'.¹³⁵

Where they do exist, the dependability of the letters composed by Virginia's leaders has been questioned. A frequent criticism is that the state's politicians doctored their opinions to match the perspectives held by their correspondents.¹³⁶ Accordingly, Gordon Wood postulates that Jefferson's anti-slavery declarations were often 'shaped to the expectations of enlightened foreigners'.¹³⁷ Similarly, Joseph Ellis believes that all America's Founding Fathers had an eye on posterity when making proclamations on slavery and so 'began ... writing letters to us as much as to one another'.¹³⁸ Such disparities mean that the records created by Old Dominion's leaders must be used in conjunction with the testimony offered by slaves and visitors to the state in order to gain a fuller view of Virginian society.

Discerning the opinions of those who operated below the elites presents even greater problems. As Robert McColley demonstrated in the 1960s, 'It is extremely difficult to find critical discussions of slavery in the papers of average well-to-do Virginia planters'.¹³⁹ This situation is further complicated by the fact that over seventy percent of Virginians throughout the era are thought to have been illiterate. Consequently, the documents available for studying slavery in Virginia 'are overwhelmingly biased in favor of the wealthiest, most stable, most highly educated slaveholding families'.¹⁴⁰

The lack of source material provided by African-Americans - both free and slave - also hinders endeavours to obtain a clear and unbiased picture of ownership tendencies

¹³³ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.102.

¹³⁴ J. C. A. Stagg, 'An Introduction to the Life and Papers of James Madison', *Library of Congress: James Madison Papers, 1723-1859*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/james-madison-papers/articles-and-essays/an-introduction-to-the-life-and-papers-of-james-madison/>, p.1.

¹³⁵ Bellamy, 'George Mason', *Top Scholar*, p.6.

¹³⁶ W. M. S. Rasmussen & R. S. Tilton, *George Washington: The Man Behind the Myths* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.xiii; Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, pp.182-183; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.200.

¹³⁷ Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.39; Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, pp.182-183; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.200-202; Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, pp.130-131.

¹³⁸ Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.18; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.10; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, pp.122-123; Ellis, 'Introduction', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers*, pp.11-12; P. D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes": George Washington and Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Dec., 2005), p.426.

¹³⁹ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.142.

¹⁴⁰ J. Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), p.xvi.

amongst planters. As Richard Dunn asserts, 'Anyone trying to study slave life faces the challenge that almost all of the surviving evidence was written down and preserved by the slaveholders'.¹⁴¹ Therefore, effort has been made to mitigate the difficulties presented by the poor representation of lower ranking whites and the African-American community. As mentioned, legislative petitions and court records are employed to incorporate the views of marginalised sections of society. Additionally, it is possible to discern a lot about the context such groups operated in by studying what was not said by literate figures. For instance, between 1806 and 1825 there was little debate in either newspapers or petitions about the future of slavery. This highlighted the virtually impregnable position of the institution at that time.

A final obstacle is presented by the inconsistencies inherent in Jefferson's statements on slavery, race and colonization. It is undeniable that the opinions Jefferson forwarded in his voluminous correspondence were often contradictory and not always an accurate indicator of his general perceptions. Accordingly, Ari Helo warns that 'Taking each and every line of Jefferson's statements at face value obscures his implicit disagreement with the implementation of a suggested policy - and sometimes with the policy itself'.¹⁴² To exemplify his point, Helo uses a letter Jefferson wrote to Thomas Humphreys in 1817, in which the retired President labelled a Congressional initiative to expatriate free black men to Africa 'the corner stone of' future colonization plans. However, just seven years after postulating this, Jefferson claimed that he had 'ever deemed entirely impossible the idea that "an place on the coast of Africa should answer the purpose"' of colonization societies.¹⁴³ More succinctly, Robert Forbes argues that 'Rather than seeking an underlying consistency in Jefferson's wildly divergent theological stances, we might more meaningfully view them as "dog-whistles" intended to send specific messages to a variety of distinct constituencies'.¹⁴⁴

However, such discoveries do not hinder the aims of the thesis, which are to place Jefferson into the context of Virginian society and demonstrate that the status conferred upon him as a gauge of state-wide perceptions has been overstated. If anything, the fact that Jefferson's outlook oscillated so wildly shows that his ability to reflect common perspectives has been exaggerated. These discoveries highlight why it is necessary to move research away from viewing Old Dominion through Jefferson and, instead, seek to evaluate the author of the Declaration of Independence alongside his fellow Virginians.

¹⁴¹ Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations*, p.1.

¹⁴² Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.105.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness'", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.74.

Chapter One: Historiography

Thomas Jefferson is one of the most studied figures in American history. The statesman has been the subject of an astronomical amount of attention from scholars and the public alike, largely because of his prominent role as the author of the Declaration of Independence and his subsequent eight-year tenure as third President of the United States. Indeed, it is not overstating the point to claim that 'no one in American history has been subjected to a greater range of interpretations than has Thomas Jefferson'.¹ Jefferson's popularity with academics and casual observers is arguably as strong now as it has been at any stage since his death in 1826. In fact, it is estimated that more than 100 books and articles have been published on him every year since the turn of the millennium.² Thus, although there are many different interpretations of Jefferson's life, there is little doubt that 'No figure in our past has embodied so much of our heritage and so many of our hopes'.³

This chapter outlines broad trends in Jefferson historiography. It also provides a summary of general research regarding slavery and race in Virginia in the years between 1769 and 1832. Doing so lays the foundations for the remaining parts of this thesis by delineating a historiographical context in which later findings can be situated. Furthermore, it highlights some of the weaknesses in previous scholarship that the project seeks to remedy. First, the analysis charts developments in Jefferson biography, with the rise and fall of his reputation being outlined. The main body of the chapter details areas of contention within Jefferson and slavery literature. Debates surrounding other key figures in Virginian society after the Revolution, such as George Washington and James Madison, are then investigated. Finally, the range of scholarly opinions concerning slavery and racial perspectives in Virginia are highlighted. These include arguments surrounding the extent to which abolition was possible in Virginia and whether anti-black prejudice was widespread throughout the former colony.

Gaining agreement on Jefferson's legacy amongst his numerous biographers has proven an impossible task, largely because multiple Jeffersonian characters have been identified by scholars.⁴ Consequently, his reputation has fluctuated wildly since his death in 1826. From 1826 until the conclusion of the American Civil War in 1865, Jefferson was

¹ J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall, 'Introduction', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.1.

² F. Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.4.

³ G. Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p.38.

⁴ M. D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.445.

portrayed favourably by pro- and anti-slavery activists, who attempted to illustrate that he had supported their perspectives.⁵ Thus, in a letter penned in 1859, Abraham Lincoln wrote: 'All honor to Jefferson ... who ... had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times'.⁶ Simultaneously, Confederates defended slavery by emphasising Jefferson's negative opinion of African-Americans. Proponents of the system also noted Jefferson's failure to free most of his labourers and stressed his support for slaveholders' rights during the 1819 Missouri Crisis.⁷ Early African-American perspectives generally matched the Confederate stance. For instance, the black abolitionist David Walker - writing in 1829 - condemned Jefferson for his damaging portrayal of African-Americans in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which he thought had 'been as great a barrier to our emancipation as any thing that has ever been advanced against us'.⁸

Like many historical figures, perceptions of Jefferson have largely been governed by contemporary issues. Consequently, Jefferson's reputation declined after the American Civil War as his role in creating the sectional tensions that eventually caused the conflict was increasingly highlighted by critics.⁹ Additionally, his lack of tangible action against slavery was emphasised. In fact, one abolitionist, Moncure Conway, lamented: 'Never did a man achieve more fame for what he did not do'.¹⁰ Jefferson's image continued to wane in the early twentieth century, as his economic policies became out-dated in an increasingly market-based American society. Accordingly, his great political rival Alexander Hamilton superseded him as the nation's favourite figure from the Revolutionary age.¹¹ Equally, his arguments in support of minimalist government started to appear obsolete in an era in which 'national reformers confronted problems that required more effective, not less active government'.¹²

Nevertheless, Jefferson's status rose once more in the late 1920s. Financial factors were again key in altering perceptions, with the Great Depression highlighting the excesses of the market forces that Jefferson opposed in the formative days of the New Republic.¹³ His popularity then surged throughout the Presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Indeed, 'by 1943

⁵ F. D. Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.4.

⁶ Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.4.

⁷ Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.4; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.166.

⁸ D. Walker, *David Walker's Appeal, In Four Articles: Together With a Preamble, to the Colored Citizens of the World, but In Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Third and Last Edition* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1993), p.47; Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.176.

⁹ Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.4.

¹⁰ H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.7.

¹¹ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.5.

¹² J. Appleby, 'Introduction: Jefferson and His Complex Legacy', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.2.

¹³ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.5.

Jefferson had come to embody America itself'.¹⁴ In large part this improvement came as a consequence of World War Two, during which Jefferson's statements in support of liberty and equal rights proved an appropriate symbol for America's battle against fascism.¹⁵ The increase in Jefferson's popularity was such that his image was carved alongside those of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt on South Dakota's famous Mount Rushmore monument. Moreover, the statesman's Monticello home was depicted on the Nickel, while a memorial to the former President was erected in Washington D.C.¹⁶

However, this adulation was replaced by further scepticism in the 1960s, when Jefferson 'emerged as the patron saint of American hypocrisy', a blow from which his standing has yet to recover.¹⁷ Indeed, the erosion of Jefferson's legacy over the last half century has been such that 'more than a few working historians ... appear to dislike Jefferson more intensely than most of us dislike anyone actually living'.¹⁸ The former President's contradictions over slavery, allied to his harmful opinions regarding race, have proved pivotal in his downfall. In fact, Mark McGarvie correctly states that 'the manifest injustice of slaveholding detracts from Jefferson's reputation' more than any other issue.¹⁹ Greater analysis of Jefferson's voluminous writings has also demonstrated his inconsistency on numerous topics, a factor that critics like Robert Forbes have emphasised in recent appraisals.²⁰

Given slavery's position as 'an integral part of the economic and social fabric of ... society' in all southern American states, it is unsurprising that Jefferson's relationship with the institution has become a key area of historical enquiry.²¹ Broadly speaking, there have been three categories of Jefferson and slavery historiography. For over a century following his death in 1826, evaluations of Jefferson's association with slavery were largely complimentary. In the immediate aftermath of his death, Jefferson was often evoked by those campaigning against the system. In his survey of *The Jefferson Image in the American*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.6 contains the quote.

¹⁵ R. B. Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.132.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.132-133.

¹⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.7.

¹⁸ W. G. Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution: Thomas Jefferson and Gabriel's Uprising', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 2003), p.1.

¹⁹ M. D. McGarvie, "'In Perfect Accordance with his Character": Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and the Law', in *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (June 1999), p.142.

²⁰ R. P. Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness": The Early American Republic and the Construction of Race', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2012), p.74.

²¹ D. J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.62.

Mind (1960), Merrill Peterson demonstrated that 'No other words from his pen, or perhaps from any pen, were more often quoted as gospel by anti-slavery men' than Jefferson's denunciation of slavery in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.²² Thus, Andrew Dixon White could label Jefferson 'a determined and consistent foe of slavery' during the American Civil War. Additionally, Dixon White argued that his subject's negative avowals about African-Americans did not detract from his lifetime's work against the system.²³

Those who espouse comparable sentiments are often referred to as 'emancipationist historians'.²⁴ James Curtis Ballagh provided a perfect illustration of this positive view when - in his 1902 analysis of slavery in Virginia - he declared that 'It was Jefferson who first gave effective and forcible expression to' anti-slavery sentiment in his native state.²⁵ Ballagh even thought that Jefferson had been in advance of his fellow Revolutionary statesmen on the question, noting that 'Madison, Washington, and Henry were more conservative' on the topic than the author of the Declaration of Independence had been.²⁶ Similarly, Ulrich Phillips praised Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* for containing 'phrases afterward classic among abolitionists' in 1923.²⁷

This positive portrayal remained prevalent in American scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century. Accordingly, the eminent biographer Dumas Malone could write that Jefferson 'was in advance of predominant opinion in his state on the question of slavery' in 1967.²⁸ The most prominent exponents of the emancipationist interpretation after the Second World War were Malone and Merrill Petersen, whose *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation* (1970) postulated that 'No abolitionist of later time ever cried out more prophetically against slavery' than Jefferson had in *Notes on Virginia*.²⁹ Indeed, Peterson surmised that 'a gradual emancipation' had been Jefferson's 'cherished goal' throughout his life.³⁰ Recent studies have also commended Jefferson. The Encyclopaedia Britannica's 2007 publication concerning *The Founding Fathers* certainly postulates that

²² Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.48.

²³ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.189; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.165 holds the quote.

²⁴ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.210.

²⁵ J. C. Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1902), p.128.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.130.

²⁷ U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* - 2nd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p.123; Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, pp.188-189.

²⁸ D. Malone, 'Mr. Jefferson and the Traditions of Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Apr., 1967), p.137; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.206.

²⁹ M. D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.260.

³⁰ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.47.

Jefferson's sentiments before *Notes on Virginia's* release 'placed him among the most progressive elements of southern society'.³¹

Francis Cogliano contends that the emancipationist interpretation largely flourished because of the preponderance of white, male authors - generally hailing from Virginia - in early Jefferson academia.³² Much of the primacy enjoyed by emancipationists can, too, be ascribed to the attention that was placed on Jefferson's written statements about slavery, which were often unequivocal in their denunciation of the system. Moreover, the preponderance of favourable studies was aided by the lack of significance attributed to race prior to the 1960s. Editorial bias was a final contributor. There is undoubtedly evidence that early editors of Jefferson's letters deleted signs of the decline in his anti-slavery stance in order to preserve his reputation. For instance, Adrienne Koch and William Pedin carefully amended correspondence Jefferson had sent to the young abolitionist Edward Coles in 1814 to make it seem that their subject had been an advocate of Coles' emancipation plan. Similarly, Edwin Morris Betts excluded damaging evidence about Jefferson's conduct as a master from early editions of his *Farm Book*.³³

Popular opinion of Jefferson was initially heavily influenced by emancipationist historiography. The favourable perception of Jefferson's attitude towards slavery was demonstrated by the choice of inscription on the Jefferson Memorial, which was erected in Washington, D. C. in 1943. On the plinth underneath Jefferson's statue is a famous quote from his *Autobiography* that reads: 'Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free'.³⁴ A desire to protect Jefferson's legacy was evident on the construction, for the mural neglected to include the following sentence of the *Autobiography*, in which he asserted: 'Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government'.³⁵

Nonetheless, prevailing scholarship was contested by a flurry of revisionist studies during the 1960s. Heavily influenced by the American Civil Rights movement, these productions attacked Jefferson's derogatory view of African-Americans. In fact, the denigration his *Notes on Virginia* observations have received 'has been a key category of analysis in the re-evaluation of Jefferson over the past forty years'.³⁶ A pivotal text in the

³¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.124.

³² Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.171 & 173.

³³ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.205; Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.119.

³⁴ T. Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790. With the Declaration of Independence', 6 January 1821, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.44; A. Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.9.

³⁵ Jefferson, 'Autobiography', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson*, p.44; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.9.

³⁶ See Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.186 for the quote; Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers*, pp.115-116.

formative stages of the revisionist phase was Winthrop Jordan's survey of racial prejudice in America, *White over Black* (1968).³⁷ Indeed, by suggesting that Jefferson's statements concerning the mental capacity of African-Americans represented 'the most intense ... and extreme formulation of anti-Negro "thought" offered by any American in the thirty years after the Revolution', Jordan 'set the terms of the debate about the centrality of race and slavery in any appraisal of Jefferson'.³⁸ In a landmark finding, Jordan identified racial prejudice - and Jefferson's request that any emancipation scheme be accompanied by the colonization of all free blacks - as the key factor behind his subject's inability to oversee the abolition of Virginian slavery.³⁹

As well as highlighting his prejudice, critics used Jefferson's lifelong reliance on slave labour to illustrate that he 'had only a theoretical interest in promoting the cause of abolition'.⁴⁰ Writing in 1964, for example, Robert McColley emphasised that Jefferson's indictments of the institution 'were so rarely accompanied by any positive efforts against slavery as to cast doubt on their sincerity'.⁴¹ Additionally, McColley entered new territory by querying whether Jefferson's abolition plan in *Notes on Virginia* represented a challenge to the system. The revisionist claimed that 'among the class of wealthy planters whom they chiefly represented not one Virginia statesman of the Jeffersonian era ever advanced a practical proposal for the elimination of slavery'.⁴² McColley was equally scathing about Jefferson's statements concerning African-Americans in *Notes*, which he thought were 'more than a little embarrassing to recount'.⁴³

Writing a decade after McColley, David Brion Davis was comparably scornful of Jefferson's 'quietistic surrender to fate'. Davis argued that his subject's reticence meant that he failed to publicly support the objectives of the Virginia Abolition Society and other anti-slavery groups. Indeed, Davis thought that Jefferson's refusal to buttress the abolitionist cause prevented others from lending their backing, reasoning: 'if the great

³⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.211.

³⁸ W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p.481; J. J. Ellis, 'American Sphinx': *The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), p.18; J. J. Ellis, 'American Sphinx: The Contradictions of Thomas Jefferson', *The Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/american-sphinx-the-contradictions-of-thomas-jefferson/>.

³⁹ W. D. Jordan, 'Hemings and Jefferson: Redux', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.44.

⁴⁰ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.178; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.206-208 & 210.

⁴¹ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.211; R. McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* - 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.124.

⁴² McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.115.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.127.

father of democracy had refrained from giving public voice to his convictions, how could lesser men presume superior wisdom?⁴⁴

Similarly, William Cohen - while acknowledging the success of Jefferson's anti-slavery activities before 1784 - concluded that his subject's opposition to the system had diminished rapidly after 1785.⁴⁵ Writing in 1969, Cohen alleged that 'self-interest' had shaped Jefferson's conduct towards slavery throughout his Presidency, during which he allowed the institution to spread into new territories purchased in Spanish and French Louisiana.⁴⁶ Cohen's article for the *Journal of American History* - which has been labelled 'probably the most important contribution to the revisionist interpretation of Jefferson's relationship with slavery' - also became the first publication to challenge the opinion that Jefferson was a uniformly compassionate planter. Principally, Cohen emphasised Jefferson's frequent pursuits of runaway slaves and his heavy involvement in the trading of labourers.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, in contrast to subsequent productions, Cohen was still prepared to concede that America's third President 'was benevolent and humane ... when judged by the traditional assumptions of the slaveholders'.⁴⁸

Overall, the key tenets of revisionism had been formed by the end of the 1970s. These emphasised that 'Jefferson's actions against slavery were not as significant as his words' and that his 'opposition to slavery, such as it was, was more pronounced early in his career than later'.⁴⁹ However, many of Jefferson's critics were still willing to emphasise the positive actions he took against the system before 1784. Thus, John Chester Miller claimed that 'the significance of' *Notes on the State of Virginia* was 'not that Jefferson presented a brief for black inferiority but that he demanded the extinction of slavery', while Winthrop Jordan concluded that America's third President had been genuine in his distaste of the institution.⁵⁰ Indeed, three decades after the release of *White over Black*, Jordan still found that Jefferson 'never deviated from his conviction about the necessity of eventual freedom for blacks'.⁵¹ Some historians of the revisionist period even opposed the condemnation of Jefferson's perceptions on race. For instance, Fawn Brodie emphasised that Jefferson had claimed that black men were as brave as their white counterparts. Brodie affirmed that

⁴⁴ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.176 contains both quotes.

⁴⁵ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.213; W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.511.

⁴⁶ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, pp.521-523.

⁴⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.213; Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.516.

⁴⁸ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.525.

⁴⁹ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.214.

⁵⁰ McGarvie, "'In perfect accordance with his character'", in *Indiana Magazine of History*, p.158 contains the quote; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.212; Jordan, *White over Black*, pp.431-432.

⁵¹ Jordan, 'Hemings and Jefferson', in Lewis & Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*, p.44.

such contentions 'set him apart in his own time in Virginia as either radical or quixotic'.⁵² These qualifications were a welcome addition to a field that frequently risked neglecting the many external factors - including political pressures and economic circumstances - that prevented Jefferson acting against slavery.

The popularity of revisionism reached a new peak during the 1990s, as changes in the focus of historical scholarship further dented Jefferson's reputation. Primarily, the increasing importance placed on 'diverse gendered, ethnic, and racial points of view' in studies of the decade highlighted the flaws in Jefferson's egalitarian outlook.⁵³ Consequently, the second wave of critical commentaries were often more vicious than earlier polemics. Chief prosecutor for 1990s revisionists was Paul Finkelman, who concluded that Jefferson failed to live up to his reputation as a champion of liberty because his 'negrophobia was profound'.⁵⁴ In a 1993 lecture to fellow academics, Finkelman went further than previous revisionists by proclaiming that 'Jefferson was the intellectual godfather of the racist pseudo-science of the American school of anthropology'.⁵⁵ However, elements of the first revisionist phase remained. Jefferson was certainly widely censured for his inability to challenge slavery. For example, Gordon Wood contended that 'Jefferson loaded such conditions on the abolition of slavery that the antislavery movement could scarcely get off the ground' when writing in 1993.⁵⁶

The revisionist case was buttressed in 1998 when DNA evidence published in *Nature* magazine virtually confirmed that Jefferson had fathered at least one child - and possibly as many as six - by one of his slaves, Sally Hemings. Rumours of a relationship between Jefferson and Hemings dated back to 1802, when an article accusing the President of misconduct was published in the *Richmond Gazette* by the Scottish journalist James Thompson Callender. The reporter alleged that 'it was "well known" that Jefferson kept Sally, one of his slaves, as concubine and had fathered children by her'.⁵⁷ Several of Jefferson's slaves and some visitors to Monticello referred to the relationship in verbal and written accounts, while abolitionists before the American Civil War often utilised the claim

⁵² F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.158.

⁵³ R. Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia: 1740-1790* - 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.xxvi; J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf, 'Introduction', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.1.

⁵⁴ P. Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* - 2nd ed. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p.134.

⁵⁵ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.134; P. Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery: "Treason Against the Hopes of the World"', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.186.

⁵⁶ Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.40.

⁵⁷ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.465 contains the quote; Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.40; L. Stanton, 'Jefferson's People: Slavery at Monticello', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.91; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.170; Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.182; P. Nicolaisen, 'Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Question of Race: An Ongoing Debate', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (April 2003), p.99.

to demonstrate the moral depravity that slaveholding encouraged.⁵⁸ However, the charge was ignored by scholars for more than a century. Thus, Merrill Peterson could legitimately affirm that 'no serious student of Jefferson has ever declared his belief in it' when writing in the early 1960s. In fact, Peterson ascribed the rumour to 'the Negroes' pathetic wish for a little pride'.⁵⁹ In a bid to further exonerate Jefferson, Peterson patented the 'character defense'. For over two decades, this became a keystone in endeavours to refute Callender's claims. Peterson argued that 'unless Jefferson was capable of slipping badly out of character in hidden moments at Monticello, it is difficult to imagine him caught up in a miscegenous relationship'.⁶⁰

Scholars who lent credence to the Jefferson-Hemings relationship were heavily rebuked by their peers. Fawn Brodie was certainly widely criticised for drawing attention to the claims in her 1974 book, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History*.⁶¹ Accordingly, until the publication of *Nature's* findings the allegations enjoyed a greater reception amongst the public than the academic community.⁶² Indeed, more than 300,000 copies of Brodie's book were sold in the decade following its release, despite the fierce rebuke the author received from many scholars.⁶³ Similar success was enjoyed by Annette Gordon-Reed, whose *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (1997) called for greater emphasis to be placed on the testimony provided by Monticello's slaves and other circumstantial evidence, which seemingly demonstrated that a liaison had occurred between Jefferson and Hemings.⁶⁴ Unlike Brodie, though, Gordon-Reed's summary enjoyed positive reviews from academics as well as the public. In fact, following her intervention 'the resistance of many historians to the plausibility of a Jefferson-Hemings liaison seriously began to crumble'.⁶⁵

A torrent of criticism followed the confirmation of Jefferson's parentage of at least one of Hemings' children.⁶⁶ Few scholars now believe that Jefferson and Hemings shared in an equitable relationship, with some even suggesting that America's third President sexually exploited his labourer.⁶⁷ Conflicting views of the nature of the association were

⁵⁸ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.183.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.186 & 187.

⁶⁰ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.172.

⁶¹ R. Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), p.101; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.174.

⁶² Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.175-176.

⁶³ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.173; Nicolaisen, 'Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Question of Race', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.101.

⁶⁴ Lewis & Onuf, 'Introduction', in Lewis & Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*, p.9.

⁶⁵ G. Wood, 'The Ghosts of Monticello', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.27.

⁶⁶ P. S. Onuf, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.14.

⁶⁷ Nicolaisen, 'Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and the Question of Race', in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.104-105.

elucidated in Jan Lewis and Peter Onuf's *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (1999). First, Philip Morgan reached a neutral position by claiming: 'It makes little sense to assert that Jefferson raped Sally or that their relationship was the functional equivalent of a living marriage'.⁶⁸ By contrast, Clarence Walker ventured that Jefferson had abused his slave, declaring: 'what we do know about slavery and the sexual exploitation of black women under the system makes it easy to believe that the Hemings - Jefferson relationship was exploitative, with a powerful white man taking advantage of a powerless black female'.⁶⁹ Both views are legitimate, but largely unproveable due to the lack of documentation provided by either Jefferson or Hemings. Consequently, we are unlikely to ever uncover the true nature of Jefferson and Hemings' liaison. However, if we are to assume that Walker's position is correct, there is a risk that some of the agency that Hemings was able to exert over Jefferson - which enabled her to ensure that her children received their freedom in his will - is not granted full historical attention.⁷⁰

Whatever stance scholars have taken, there is little doubt that the Jefferson-Hemings revelation has occasioned a re-evaluation of Jefferson's conduct as a master. Prior to the 1990s, Jefferson had almost universally been depicted as 'the gentle master' for nearly two centuries, as generations of historians parroted the paternalist dialogue that planters cited in the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Perceptions surrounding ownership are arguably what separate revisionists of the 1960s and 1970s from recent critics. While early detractors tended to see Jefferson as a relatively benign master - despite his pursuit of runaways - later revisionists sought to demonstrate that America's third President 'was in most respects a typical slaveholder'.⁷² For instance, Paul Finkelman found that 'Jefferson remained strikingly unconcerned about slaves as individuals. He barely noticed those slaves who served him at home and in his fields and all too often became ready forms of capital to pay his debts'.⁷³ Furthermore, Gordon Wood established that Jefferson 'bought, bred, and flogged his slaves, and he hunted down fugitives in much the same way his fellow Virginia planters did'.⁷⁴ Equally, James Sidbury emphasised Jefferson's failure to stop the cruel

⁶⁸ P. D. Morgan, 'Interracial Sex in the Chesapeake and the British Atlantic World, c.1700-1820', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.75.

⁶⁹ C. Walker, "'Denial Is Not a River in Egypt'", in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.190.

⁷⁰ B. Fehn, 'Thomas Jefferson and Slaves: Teaching an American Paradox', in *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 14, No. 2, The Early Republic (Winter 2000), p.28; Onuf, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.14.

⁷¹ Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.288.

⁷² Wood, 'The Ghosts of Monticello', in Lewis & Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*, p.21.

⁷³ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.131.

⁷⁴ Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.40.

behaviour meted out by Monticello's overseers during his time away on national duty, while Phillip Schwarz averred that 'Jefferson was unquestionably capable of angrily asserting his rights when slaves claimed at least by their actions that they had customary rights that clashed with his'.⁷⁵ Nor have recent archaeological excavations been kind to Jefferson's reputation. For example, William Kelso found that 'poor sanitary conditions' were widespread at slave dwellings on Jefferson's Monticello estate.⁷⁶

Unsurprisingly, critical appraisals of Jefferson's stance on slavery have continued to dominate the historiographical landscape. Most recently, Henry Wiencek's *Master of the Mountain* (2012) affirmed that Jefferson's lack of abolitionist activism after the American Revolution meant that his only 'symbolic role' was 'to make slavery safe' in America's southern states.⁷⁷ In fact, Wiencek can be placed alongside Paul Finkelman as the fiercest critic in twenty-first century Jefferson scholarship. Accordingly, despite conceding that Jefferson was 'far in advance of his times' on slavery before the American Revolution, Wiencek postulated that the statesman eventually 'rationalized an abomination to the point where an absolute moral reversal was reached and he made slavery fit into America's national enterprise'.⁷⁸ Furthermore, by making his racial prejudice clear in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Wiencek alleged that 'Jefferson made himself the theorist and spokesman for the reactionaries'.⁷⁹

Wiencek and Finkelman are by no means the only contemporary scholars to entertain negative perspectives of Jefferson. For instance, Robert Forbes contrasts Jefferson's egalitarian avowals in the Declaration of Independence with his general inaction against slavery to conclude that America's third President was 'perhaps history's greatest hypocrite'.⁸⁰ Forbes has been equally scathing of academics who propound the 'emancipationist' line, accusing those who defend Jefferson of being 'conservative ideologues bent on whitewashing the reputations of the Founders'.⁸¹

The pre-eminence of revisionist portrayals has been increasingly reflected in popular perceptions of Jefferson. In 2003, governors from Thomas Jefferson Elementary

⁷⁵ J. Sidbury, 'Thomas Jefferson in Gabriel's Virginia', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), pp.202-203; P. J. Schwarz, 'Jefferson and the Wolf: The Sage of Monticello Confronts the Law of Slavery', in *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer 1994), p.19.

⁷⁶ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.223.

⁷⁷ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.275.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.11 & 28.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.49.

⁸⁰ R. P. Forbes, 'Secular Damnation: Thomas Jefferson and the Imperative of Race', *Torrington Articles*, Vol. 3 (2012), accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/torr_articles/3, p.1; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.141; A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.414; Lewis & Onuf, 'Introduction', in Lewis & Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*, p.1.

⁸¹ Forbes, 'Secular Damnation', *Torrington Articles*, pp.1-2.

School in California wrote to parents proposing a change to the establishment's name. The school explained that 'For some of our staff, it has become increasingly uncomfortable to work at a site whose name honors a slaveholder'. Overall, board members concluded that 'A school name which fails to acknowledge or respect the depth and importance of their people's collective sorrow is personally offensive'. Although the endeavours were narrowly defeated, the incident illustrated the way in which Jefferson's legacy polarised opinion.⁸² This was further evidenced in February 2017, when a Jefferson statue at the William and Mary College in Virginia was defaced, with the words 'slave owner' and 'racist' being dubbed on the memorial.⁸³

Despite this negative coverage, emancipationist portrayals have not disappeared from Jefferson biography. Recent Jefferson advocates have generally utilised two arguments to defend their subject. First, Douglas Wilson accused critics of 'presentism' when evaluating Jefferson in an article published for *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1992. Subsequent emancipationists have seized on this position to censure revisionists for viewing their subject's statements and conduct through the prism of the twenty-first century.⁸⁴ Such accusations are sometimes merited. Consequently, Jefferson's backers have responded to attacks on their subject by emphasising that his racial perspectives were commonly held in the eighteenth century. In fact, Sunand Joshi postulated that Jefferson 'was unusual in keeping even a partially open mind on the subject' of African-American intellect.⁸⁵

Writing in 2008, Erik Root articulated another emancipationist contention when he averred that Jefferson and other Virginian statesmen were being prudent when not acting against the institution, for doing so would have decreased their political influence.⁸⁶ To buttress his case, Root declared that Jefferson never made 'any *positive* gesture toward the peculiar institution' during his life.⁸⁷ Root is not alone in maintaining this view. In 1993, J. D. Greenstone found that 'Jefferson's emphasis on compromise' was 'important' in the eventual decline of his anti-slavery ideals.⁸⁸ The following chapters show that there is merit

⁸² Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.199.

⁸³ D. Ernst, 'Thomas Jefferson Statue at William & Mary Vandalized with fake blood: "Slave owner"', *The Washington Times*, Monday 13 February 2017, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/13/thomas-jefferson-statue-vandalized-at-william-mary/>.

⁸⁴ A. Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.103; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.207.

⁸⁵ S. T. Joshi (ed.), *Documents of American Prejudice: An Anthology of Writings on Race from Thomas Jefferson to David Duke* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p.261.

⁸⁶ E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p.7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁸⁸ J. D. Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.108.

to this view, for it is undeniable that support for slavery remained intact amongst a large section of the public throughout Jefferson's life. Nonetheless, opportunities to challenge the institution existed and Jefferson was rarely willing to take them.

Nor has the public response to Jefferson's fading reputation amongst the academic community been wholly negative. This can be seen in the popular reaction to the Jefferson-Hemings liaison. Whereas historians have queued up to castigate Jefferson since 1998, the public reaction has generally been more measured. Indeed, Peter Onuf argues that 'If anything, Jefferson's stock rebounded' after the relationship was confirmed, for 'Jefferson as lover - no matter how unequal the lovers' power - is a more sympathetic character than Jefferson the owner and exploiter of his fellow human beings'.⁸⁹

Perhaps the greatest difference between emancipationists and revisionists can be discerned in the importance the two groups place on Jefferson's statements and actions. While advocates have always praised Jefferson for vehemently attacking slavery in his writings, critics have been more inclined to focus on his failure to emancipate more than a handful of his slaves or challenge the institution during his Presidency. Consequently, they argue that 'Jefferson's actions speak louder than his words; indeed, they drown out his words in a deafening crash of bad faith, broken promises, and racism'.⁹⁰ These rifts have widened over time, leading to increasingly polarised - often disproportionate - stances being assumed by those on both sides of the divide. Such a situation does little to aid our understanding of Jefferson or the forces that made him think and act in the way he did.

With this imbalance in mind, a much-needed third category of historiography has emerged since the 1970s. So-called 'contextualizers' - while refuting the anti-slavery Jefferson portrayed by early biographers - dismiss suggestions that Jefferson completely failed to challenge slavery.⁹¹ Writing in 1976, Robert Shallhope gave vent to the frustrations of this new breed of researcher when he observed that Jefferson had 'not been immune to the tendency among historians to create a single and substantial "reality" in the period they are studying and then to judge individuals, groups, or movements by that standard'.⁹² Consequently, when 'measured by one historian's conception Jefferson was a great liberal statesman, whereas by another's he was an opportunistic hypocrite'.⁹³

William Freehling first articulated the counter-revisionist view in 1972. Freehling asserted that 'The new charge that the Founding Fathers did next to nothing about

⁸⁹ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.270 quotes Onuf.

⁹⁰ Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.104.

⁹¹ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.216-221 discusses 'contextualizers' and contextualist historiography.

⁹² R. Shallhope, 'Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought', in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Nov., 1976), p.529.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

bondage is as misleading as the older notion that they almost did everything'.⁹⁴ Thus, while making no excuses for Virginian statesmen's failure to manumit their labourers, Freehling credited Jefferson and his fellow Founding Fathers with bequeathing 'to posterity a crippled, restricted, peculiar institution'.⁹⁵ Therefore, rather than castigating Jefferson for failing to live up to the ideals of the Revolution, Freehling placed his subject in the role of 'the pragmatic statesman, practicing government as the art of the possible'.⁹⁶ Such a position is not far removed from that assumed by current emancipationists like Erik Root.

As well as providing a middle ground between the emancipationist and revisionist camps, contextualists used the mantra 'Today, makes yesterday mean' to call for Jefferson's views to be placed in their correct setting.⁹⁷ Accordingly, recent contextualist works have appealed for studies of Jefferson to be less emotive in their judgements. This request is best elucidated by Andrew Burstein, who queries: 'must we judge Thomas Jefferson entirely on whether he was, ultimately, as munificent as the most susceptible, most compassionate southerner? Must he be all racist or all liberator?'⁹⁸ Consequently, a key aim of this thesis is to achieve the contextualist ambition and produce a review that does not enforce twenty-first century standards onto the Jeffersonian era.

Twenty-first century contextualists have tended to be kinder to Jefferson than their revisionist peers but less forgiving than emancipationists. For example, Joseph Ellis presented Jefferson's transition on slavery as being one 'from an advocate of emancipation to a silent and fatalistic procrastinator' rather than a promoter of the system.⁹⁹ Adam Rothman articulated many aspects of the contemporary contextualist position when - in a meeting of Jefferson scholars in 2007 - he acknowledged that 'Jefferson was a pioneering critic of slavery and deserves credit for his eloquent condemnations of the institution ... But he must also be held to account for adding insult to injury through his equally pioneering articulation of racist ideas and policies'.¹⁰⁰

In addition to providing a balanced voice to the arguments surrounding Jefferson, contextualist productions have added important new dimensions to evaluations of the statesman. For instance, Ari Helo has persuasively suggested that Jefferson's complex political and ethical ideologies enabled him to 'claim ... consistency in his advocacy of

⁹⁴ W. W. Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Feb., 1972), p.82; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.217 & 223. Cogliano surveys Freehling's work in depth on p.223.

⁹⁵ Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.91.

⁹⁶ Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.86; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.168.

⁹⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.207; D. L. Wilson, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Character Issue', *The Atlantic Online*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96oct/obrien/charactr.htm>.

⁹⁸ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.221 details Burstein's critique.

⁹⁹ J. J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), p.106.

¹⁰⁰ Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.104.

democracy and the rights of man while remaining throughout his life, one of the largest slaveholders in Virginia'.¹⁰¹ Helo avers that Jefferson's faith in 'human progress' governed his approach to slavery, for the statesman felt that meaningful change could only be achieved through political and societal reform, rather than individual action.¹⁰² In this interpretation, Jefferson was a reactive agent who maintained his own objectives with regard to abolition, but accepted that these were unobtainable until public perceptions had changed.¹⁰³ This conviction that leaders should only support an action when it had obtained communal approval was particularly obvious with Jefferson's colonization plan, which was effectively shelved because he 'never found a white majority in Virginia to act on it'.¹⁰⁴ When inspected closely, Helo demonstrated, Jefferson's political views explained his reluctance to ask the national Government to act against slavery late in his life. Jefferson always subscribed to the view that only individual states should be granted the power to alter their constitutions when the public demanded change. Thus, in his mind, national politicians did not have the right to dictate what was permissible in specific states. This led him to criticise northern Congressmen for trying to prevent slavery expanding into Missouri in 1820.¹⁰⁵

Helo's work built on a ground-breaking evaluation produced by Woody Holton in 1999. In his *Forced Founders*, Holton challenged prevailing views that Virginia's elites at the time of the American Revolution had been 'a confident and powerful' class who persuaded their subjects to support their drive for independence.¹⁰⁶ Instead, Holton postulated that 'From 1763 to 1776, Indians, merchants, slaves, and debtors helped propel free Virginians into the Independence movement'.¹⁰⁷ Holton's findings matched those propounded by some Jefferson scholars. For instance, John Saillant hypothesized that 'A reading of the vast corpus of Jefferson's private writings reveals not a confident statesman, but a public figure who manipulated a serene rhetoric of common sense and of sentiment as an instrument to instill [*sic*] social unity in an audience he was less and less able to comprehend'.¹⁰⁸ Such assertions have much to recommend. In fact, the following analysis agrees with scholars who challenge the notion that Jefferson and fellow elites were leaders in setting the public

¹⁰¹ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.98.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.169-170.

¹⁰⁶ T. Estes, 'Reviewed Work: *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* by Woody Holton', in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (Fall 2000), p.206.

¹⁰⁷ W. Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp.xvii-xviii.

¹⁰⁸ J. Saillant, 'The American Enlightenment in Africa: Jefferson's Colonizationism and Black Virginians' Migration to Liberia, 1776-1840', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Spring 1998), p.263.

agenda. With regard to slavery, for example, small and middle-ranking planters made clear to Virginian lawmakers that their right to hold property was more important than African-Americans' right to freedom in 1785.¹⁰⁹ However, this perspective has limitations. Principally, critics legitimately argue that the notion that Jefferson was only prevented from acting against slavery by popular hostility towards abolition allows him to get away with failing to deal with his private ownership of slaves. Equally, it is true that Jefferson displayed no concern for majority opinion when pressing for changes that he truly believed in, such as religious liberty.¹¹⁰

Despite this variety of interpretations, academics of all stances have concluded that Jefferson possessed perspectives that reflected those of his peers. Winthrop Jordan was a leading figure in the development of this trend. In *White over Black*, Jordan asserted that Jefferson was the 'one man' in whom historians could 'glimpse the interactions among deep emotions, intellectual constructs, long-accumulated traditions concerning the Negro, and the social problem of slavery in a free society'.¹¹¹ Writing four years after *White over Black's* release, William Freehling echoed this stance when he claimed that Jefferson's inability to challenge slavery meant that he 'spoke for his age'.¹¹² Likewise, Robert Shallhope concluded that 'To understand how Jefferson perceived antebellum American society is, perhaps, to recognize how an ever-increasing number of southerners came to view their circumstances'.¹¹³ The emancipationist historian Noble Cunningham re-enforced this belief in the 1980s when he conceded that 'Jefferson was much the product of his age in his views on race'.¹¹⁴ Equally, late twentieth century revisionist Paul Finkelman surmised that Jefferson's treatment of his slaves was akin to that of 'an ordinary southern gentleman and master'.¹¹⁵ Comparable sentiments were voiced by Gordon Wood, who thought that 'The human Jefferson was essentially a man of the 18th century, a very intelligent and bookish slaveholding southern planter'.¹¹⁶ More recently, Eva Sheppard Wolf postulated that 'Jefferson also typified the Virginia political elite in his cautious approach to antislavery legislation'.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Inhabitants: Petition, Accomack County, 1782-06-03, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹¹⁰ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.197.

¹¹¹ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.xii.

¹¹² Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.82.

¹¹³ Shallhope, 'Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism', in *The Journal of Southern History*, p.556.

¹¹⁴ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.206.

¹¹⁵ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.186.

¹¹⁶ Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, p.41.

¹¹⁷ E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.14.

Jefferson's statements in *Notes on Virginia* have assumed a particularly important place in scholarly appraisals of Old Dominion. Lacy Ford contends that *Notes* 'contained almost all of the criticisms of slavery that reverberated throughout the upper South for the next fifty years'.¹¹⁸ The following chapters challenge this conviction. Indeed, a core argument of this thesis is that historians gain little from blithely maintaining that Jefferson was an accurate gauge of wider Virginian perceptions. This is because popular views were often heavily influenced by time and local events and were, accordingly, far more nuanced than such arguments suggest.

'Founders' Chic': Virginian Statesmen and Slavery in the New Republic¹¹⁹

The debates surrounding Jefferson's relationship with slavery have formed part of a wider discourse concerning the role that America's 'Founding Fathers' had in either challenging or acquiescing in the survival of slavery in the years following the American Revolution. Since the mid-1800s, broader assessments of Virginia's leaders have oscillated 'between idolization and evisceration'.¹²⁰ Thus, Richard Bernstein demonstrates that America's Revolutionary generation have generally been viewed as either 'demigods or demons' by academics.¹²¹

There are numerous debates surrounding the Founding Fathers' association with slavery. Foremost amongst these are questions about the extent to which eminent characters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries helped the Virginian anti-slavery cause. As with Jefferson, observations on the topic can be placed into three categories. First, countless scholars have praised the abolitionist actions and statements of politicians in post-Revolutionary Virginia. In fact, William Freehling affirmed that 'no man needed to defend the Founding Fathers on slavery' until the 1960s.¹²² Accordingly, James Curtis Ballagh's suggestion that Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison and Patrick Henry 'wished to see the abolition of slavery' went almost unchallenged in early historiography.¹²³

¹¹⁸ L. Ford, 'Reconfiguring the Old South: "Solving" the Problem of Slavery, 1787-1838', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (June 2008), p.99.

¹¹⁹ The growth of 'Founders' Chic' - the study of America's Founding Fathers - is described in Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.8.

¹²⁰ J. J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (London: Faber, 2005), p.xi.

¹²¹ Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.x; J. J. Ellis, 'Introduction', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.3.

¹²² Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.81.

¹²³ Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia*, pp.129-130. See p.130 for the quote.

Nevertheless, slavery has proved an increasingly valuable tool for those seeking to attack Virginian statesmen of the post-1776 epoch. In fact, 'The contrast between ideals and practice' that the ownership of bondsmen engendered 'has amused the Revolution's enemies and embarrassed many of its friends for two hundred years'.¹²⁴ As with Jefferson, such denigration was amplified by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. During the sixties, contemporary battles for racial equality meant that issues like slavery and race could 'no longer be treated as peripheral matters' when evaluating the lives of historical figures.¹²⁵ Accordingly, in 1964 Robert McColley claimed that the refusal of Virginia's statesmen to publicly challenge the system 'cast doubt on' the 'sincerity' of their 'antislavery pronouncements'.¹²⁶ McColley's findings were buttressed to a limited extent by William Freehling, who felt that 'The financial cost of abolition ... was made too staggering to bear by the Founding Fathers' racism'.¹²⁷

Analysis of the Founding Fathers' connection with slavery has increased over the past two decades as a consequence of a wider boom in biographical studies of the American Revolution's protagonists, known as 'Founders' Chic'.¹²⁸ It is perhaps unsurprising that the reputation of America's earliest leaders has largely followed that of Thomas Jefferson and been negatively affected by the emphasis placed on gender and race in studies since the 1990s. Indeed, having often been praised for their forward thinking, the Revolutionary generation now find themselves the topic of negative appraisal because of their 'lack of foresight and humanity'.¹²⁹ Consequently, Joseph Ellis spoke for many when, in 2002, he asserted that the Founders' 'dominant legacy' with slavery 'was avoidance and silence'.¹³⁰ The Fathers' perspectives on race have also been hotly contested. Recent evaluations have frequently criticised the prejudice of Revolutionary-era Virginian statesmen. Roger Wilkins certainly contended that the politicians 'helped to institutionalize' a 'deep legacy of racism', while Anthony Iaccharino claims that the 'southern Founders' possessed a 'deep-seated racial prejudice'.¹³¹

However, not all twenty-first century evaluations of Virginia's leaders are negative. Over the last fifteen years a counter-revisionist view has gradually emerged. For instance,

¹²⁴ R. Brookhiser, *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington* (London: Free Press, 1996), p.177.

¹²⁵ See Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.xiii for the quote; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.7 & 200; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, pp.133 & 140-141.

¹²⁶ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.124 holds the quotes; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.211.

¹²⁷ Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.83.

¹²⁸ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.8; Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.138.

¹²⁹ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, pp.640-641.

¹³⁰ Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.241.

¹³¹ Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow*, p.139; A. Iaccharino, 'A Closer Look: The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), pp.66-67.

Erik Root used his 2008 publication, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, to assert that Virginia's post-Revolutionary statesmen 'were in basic agreement on one thing: slavery must come to an end sooner rather than later, and all believed the institution an evil'.¹³² Repeating an argument commonly made by early Jefferson emancipationists, Root affirmed that historians should not 'apply the principles we claim for ourselves to others'. Overall, Root felt that 'the Founders had to account for the various prejudices of the day' and, consequently, were required 'to make concessions to the conventional wisdom of the time'.¹³³ Thus, the failure of anti-slavery forces to oversee the eradication of the system was not the fault of Virginian leaders, who consistently conceded that 'Slavery was not just and it was unnatural for Negroes to be held in bondage' in private.¹³⁴

Furthermore, it would be a mistake to believe that all of Virginia's leaders have been subjected to the same degree of opprobrium as Jefferson. In fact, some have benefitted from not receiving the extraordinary amount of attention that scholars have placed on Jefferson. For instance, academics have often painted George Washington as an opponent of slavery. In his *Founding Fathers Reconsidered* (2009), Richard Bernstein expertly demonstrated that Washington's reputation amongst historians has 'remained consistently high' over the last two centuries. By contrast, Jefferson's standing has 'risen and fallen almost in complementary historical cycles' with that of the New England statesman Alexander Hamilton.¹³⁵

Washington often receives praise for freeing all his bondsmen in his will. Positive appraisals of Washington's decision emerged quickly following his death in 1799. These have formed the basis for 'an abolitionist interpretation' which has remained a popular facet of Washington historiography.¹³⁶ Thus, Roger Wilkins - who is generally critical of Virginia's post-Revolutionary leaders - postulated that, by releasing his labourers, Washington sent 'a powerful message of disapproval of slavery down through the generations'.¹³⁷ Wilkins is not alone. For example, Fritz Hirschfeld thought that the manumission confirmed 'to the world that George Washington stood squarely on the side of emancipation'.¹³⁸

Further aspects of Washington's record are commended. First, the development of his antagonism towards the system is celebrated by historians. Prior to the American

¹³² Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.9.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.27 contains the first quote. See p.52 for the other quotes.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.225.

¹³⁵ Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.116.

¹³⁶ F. Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2006), p.83.

¹³⁷ Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow*, p.137.

¹³⁸ F. Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), p.6.

Revolution, most evidence suggests that Washington did not oppose slavery. However, advocates believe that this stance 'evolved gradually over the years', leading to the 1799 emancipation.¹³⁹ Consequently, Hirschfeld postulated that Washington turned 'from a conventional slaveholder to a lukewarm abolitionist' during his life.¹⁴⁰ Equally, Paul Finkelman praised the General for developing into one of 'The few southerners who genuinely opposed slavery'.¹⁴¹

Additionally, leading Jefferson revisionist Henry Wiencek singles out Washington's opinions on race for special praise. Wiencek contends that Washington's perception of African-Americans changed dramatically in 1775 and 1776, when he agreed to allow free black men to serve in American forces and praised the black poet Phyllis Wheatley.¹⁴² In fact, Wiencek contrasted Washington's support for Wheatley with the 'dripping contempt' Jefferson exhibited towards her in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.¹⁴³ Fritz Hirschfeld concurred with these findings. Hirschfeld commended Washington for agreeing to lead regiments of free African-Americans in the War of Independence. Hirschfeld felt that undertaking this act represented 'a significant and irrevocable step on the long and difficult road to racial equality' and confirmed Washington's 'ability to rise above certain inborn and ingrained prejudices'.¹⁴⁴

Scholars have generally agreed with Wiencek and concluded that Washington's record on race compared favourably with Jefferson's. For instance, in his analysis of the *Founding Brothers*, Joseph Ellis postulates that Washington should be considered in advance of Jefferson, for he refused to 'embrace the racial arguments for black inferiority that Jefferson advanced in *Notes on the State of Virginia*'.¹⁴⁵ James Thomas Flexner made a similar assessment in *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (1976), claiming: 'Never in all his writings did Washington express even by implication agreement with the belief of Jefferson and many other southern leaders that the blacks were racially inferior'.¹⁴⁶ Finally, despite conceding that Washington 'never had a high opinion of blacks', Phillip Morgan postulated that 'In an irony of ironies, the rock-solid realist of Mount Vernon was more visionary than the idealistic dreamer of Monticello' when it came to race.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁹ W. M. S. Rasmussen & R. S. Tilton, *George Washington: The Man Behind the Myths* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.200; Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.259.

¹⁴⁰ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.3.

¹⁴¹ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.115.

¹⁴² H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: Macmillan, 2004), p.214.

¹⁴³ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.213 contains the quote; Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.134 asserts similar.

¹⁴⁴ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, pp.151 & 152.

¹⁴⁵ Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.158.

¹⁴⁶ J. T. Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (London: Collins, 1976), p.387.

¹⁴⁷ P. D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery", in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Dec., 2005), p.425.

Many appraisals of Washington's conduct as a master have also been positive. For instance, William Rasmussen and Robert Tilton utilise comments made by visitors to Mount Vernon to suggest that Washington's bondsmen 'were evidently managed with some degree of decency'.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Richard Brookhiser claims that the way Washington ran his estate 'was as good as such things went'.¹⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Joseph Ellis and Phillip Schwarz found that, from the 1780s onwards, Washington became a 'mellower' master who 'chose to make the maintenance of slave families at Mount Vernon a higher priority than profit'.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, Mary Thompson's investigations revealed that Washington bucked wider trends by permitting his labourers to get married, while the archaeological finds of Dennis Pogue illustrate that bondsmen at Mount Vernon received a greater variety of food than those on many plantations.¹⁵¹

With these factors in mind, it is unsurprising that Washington has generally been favourably contrasted with other Founders. Indeed, Paul Finkelman concluded that America's first President's 'opposition to the institution stands out, especially when he is compared to Jefferson'.¹⁵² Likewise, Kenneth Morgan applauded Washington for being 'the only Founding Father to make legal arrangements to free all of his slaves' and Joseph Ellis praised him for being 'one of the few members of the aristocratic class in Virginia who held any views favorable to the eventual integration of the races in the United States'.¹⁵³ Henry Wiencek even suggests that we should 'judge Washington's peers by Washington's standards' when discussing whether the Founding Fathers could have abolished slavery throughout America.¹⁵⁴

Nonetheless, Washington has received criticism for aspects of his opinions and conduct. For example, a growing body of appraisals have condemned him for only liberating his bondsmen following his death. By doing so, they postulate that 'the social consequences of freedom would not be witnessed' by him.¹⁵⁵ Further, in a 2001 collection concerning *Slavery at Mount Vernon*, J. B. Lee concluded that Washington's decision to

¹⁴⁸ Rasmussen & Tilton, *George Washington*, p.199; K. Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), p.285.

¹⁴⁹ Brookhiser, *Founding Father*, p.181.

¹⁵⁰ Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.167 holds both quotes; P. J. Schwarz, 'Introduction', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.4.

¹⁵¹ M. V. Thompson, "'They Appear to Live Comfortable Together": Private Lives of the Mount Vernon Slaves', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.80; D. J. Pogue, 'Slave Lifeways at Mount Vernon', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.125.

¹⁵² Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.116.

¹⁵³ Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.301; Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.158; Flexner, *Washington*, p.385.

¹⁵⁴ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.174.

¹⁵⁵ Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.300 contains the quote; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.8.

manumit his labourers 'was not a joyful act'. Indeed, Lee alleged that the former General had only 'freed his slaves because he did not know what else to do with Mount Vernon's burgeoning black population'.¹⁵⁶ Even sympathetic historians comment on Washington's early resistance to emancipation. Accordingly, James Flexner wrote that Washington 'accepted the institution without question' during 'his young manhood'.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, Francois Furstenburg thought that Washington had 'displayed a callousness toward slavery typical of most eighteenth-century planters' prior to the American Revolution.¹⁵⁸ Fritz Hirschfeld agrees that 'Washington had shown few visible qualms about the institution of slavery' before 1776. In fact, the General 'conformed in most respects with the slaveholding practices of his period and region' until the 1780s.¹⁵⁹ Hirschfeld's analysis differed further from most positive portrayals by stressing that Washington 'could have done much more during his lifetime to bring about the emancipation of slaves, had he wanted to'.¹⁶⁰

An emerging area of criticism has been Washington's daily treatment of his workforce. For example, Roger Wilkins asserts that Washington 'saw first property and then human beings' when dealing with his slaves.¹⁶¹ Likewise, Henry Wiencek found that the General's bondsmen were 'miserably clothed' and that more than half of the married couples at Mount Vernon were forced to live apart due to the diversity of tasks Washington set his labourers.¹⁶² Kenneth Morgan also affirms that Washington spent little money on clothing his workforce 'and only provided them with just enough food'.¹⁶³ Finally, Lorena Walsh condemned Washington for forcing handicapped African-Americans to undertake everyday jobs like knitting and 'doggedly' pursuing 'slaves who ran away'.¹⁶⁴

Nor have favourable accounts of Washington's perspectives on race gone completely unchallenged. For instance, John Ferling found that prior to the American Revolution the General had been 'typical of his time. He was a racist'.¹⁶⁵ Comparably, Rasmussen and Tilton criticise Washington for viewing his bondsmen with 'crass

¹⁵⁶ J. B. Lee, 'Mount Vernon Plantation: A Model for the Republic', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.38.

¹⁵⁷ Flexner, *Washington*, p.386; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.133.

¹⁵⁸ Furstenburg, *In the Name of the Father*, p.83.

¹⁵⁹ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁶¹ Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow*, p.76.

¹⁶² Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, pp.121 & 124.

¹⁶³ Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.286-287. See p.287 for the quote.

¹⁶⁴ L. S. Walsh, 'Slavery and Agriculture at Mount Vernon', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.70.

¹⁶⁵ J. E. Ferling, *The First of Men: A Life of George Washington* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), p.68.

insensitivity'.¹⁶⁶ Fritz Hirschfeld, too, found that Washington and his wife, Martha, possessed 'deep-seated racial prejudices', while Wiencek even conceded that 'Washington vastly underestimated the intelligence of the slaves'.¹⁶⁷

Such scholarship has undoubtedly bolstered our understanding of Washington, who until recently had received far less attention amongst the historical community than Jefferson. Yet some of these studies fall into the traps that have hindered Jefferson studies. For instance, many investigations of Washington fail to fully acknowledge the context of the era. Thus, those who criticise him for his earlier racial views or the treatment of workers do little to situate the General amongst his peers. Much of the praise heaped upon Washington is similarly exaggerated. Emancipating his slaves following his death certainly appears less of an anti-slavery statement when compared with the actions of Robert Carter, who freed 509 slaves in 1791 and lived with widespread criticism of his actions afterwards. Accordingly, chapters one and two of this thesis aid attempts to contextualise Washington, as well as Jefferson.¹⁶⁸

Appraisals of James Madison have been comparably mixed but generally more positive than those of Jefferson. Madison has received striking praise from Roger Wilkins, who proclaimed that the Orange County slaveholder's 'innate sensibility about slavery was closer to that of the Quaker abolitionists than was the thinking of any of the other three members of this Virginia quartet' of Madison, Jefferson, Washington and George Mason.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, Ralph Ketcham affirmed that Madison's certainty of slavery's 'immorality, and its incongruity in a nation resting on the Declaration of Independence ... never slackened'.¹⁷⁰ Overall, Ketcham viewed Madison as an authentic opponent of slavery and grouped him alongside Jefferson, Washington and Mason as someone who 'abhorred the institution of slavery and sought to have as little as possible to do with it'.¹⁷¹ Madison's actions as an owner have received comparable praise. For example, Kenneth Clark - although critical of Madison for failing to emancipate his bondsmen - acknowledges that the statesman did everything possible to diminish slavery's 'degradations and harshness' on his own plantation.¹⁷² Likewise, Ketcham felt that field hands at Madison's Montpelier

¹⁶⁶ Rasmussen & Tilton, *George Washington*, p.9.

¹⁶⁷ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.65; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.316.

¹⁶⁸ A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), p.xvii.

¹⁶⁹ Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow*, pp.131-132.

¹⁷⁰ R. Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.625.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁷² K. M. Clark, 'James Madison and Slavery', *The James Madison Museum - Orange, Virginia. James Madison Information, Exhibits and Displays*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.jamesmadisonmuseum.org/slavery.html>.

home 'received attention in the best rather than the worst tradition of the colonial South'.¹⁷³

However, other historians have assumed a more moderate stance. Drew McCoy undoubtedly contends that 'On the level of principle ... Madison's antislavery credentials can be fairly described as impeccable'.¹⁷⁴ On race, moreover, McCoy thought Madison had a better record than Jefferson. In particular, the biographer emphasised that Madison 'never voiced any personal concern about "amalgamation"'.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, McCoy still expressed his 'disappointment' at Madison's lack of action against slavery in both the public and private sphere.¹⁷⁶ In their evaluation of *Jefferson and Madison* (2010), Andrew Burstein and Nancy Isenberg also reached a more critical conclusion, postulating that Madison 'evidenced no greater discomfort with slavery than Jefferson did'. Consequently, Burstein and Isenberg affirmed that 'By modern standards, or even mid-nineteenth-century standards, Madison and Jefferson did not do nearly enough to relieve suffering and extend rights'.¹⁷⁷ The biographers argue that Madison's reputation has benefited from the fact that he has not been 'examined under the sharp lens that history has focused on Jefferson'. If Madison's legacy was afforded greater scrutiny, they claim, scholars would find that he 'held on to many of the prejudices that limited Jefferson's imagination and that persisted across the South'.¹⁷⁸ The following analysis buttresses this impression and adds to Burstein and Isenberg's thesis by providing a broad context in which Madison's stance can be situated.

Furthermore, other surveys have refuted Madison's anti-slavery reputation. For instance, in a 1921 article for *The Journal of Negro History*, it was claimed that Madison could not be considered 'an abolitionist for the reason that he found it difficult to remove the Negroes from the country when freed'.¹⁷⁹ More recently, Richard Matthews advanced that, although 'Madison "always abhorred the institution of slavery"', he placed his and other white Virginians' property rights above the liberty of African-Americans.¹⁸⁰ Equally, Paul Finkelman's opinion of Madison was not as complimentary as his perspective on Washington. Despite stating that both Madison and James Monroe were 'less negrophobic'

¹⁷³ Ketcham, *James Madison*, pp.12 & 374. See p.12 for the quote.

¹⁷⁴ D. R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.260.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.278.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.265.

¹⁷⁷ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, pp.26 & 125.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.200.

¹⁷⁹ J. Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1921), p.75.

¹⁸⁰ S. J. Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher: James Madison, Republicanism, and Slavery* (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2008), p.111 provides the Matthews example.

than Jefferson, Finkelman still found that ‘they certainly never gave any support to opponents of slavery or supporters of black rights’.¹⁸¹

Slavery and Prejudice in Post-Revolutionary Virginia: Impenetrable Forces?

Finally, there are several controversies to consider when producing a project about the themes of slavery and race in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Virginia. Primarily, much has been written about the strength of the institution at the time of the American Revolution. This includes debates over whether abolition was ever possible in Virginia. Initial publications created the ‘progressive’ view that ‘a broad humanitarian desire for emancipation’ existed in the Upper South from the Revolution until the invention of Eli Whitney’s cotton gin in 1793.¹⁸² James Curtis Ballagh produced a classic ‘progressive’ text in the early twentieth century. Ballagh postulated that the abolitionist cause had ‘gained ground constantly from 1790 to 1830’.¹⁸³ Indeed, Ballagh found little reason to be critical of Virginia’s transformation into a proslavery state after 1830, instead concluding that the decline of anti-slavery sentiment in Old Dominion could be ascribed to the ‘jealousy of outside interference’.¹⁸⁴

Ballagh was equally complimentary about the treatment meted out by Virginian masters, noting that slaves were only sold ‘when they were unruly or worthless’ or when their owners were unable to provide sufficient material support. Moreover, he found that ‘Many a slave passed through life without ever having had a blow from master or overseer’.¹⁸⁵ Ballagh was not alone in this belief. In fact, for almost a century following the conclusion of the American Civil War, the prevalent Antebellum view that Virginian slaves were mildly treated in comparison with labourers in other nations remained the norm in scholarly appraisals.¹⁸⁶ Although informative works, the productions of Ballagh and other early twentieth-century scholars like Ulrich B. Phillips suffered from the amount of

¹⁸¹ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.126.

¹⁸² McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, pp.2 & 4. The first quote appears on p.4, the second is on p.2; Freehling, ‘The Founding Fathers and Slavery’, in *The American Historical Review*, p.81; Malone, ‘Mr. Jefferson and the Traditions of Virginia’, in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.137.

¹⁸³ Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia*, p.26.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.130.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.98-99.

¹⁸⁶ J. Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), pp.12-14.

emphasis they placed on the word of slaveholders. Indeed, Mark Smith argues that even early revisionist works tended to over-analyse the testimony of planters.¹⁸⁷

However, the situation changed from the start of the 1960s, with scholars granting greater attention to a series of 'slave narratives' - originally recorded four decades earlier - and autobiographies. The added emphasis placed on slave accounts demonstrated both the crueller aspects of slavery and the limitations of the abolitionist cause.¹⁸⁸ In contrast to the 'progressive' view, revisionist works began emphasizing that the Virginian anti-slavery movement was never particularly strong at any time. Robert McColley's *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* (1964) represented the onset of a sea-change in portrayals. In the introduction to his work, McColley stated that previous scholarship had incorrectly depicted the era as an opportunity to end slavery throughout America. Instead, McColley found that 'The years of slavery's supposed decline were in fact the years of its greatest expansion'.¹⁸⁹ Much of the problem, McColley thought, was that although 'Jefferson and his contemporaries may have set down great maxims of liberty', they were guilty of accepting 'doctrines of racism'.¹⁹⁰ More controversially, the revisionist asserted that 'neither Deists, nor Methodists, nor any other group of dissenters seriously challenged the basic institutions of Virginia'. To buttress his conjecture, McColley illustrated that most emancipators - as opposed to liberating all their labourers - were only inclined to free favoured slaves.¹⁹¹

Later revisionists reached similar conclusions to McColley. Despite conceding that 'There can be no question that by the 1760s many sensitive Virginians ... regarded Negro slavery with the deepest moral repugnance', David Brion Davis - writing in 1975 - buttressed the growing belief 'that the "southern antislavery movement" was more apparent than real' in Virginia.¹⁹² Davis and other revisionists also refuted earlier claims that the system was economically unstable in the aftermath of the American Revolution by highlighting the thriving, capitalist nature of slavery throughout the epoch.¹⁹³ In particular, research suggested that so-called 'Middling slaveowners' - those possessing between five and twenty labourers - had far more in common with the elite planter class than they did

¹⁸⁷ M. Smith, *Debating Slavery: Economy and Society in the Antebellum American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.19.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.20.

¹⁸⁹ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.3.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.37 contains the quote. Page 143 discusses manumission trends.

¹⁹² Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, pp.169 & 210.

¹⁹³ Smith, *Debating Slavery*, pp.22 & 26.

non-slaveholding farmers. This discovery showed that slavery was far stronger than had previously been thought.¹⁹⁴

Revisionists placed great emphasis on the apparent lack of enthusiasm for abolition amongst the lower echelons of Virginian society. For example, James Oakes averred that proposals 'for gradual emancipation in southern law failed because of popular opposition' in 1983.¹⁹⁵ More recently, Richard Bernstein has proclaimed that 'a widespread but mild antislavery sentiment failed to overcome a tough-minded, determined resistance by those with a vested interest at stake in the institution', while Matthew Mason found 'that the Revolution nourished only the most ineffectual profession of antislavery sentiment in most white Southerners'.¹⁹⁶ Michael McDonnell took a more extreme position in 2007. McDonnell argued that events in the American Revolution ensured that abolition never enjoyed enough public support to succeed. Principally, McDonnell thought that the quantity of African-Americans who fled their owners to obtain freedom fighting for British forces had heavily 'curtailed the number of postwar manumissions' in Virginia.¹⁹⁷ The following chapters buttress many of the points made by Oakes, Bernstein and McDonnell. For instance, a constant theme is the hostility of small and middle ranking planters to losing their slave property.

However, other scholars have taken a moderate stance and emphasised that anti-slavery thought gathered some momentum in the decade following the Declaration of Independence. For example, Winthrop Jordan postulated that anti-slavery activism 'was at least acceptable' in the Upper South states of Maryland, Virginia and Delaware in the 1780s. Thus, rather than fully accept revisionist perceptions, Jordan surmised that 'there was a pronounced change in mood' in the following decade. Accordingly, abolitionist ideals had 'faded away like some wispy vision' by the early nineteenth century.¹⁹⁸ This perspective - that abolition gained ground in the aftermath of the Revolution but fizzled out before 1800 - has obtained popularity in the last two decades. In 2002, for instance, Joseph Ellis proclaimed 'that the window of opportunity to end slavery was not opening, but closing' by the 1790s.¹⁹⁹ Writing in 2006, moreover, Eva Sheppard Wolf asserted 'that although the

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.31-32.

¹⁹⁵ Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, p.32.

¹⁹⁶ Bernstein, *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*, p.98; M. Mason, 'Necessary but Not Sufficient: Revolutionary Ideology and Antislavery Action in the Early Republic', in J. C. Hammond & M. Mason (eds.), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p.20.

¹⁹⁷ M. A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), p.489.

¹⁹⁸ W. D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.136.

¹⁹⁹ Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.104.

Revolutionary period did bring challenges to slavery in Virginia, on the whole white Virginians remained committed to the institution throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'.²⁰⁰ Key to Sheppard Wolf's argument was the contention that increased manumissions in the period between 1782 and 1806 actually strengthened slavery - by encouraging good behaviour amongst bondsmen - rather than weakening it.²⁰¹ Sheppard Wolf also highlighted the importance of race in the post-Revolutionary epoch. Indeed, she thought that popular prejudice 'was at the center of the problems of slavery and liberty in the Revolutionary and early national years', largely because those who opposed the system could not foresee a biracial America coming to fruition.²⁰²

Moreover, a concrete challenge to the revisionist view has gradually emerged since the 1980s. In fact, numerous historians have contradicted the revisionist standpoint and suggested that 'burgeoning humanitarian antislavery sentiment might have generated a movement for gradual, compensated emancipation in Virginia had state and national leaders encouraged it'.²⁰³ In his *First Emancipator* (2005), Andrew Levy cites the example of Robert Carter - who freed more than 500 slaves in 1791 - to demonstrate that a gradual abolition of Virginian slavery may have been more plausible than revisionist scholars thought.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Levy questions whether historians have given enough attention to the numerous manumissions that took place in the late eighteenth century when formulating their perceptions on the strength of slavery.²⁰⁵ Levy is especially critical of the manner in which academics have accepted the statements of planters about the impossibility of abolition, arguing that 'just as nineteenth-century Southern politicians claimed ... that emancipation was impractical, twentieth-century historians continued to make the same argument as a keystone to the defense of the slaveholding practices of the Virginian founding fathers'.²⁰⁶ This thesis builds on Levy's analysis by showing that manumissions were undertaken by both small and large-scale slaveholders between 1769 and 1832, despite severe restrictions being placed on emancipations for much of the epoch.

New works have furthered our knowledge by emphasising the local variations that characterised the system.²⁰⁷ Such productions have questioned whether it is possible to

²⁰⁰ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.x-xi.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.43-44 & 81.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp.xiii & xiv.

²⁰³ A. Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1999), p.559.

²⁰⁴ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, pp.xvii & 180-181.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.180-181.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.191.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Debating Slavery*, pp.48 & 50-51.

generalize about the nature of Virginian perceptions on slavery. For instance, Art Budros has ably demonstrated the differences between urban and rural attitudes towards the institution. In his analysis of liberations in Brunswick County, Budros found that a higher rate of manumissions occurred in towns than in country areas throughout the period between 1782 and 1862.²⁰⁸ Equally, thanks to Budros' investigation of emancipations in the 1790s, we have a greater understanding of the conditions that made planters likelier to free their slaves. Budros suggests that masters tended to liberate workers at times when demand for tobacco was high. By contrast, when the state was struggling economically - and prices were low - planters shunned their slaves' claims to freedom.²⁰⁹

Scholars have also debated the nature of the treatment meted out by Virginia's planters in the post-Revolutionary era. Most pre-1990s assessments, whether traditional or revisionist, found that slaveholding conduct in the state was generally better than that meted out in the Lower South or in other slave-owning societies. For instance, Winthrop Jordan postulated that 'punishments were ... becoming less harsh and familial relations less subject to arbitrary disruption' in the late eighteenth century.²¹⁰ Thus, Jordan concluded that although bondsmen continued to be disciplined by their masters, 'scattered evidence' suggested that 'In Virginia at least, many planters insisted upon decent food and quarters, upon sparing use of the whip, and that slave families never be sold apart'.²¹¹ Elements of this interpretation persist. In 2007, David Brown and Clive Webb discerned a clear improvement in the treatment of slaves following the emergence of Humanitarian thinking and the doctrines of the American Revolution. They argue that 'A heightened concern for the slave family was evident' in both the Upper and - to a lesser degree - Lower South.²¹²

However, recent scholarship has taken an increasingly negative view of Virginian conduct. Indeed, one of the broader effects of the Jefferson-Hemings discovery has been the greater emphasis placed on the treatment of labourers. In 1998, for instance, Philip Morgan postulated that 'no group' in eighteenth century Virginia 'experienced an everyday treatment so close to animal domestication as did black slaves'.²¹³ Writing in 2013, furthermore, Alan Taylor questioned the traditional belief that conditions for slaves improved after 1776. In particular, Taylor demonstrated that economic difficulties caused

²⁰⁸ A. Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility: Manumission in Brunswick County, Virginia, 1782-1862', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (Nov., 2004), pp.544-545.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.555.

²¹⁰ Jordan, *White over Black*, pp.367-368. See p.368 for the quote.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.368.

²¹² D. Brown & C. Webb, *Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.80.

²¹³ P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.271.

masters to sell excess labourers, meaning that 'On the issue that mattered most to the enslaved - the unity and security of their families - their conditions deteriorated after the revolution'.²¹⁴ As with slavery, consequently, there have been growing calls for a greater emphasis to be placed on local circumstances when analysing wider ownership trends. For example, Dennis Pogue asserts that 'the treatment of slaves by their masters varied considerably from plantation to plantation depending on the economic position, the personal beliefs, and the idiosyncrasies of masters'.²¹⁵

Finally, debate has raged about the extent and nature of racial prejudice in post-Revolutionary Virginia. Winthrop Jordan certainly asserted that Americans had acknowledged the extent of their discrimination towards blacks as early as the 1750s and 1760s. Indeed, Jordan utilised the testimony of mid-eighteenth-century observers to demonstrate that some masters defended their slaveholding by averring that Africans were 'an inferior species' before the American Revolution.²¹⁶ This loathing for blacks increased following 1776. Jordan believed that racial tensions were exacerbated by the growth of Virginia's free African-American population, which 'tended to heighten the white man's distaste for Negroes'.²¹⁷ Another 1960s scholar, William Jenkins, broadly agreed with Jordan's thesis, claiming that 'In the literature of the Colonial period may be found many evidences of the belief in the inferior capacity of the Negro'.²¹⁸ Similarly, in a January 1968 article for the *Journal of Negro History*, Don Kates surmised that 'Negroes were almost uniformly held to be intellectually and morally inferior, slothful, inclined to violence and ... an unmitigated burden on their communities'.²¹⁹ Moreover, Edmund Morgan argued that race, rather than class, was the greatest dividing factor in Old Dominion. Thus, despite their economic differences, lower classes united with elites in the face of racial difference.²²⁰

Duncan MacLeod even concluded that the American Revolution had 'produced a coherent racist doctrine that became a sacred, significant totem in American society'.²²¹ MacLeod claims that white slaveholders needed to find a reason to reject manumission that would not make them look like hypocrites. Consequently, they embraced 'the clear outlines of a hostile stereotype of blacks. They were deemed to be lacking in intelligence; to be idle, dishonest, and savage; and to be sexually promiscuous, a threat to white

²¹⁴ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.51.

²¹⁵ Pogue, 'Slave Lifeways at Mount Vernon', in Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, p.123.

²¹⁶ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.278.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.410.

²¹⁸ W. S. Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), p.17.

²¹⁹ D. B. Kates Jr., 'Abolition, Deportation, Integration: Attitudes Toward Slavery in the Early Republic', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Jan., 1968), p.40.

²²⁰ Brown & Webb, *Race in the American South*, p.55.

²²¹ D. J. MacLeod, 'Toward Caste', in I. Berlin & R. Hoffman (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.230.

womanhood and the purity of the white race'.²²² While such prejudices undoubtedly existed in the years before 1776, African-Americans 'had never before been so clearly defined as different and inferior, nor had their place in society ever before been so coherently and systematically deduced from those differences'.²²³ A comparable assessment is offered by Benjamin Quarles, who states that the leaders of the Revolution's 'inherent conservatism limited the revolutionary potential of the American War for Independence'.²²⁴

Such views have maintained their credibility. Roger Wilkins adeptly summarises the perceptions of many scholars when he argues that 'The white culture devoutly believed in the inferiority of blacks' in the years following the American Revolution.²²⁵ Moreover, Barbara Stevenson thought that race 'was such an important dimension of one's life and identity in the slave South that other significant social variables like class, culture, ethnicity, and gender were as much embedded in "race" as they were distinctive operatives'.²²⁶ Free African-Americans were most affected by this prejudice. In fact, Stevenson postulated that 'There seemed to be no limit to the kind of fear, suspicion, and even repulsion that their presence bred'.²²⁷ Finally, Michael McDonnell claimed that repeated slave defections to British forces during the War of Independence inflamed racial prejudice in Old Dominion. Accordingly, those who received their freedom after 1782 were forced to live 'precarious and marginal lives, in an increasingly racist society'.²²⁸

Although widely held, the belief that post-Revolutionary Virginia was an extremely prejudiced state has not gone unchallenged. David Brion Davis was one of the first scholars to diverge from popular perceptions when he claimed in 1975 that 'so far as slavery is concerned, racist arguments often served as an excuse for motives that were less easy to acknowledge'. In Davis' view, planters who asserted that emancipation was impossible because of racial differences were shielding themselves from having to admit that other factors - like financial self-interest - were preventing them from acting on Revolutionary doctrines.²²⁹ Davis also thought that arguments centred on racial inferiority represented an attempt to rally 'the support of nonslaveholding whites' by finding a common enemy.²³⁰

²²² *Ibid.*, p.231.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p.235.

²²⁴ B. Quarles, 'The Revolutionary War as a Black Declaration of Independence', in I. Berlin & R. Hoffman (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.285.

²²⁵ Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow*, p.96.

²²⁶ B. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.xi.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.162.

²²⁸ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.490.

²²⁹ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.14.

²³⁰ D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.272.

Davis was echoing an opinion first ventured by Edmund Morgan, who suggested that colonial racism - and with it, slavery - 'enabled Virginia's planter class to co-opt the poorer whites and thus perpetuate a highly exploitative and unequal society under the banner of republican liberty', therefore leading to the American Revolution.²³¹

Equally, J. B. Allen published an article in *The Journal of Southern History* in 1978 which went further than Davis by questioning 'the generally accepted notion that the majority of white antislavery southerners were racists'.²³² The premise of Allen's thesis was that 'The racist image of southern critics of slavery reflects the absence of a comprehensive history of southern antislavery thought and historians' unwarranted concentration on such figures as Hinton Rowan Helper, Cassius Marcellus Clay, and Thomas Jefferson'.²³³ Although comparable views to those propounded by Allen and Davis have not been regularly affirmed, there is evidence that scholarship is starting to recognise that racial perspectives were far more nuanced - and subject to local influences - than had previously been thought. In *Ploughshares into Swords* (1997), for instance, James Sidbury demonstrated that 'social and race relations' in the Virginian capital of Richmond 'were quantitatively different - by virtue of being urban - from those that had long prevailed in Virginia' in the late eighteenth century.²³⁴ Fifteen years later, furthermore, Robert Forbes postulated 'that the range of elite opinion regarding Africans included the acceptance of their full humanity and even equality' prior to the release of Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1785.²³⁵

Finally, Rodney Barfield's research has highlighted that free African-Americans could gain acceptance in post-Revolutionary Virginia if they were able to convince 'the white community of their adherence to white mores and attitudes'. Barfield emphasised that 'There were many whites throughout the South who schooled free blacks, traded with them, and supported their petitions to the courts'.²³⁶ David Brown and Clive Webb have gone even further. In their *Race in the American South* (2007) the pair emphasised that 'The central theme of Southern history is racial integration', for even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'white, black and indigenous southerners interacted with one another in a myriad of diverse ways from first contact. They ate, drank, worked, socialised and slept

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.145 discusses Morgan's assertions.

²³² J. B. Allen, 'Were Southern White Critics of Slavery Racists? Kentucky and the Upper South, 1791 - 1824', in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May 1978), p.170.

²³³ *Ibid.*, pp.170-171.

²³⁴ J. Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.9.

²³⁵ Forbes, 'Secular Damnation', *Torrington Articles*, p.23; Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness'", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, pp.82-83.

²³⁶ R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbris, 2013), pp.58 & 82.

with each other, much to the consternation of the southern elite'.²³⁷ The following chapters add to this picture and, by doing so, place Thomas Jefferson's views on African-Americans within this wider picture of post-Revolutionary Virginian society.

Accordingly, there are numerous debates concerning Jefferson and other Virginian statesmen's relationship with slavery. These range from arguments concerning the extent to which Jefferson and his peers were abolitionists and lenient owners to disagreements surrounding their perspectives on race. These controversies will affect the following chapters in various ways. Principally, the discovery of Jefferson's liaison with Sally Hemings means that closer scrutiny must be placed on both his and other Virginians' day-to-day engagement with their bondsmen.²³⁸ More broadly, the findings of scholars relating to the strength of slavery and racial prejudice in post-Revolutionary Virginia are significant, for they enable Jefferson's association with these facets to be set in an appropriate context. Recent discoveries certainly demonstrate the importance of continuing to evaluate the established opinion that slavery could not have been abolished in late Virginia because of a widespread distaste for African-Americans.

With these discoveries in mind, the main body of the research starts by placing Jefferson's position on slavery and race - in addition to his conduct as an owner - within the context of Virginian society in the important years between 1769 and 1789.

²³⁷ Brown & Webb, *Race in the American South*, p.4.

²³⁸ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.186; J. C. Rees, 'Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Changing Interpretation of Slave Life on the Mount Vernon Estate', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.172.

Chapter Two: 1769-1789 - Jefferson the Revolutionary?

The two decades between 1769 and 1789 were amongst the most important in the history of Virginia and North America. For over a century and a half, Virginia - like the other twelve American colonies - had existed relatively contentedly under the jurisdiction of the British government. However, tensions between the colonies and Britain increased during the 1760s following disagreements over higher taxation and a lack of American representation in Parliament.¹ Particularly reviled by Virginians was the Stamp Act of 1765, which effectively taxed colonists on every piece of paper they used. By 1774, a large Patriot movement had formed in Old Dominion in response to this rise in duties and - amongst other issues - British enforcement of heavy taxes on imports in Massachusetts.² These disputes led Virginia and their North American peers to call an inaugural Continental Congress to discuss ways of tackling British belligerence. At a second meeting, held in Philadelphia in 1776, delegates from all the colonies opted to declare independence from Britain. The decision sparked a conflict that only concluded when Continental forces - led by a Virginian General, George Washington - defeated British regiments at Yorktown, culminating in the signing of the 1783 Paris Peace Treaty. The war hit Virginia particularly hard, with the value of the state's currency being severely diminished. Famine and a reduced demand for tobacco - the staple crop of most Virginian plantations - further impacted the parlous state of the former colony's economy.³ Widening social divisions and fear of slave rebellion added to the concerns of Old Dominion's citizens.

At the heart of most of the important issues in the Revolutionary era was a wealthy young planter, Thomas Jefferson. After initially practising as a lawyer, Jefferson's public career had commenced in 1769, when he was elected as Albemarle County's representative to the Virginia House of Burgesses.⁴ While serving in the post, Jefferson gained a reputation as a vehement critic of British policy in the New World. His opposition was twofold. First, he followed most Colonists in being critical of British tax measures. More pertinently, Jefferson's vision of republican democracy, which championed 'decentralized and self-governing "ward republics"', contrasted with the British mode of

¹ E. Cassara, 'The Intellectual Background of the American Revolution', in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Vol. 31, No. 121/122 (1977), p.439.

² R. Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* - 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp.241 & 244.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴ M. D. McGarvie, "'In Perfect Accordance with his Character": Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and the Law', in *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (June 1999), p.159; F. Shuffelton, 'Introduction', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.1.

overseeing its colonies. In particular, Jefferson deemed Parliament's capacity to enforce unpopular legislation on the colonists - and often traverse the laws decided by colonial leaders - as an example of tyranny.⁵

With his opposition to British rule well known, Jefferson was nominated as a delegate to the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in June 1775. The following year he was tasked with acting upon the recommendations of representatives to the convention and composing a Declaration of Independence. On 4 July 1776, his manuscript was signed by statesmen from all thirteen colonies, with thirty-nine amendments having been made from his original draft.⁶ After performing his duties at the Continental Congress, Jefferson returned to working in the Virginian Assembly. He was elected Governor of Virginia in 1779, a post he held until June 1781.⁷ Later in the 1780s he also served as a Virginian delegate to Congress and American Ambassador to France, before being appointed Secretary of State in September 1789 by the nation's first President, George Washington.⁸

Despite affirming in the Declaration of Independence that all men had an equal right to freedom, Jefferson possessed more than two hundred slaves at the time of the American Revolution.⁹ This chapter places Jefferson's thoughts on slavery, race and colonization - as well as his conduct as an owner - within the context of Virginian society in the years between 1769 and 1789. By doing so, the analysis determines areas in which Jefferson's sentiments and actions were comparable to - and differed from - those of his contemporaries in an endeavour to challenge the notion that he was representative of prevalent Virginian opinion during this period. Reasons behind Jefferson's stance are also postulated. The chapter starts with an introduction outlining key events in the period. The topics of slavery, ownership and race are then addressed in separate sections, before a conclusion details the evaluation's major findings. As Andrew O'Shaughnessy has

⁵ J. Appleby & T. Ball, 'Introduction', in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.xxiii; B. Shank, 'Jefferson, the Impossible', in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (June 2007), p.297; Cassara, 'The Intellectual Background of the American Revolution', in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, p.439; this critique is set out by Jefferson in T. Jefferson, 'Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms', 6 July 1775, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.80-87.

⁶ Library of Congress, '1774 to 1783', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/the-thomas-jefferson-papers-timeline-1743-to-1827/1743-to-1774/>.

⁷ G. R. Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans: "An American Dilemma" from Slavery to the White House* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.43.

⁸ Library of Congress, '1774 to 1783', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers*; Library of Congress, '1784 to 1789', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/the-thomas-jefferson-papers-timeline-1743-to-1827/1784-to-1789/>; A. Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.1.

⁹ A. Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.1.

demonstrated, it is pivotal to situate Jefferson's opinions in the Revolutionary epoch within their broader context in order to enable a balanced evaluation of his legacy.¹⁰ Challenging the belief that Jefferson was representative of Virginian thought in the Revolutionary era is equally vital given the importance placed on his perspectives. In fact, David Brown and Clive Webb have averred that Jefferson 'epitomise[d] the changing views of elite southerners in the revolutionary era'.¹¹ The following analysis finds that Jefferson was not as typical of Virginian trends as Brown and Webb suggest. Some of these differences explain Jefferson's complex positions on the abovementioned subjects. For instance, his opposition to slavery was stifled by increasing public antagonism towards the anti-slavery movement in the 1780s. Indeed, this evaluation demonstrates that arguments that would later be made by supporters of slavery were appearing in Virginian discourse in the immediate aftermath of the American Revolution.

The American Revolution occurred at a time when Virginian society was undergoing profound change. Geographically, Colonial Virginia was split into two distinct areas either side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Most Virginians resided to the east of the mountains in 1770. This region comprised the Piedmont counties - which bordered the Blue Ridge to the west - in addition to the east coast counties of the Tidewater (where Virginia's first colonists had settled nearly two centuries earlier).¹² Most Virginians lived in rural areas in 1776. In fact, it is estimated that less than three percent of people in all southern states inhabited towns in 1780. The sparsity of Williamsburg, the colonial capital of Virginia, reflected this situation. In 1780, Williamsburg was host to just 1,500 people.¹³ Thus, despite the gradual emergence of towns like Richmond, Petersburg and Alexandria, most of the Virginian terrain as late as 1790 remained rural and 'dominated by rivers and forests'.¹⁴

Nonetheless, demographic change was becoming noticeable, with greater numbers of families emigrating from the Tidewater to the Piedmont as the soils of the former region

¹⁰ A. J. O'Shaughnessy, 'Afterword', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.196.

¹¹ D. Brown & C. Webb, *Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.75.

¹² M. A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), p.2, footnote 2 describes these different regions; see appendix 1.1 and 1.2, pp.326-327 for a list of Virginian counties and a map of the state in 1800.

¹³ W. J. Cooper Jr., T. E. Terrill & C. Childers, *The American South: A History*, Vol. 1: *From Settlement to Reconstruction* - 5th ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p.38.

¹⁴ Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, p.299; the location of key urban areas is detailed in appendix 1.3 on p.328.

became depleted following a century of over-farming.¹⁵ Accordingly, although just eight percent of white Virginians had resided in the Piedmont in 1729, this figure had grown to forty-four percent by 1776. This trend continued after the Revolution, with the 1790 census recording that there were more people resident in the Piedmont than the Tidewater for the first time in Virginia's history.¹⁶

For much of the eighteenth century an established hierarchy formed the bedrock of Virginian society. The top tier comprised of a small number of great slaveholding dynasties, including the Byrds and Randolphs of Charles City County and the Carters of Westmoreland County. These families typically possessed vast holdings throughout Virginia and owned hundreds of slaves. Their wealth also meant that they held much of the political power in the colony.¹⁷ Just below the traditional gentry were several emerging young planters who had acquired large quantities of land and slaves through a mixture of marriage, inheritance and business acumen. Such men - including Jefferson, George Washington, George Mason and James Madison - played a leading role in the Patriot movement that eventually severed Virginia's ties with Britain. Furthermore, they worked to erode the dominance of the old Virginian order after 1776, having become frustrated with a lack of opportunities prior to the Revolution.¹⁸

Beneath the gentry and Patriots were middle-ranking farmers, who typically owned less land and employed a smaller number of African-American bondsmen (generally ranging from one to twenty-five). Some did not hold any slaves at all.¹⁹ The remainder of Virginia's white population encompassed 'small farmers, tenants, laborers, and indentured and convict servants'. At the bottom of the pyramid was a rapidly increasing slave population and a far smaller free black community. As early as 1750, Virginia's enslaved workers amounted to over forty percent of the colony's inhabitants. By the first American census of 1790, the proportion had surpassed fifty percent in many areas, as the number of bondsmen in the state swelled above 293,000. By contrast, even after emancipation laws

¹⁵ P. J. Schwarz, 'Introduction', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.3.

¹⁶ A. Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility: Manumission in Brunswick County, Virginia, 1782-1862', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (Nov., 2004), p.542.

¹⁷ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.29; H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: Macmillan, 2004), p.361; McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.10.

¹⁸ Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, pp.266-271 & 277 describes the impact of these men; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.29 discusses the way Patriots obtained their wealth; frustration at the lack of opportunities is described in J. P. Greene, 'The Social Origins of the American Revolution: An Evaluation and an Interpretation', in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (March 1973), p.7; biographies of many of these figures can be found in appendix 1.6, pp.331-335.

¹⁹ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.9.

had been approved in 1782, the free African-American population still totalled fewer than 20,000 in 1790.²⁰

From 1770, elements of this social hierarchy came under strain. First, the authority of the Church of England was challenged by the emergence of Dissenting groups - including the Baptists and Methodists - whose more inclusive forms of worship appealed predominantly to the poorer spectrums of society.²¹ In particular, Evangelical preachers reached out to Virginia's African-Americans to an extent never previously attempted by the Anglican Church.²² Despite initial hostility to these movements, younger statesmen pushed for greater religious tolerance after the Revolution. Their appeals were answered in 1786, when a statute permitting freedom of worship was passed. Further upheavals in Virginia's laws eroded the status of the elites, with leaders - including Jefferson - endeavouring to create a larger middle-class by abolishing previous inheritance laws and raising taxes on the wealthiest families.²³

One aspect that the Revolution failed to materially change was slavery. Virginia incorporated around 200,000 African bondsmen at the time of the American Revolution. This population grew rapidly in the following years, reaching just shy of 300,000 by 1790. However, these numbers were not evenly dispersed throughout the population. Indeed, Michael McDonnell has demonstrated that 'the "bulk" of the people were not slaveowners' in 1776.²⁴ Furthermore, many of those who possessed slaves held only one or two. Regional variations heightened this division. Whereas slaves represented the majority of inhabitants in areas of the eastern Tidewater and Central Piedmont, in Loudoun County - situated to the northwest of the Piedmont - African-Americans formed only twenty-one percent of the population at the onset of the Revolution.²⁵ Equally, just seven percent of those residing in Fairfax County were listed in the 1790 census as slaveholders. Yet these individuals still 'dominated every facet of the political system' in the post-Revolutionary epoch, with nearly all Virginian statesmen holding a considerable number of slaves.²⁶ The prominent role slavery played in Old Dominion is illustrated by the fact that fifty of the

²⁰ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.3 contains the 'small farmers...' quote; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, p.12; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.15; see appendix 1.4 & 1.5, pp.329 & 330 for an illustration of how the proportion of slaves in Tidewater Counties increased between 1775 and 1790.

²¹ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, pp.29-30.

²² Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, p.172.

²³ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.356; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.6.

²⁴ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.9.

²⁵ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, pp.9-10 highlights the disparities in the slave population of different areas; also see appendix 1.4, p.329 for a depiction of these differences in Tidewater counties in 1775.

²⁶ Wiecek, *An Imperfect God*, p.361 contains the quote; McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, pp.9-10.

hundred wealthiest men in the state in 1782 owned at least 129 bondsmen.²⁷ The importance of the institution is further demonstrated by the fact that just six of these men owned fewer than fifty slaves, with the average holding amongst elites being 163 African-American labourers.²⁸

This complicated situation was evident throughout the American Colonies, where - despite being 'almost unquestioned throughout the New World' in the mid-eighteenth century - slavery represented one of the most controversial topics in the years after 1776.²⁹ Although the northern states of Vermont (1778), Pennsylvania (1780) and Massachusetts (1783) passed bills pertaining to the erosion of slavery, the system maintained deep roots in all states south of Pennsylvania.³⁰ The dilemma that slavery presented was reflected in the divisive debates that the subject stimulated at the American Constitutional Convention of 1787. During discussions to agree the terms of a national constitution, northern representatives were forced to make concessions to southern statesmen to ensure the maintenance of the Union.³¹ Principal amongst these was an arrangement to keep the international slave trade open until 1808 in order to appease the concerns of South Carolina and Georgia, whose delegates argued that they needed more bondsmen to cater for the needs of their expanding planter classes. Furthermore, southern states - with Virginian delegates to the fore - successfully negotiated a deal whereby all slaves would be counted as three-fifths of a person when it came to apportioning seats during Presidential elections. This ruling helped sway the balance of political power to America's slaveholding regions and, in turn, made the institution impossible for the federal government to eliminate.³²

Slavery: Revolutionary Changes?

Amongst a generation of famous Virginians, Thomas Jefferson towered above all his contemporaries, perhaps barring George Washington. This status has made his position on slavery pivotal in subsequent evaluations of the institution's history during the Revolutionary epoch. Despite his early reputation as a champion of liberty, Jefferson had

²⁷ D. J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.64; U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* - 2nd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p.124.

²⁸ MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, p.64.

²⁹ D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.1.

³⁰ Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p.121.

³¹ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.27.

³² Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.27; W. D. Jordan, 'How Thomas Jefferson Rode Into the White House on the Backs of Black Slaves', in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Number 42 (Winter 2003-2004), p.126.

been surrounded by slaves throughout his life. He assumed sole ownership of his first bondsmen when he inherited thirty labourers from his deceased father's estate upon turning twenty-one in 1764.³³ Further inheritance following the unexpected death of his father-in-law - John Wayles - in 1773 meant that Jefferson was the second largest slaveholder in Albemarle County at the time he was composing the Declaration of Independence.³⁴

Nonetheless, many of Jefferson's most radical statements prior to the American Revolution were rebuttals of slavery. Much of his early opposition to the system arose from his education as a lawyer. Training as a member of the bar ensured that he was well versed in the natural law arguments of John Locke and Montesquieu before starting his career in public service.³⁵ In fact, Locke's advocacy of natural law meant that Jefferson named him alongside Francis Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton as 'my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced'.³⁶ The influence of Lockean concepts on Jeffersonian thought was clear in the Declaration of Independence, where he asserted Americans' right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'.³⁷

Jefferson initially demonstrated his anti-slavery credentials in 1769 when he composed a proposal that would have permitted Virginian masters to emancipate their bondsmen. Fearful of how his plan would be received, Jefferson convinced his cousin, Colonel Richard Bland, to submit the scheme to the Virginia House of Burgesses.³⁸ The response of lawmakers showed that slavery was firmly entrenched in Virginia. The act 'was never even put to a vote' and Bland was heavily criticised for forwarding the notion.³⁹ The experience did not deter Jefferson. A year later he made his first documented indictment of the institution while serving as a lawyer for a young slave. Endeavouring to convince a jury that Samuel Howell should be liberated on account of his mother having been 'born out of

³³ L. Stanton, 'Jefferson's People: Slavery at Monticello', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.83.

³⁴ L. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.148; Stanton, 'Jefferson's People', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.83.

³⁵ R. Cover, *Justice Accused: Antislavery and the Judicial Process* (London: Yale University Press, 1975), p.14.

³⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. Benjamin Rush', Monticello, 16 January 1811, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.427; Appleby & Ball, 'Introduction', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xxvi.

³⁷ A. Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), p.45; T. Jefferson, 'The Declaration of Independence [as amended and adopted in Congress], July 4, 1776', in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.102.

³⁸ E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.14.

³⁹ A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), p.29.

wedlock', Jefferson argued that 'every one comes into the world with a right to his own person, which includes the liberty of moving and using it at his own will'.⁴⁰

Perhaps Jefferson's earliest published condemnation of slavery occurred in his 1774 *Summary View of the Rights of British America*. In the essay, which was heavily critical of British colonial policy, Jefferson proclaimed that 'The abolition of domestic slavery' represented 'the great object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state'.⁴¹ Moreover, he tried to have an anti-slavery passage included in the Declaration of Independence. In the penultimate paragraph of his draft, Jefferson admonished the British government for originally allowing slavery to spread into America. He also provided an early glimpse of his fear of slave rebellion by accusing the colonial Governor of Virginia - Lord Dunmore - of inciting insurrection by promising freedom to all bondsmen who absconded to British forces. Additionally, Jefferson criticised Britain for maintaining the international slave trade, which he alleged had violated Africans' 'most sacred rights of life and liberty ... captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither'.⁴² Despite the passionate nature of his denunciation, Jefferson's fellow emissaries voted to have the reprimand deleted from the final copy of the document.⁴³

The young statesman was left similarly frustrated by Virginia's legislators. As part of a 1776 draft for a revision of the state's constitution, Jefferson included a plan pertaining to the gradual abolition of slavery. This was again rejected by the House of Delegates.⁴⁴ Jefferson continued to confront slaveholding interests after 1776. For instance, he composed a plan to present to the Virginian Legislature as part of another revision of the state's constitution in 1783. The scheme mitigated against 'the continuance of slavery beyond the generation which shall be living on the 31st day of December 1800'.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ T. Jefferson, 'Argument in the case of Howell vs. Netherland', April 1770, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1: 1760 - 1775 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), p.376; P. Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery: "Treason Against the Hopes of the World"', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.189.

⁴¹ T. Jefferson, 'A Summary View of the Rights of British America', in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.115; MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, p.126.

⁴² T. Jefferson, 'A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress Assembled [Jefferson's Draft]', in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.99.

⁴³ T. Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 2015), p.128; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.42.

⁴⁴ T. Jefferson, 'The Virginia Constitution: III. Third Draft by Jefferson', before 13 June 1776, in J. P. Boyd (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1: 1760 - 1776 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p.363; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.102.

⁴⁵ A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.101; McGarvie, "'In Perfect Accordance with his Character'", in *Indiana Magazine of History*, p.164; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.174.

Regrettably for Jefferson, the convention was not called, meaning that the bill remained unsubmitted.⁴⁶

The obstruction did not deter Jefferson. One year later, he forwarded a proposal to Congress that endeavoured to prevent slavery spreading into all states admitted to the American Union after 1800.⁴⁷ Clause five of Jefferson's plan for the governing of the north-western territories stipulated 'That after the year 1800 of the Christian æra [*sic*], there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the s[a]id states, otherwise than in punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been convicted to have been personally guilty'.⁴⁸ The 1784 Northwest Ordinance was arguably the most aggressive move against the institution undertaken by an eighteenth-century Virginian statesman.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Jefferson's fear that his fellow Virginians would not contemplate abolition crystallized when his scheme was being heard in Congress. Aside from Jefferson, all delegates from Old Dominion refused to back the bill. Indeed, Jefferson was one of only two men from southern states to support the measure.⁵⁰ Consequently, despite receiving an overwhelmingly positive reception from northern delegates, the legislation failed to obtain approval by one vote, which would have been gained had a representative from New Jersey not missed the ballot through sickness.⁵¹ However, the idea provided the template for a successful endeavour to prevent slavery expanding into new territories situated north of the Ohio River in 1787.⁵²

Nevertheless, Jefferson had been left disappointed by his contemporaries' reluctance to challenge slavery. In a letter written to Jean Nicholas Démeunier in 1786, Jefferson lamented: 'What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man! Who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment or death itself in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment ... inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to overthrow'.⁵³

It was amidst this backdrop of increasing frustration that Jefferson published his most notorious attack on slavery in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Jefferson had initially

⁴⁶ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.14.

⁴⁷ E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p.40; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.44.

⁴⁸ T. Jefferson, 'Report of Government for the Western Territory', 22 March 1784, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.468.

⁴⁹ W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.510.

⁵⁰ J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), pp.28-29.

⁵¹ Jefferson described the incident in T. Jefferson, 'To Jean Nicolas Démeunier', 26 June 1786, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.592.

⁵² Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.4; A. Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), p.16.

⁵³ Jefferson, 'To Jean Nicolas Démeunier', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.592.

been wary of having *Notes* circulated in America due to concerns about the anti-slavery comments he made in the study; in fact, he only dispersed the book to close friends and scholars at the William and Mary College in Virginia.⁵⁴ However, he was assured by those who read *Notes* that his musings required airing. For instance, the Massachusetts statesman John Adams acclaimed the book, asserting: 'The Passages upon slavery, are worth Diamonds. They will have more effect than Volumes written by mere Philosophers'.⁵⁵

Discussing the system in a chapter concerning the 'Manners' of Virginia's population, Jefferson launched a scathing assault on slavery, arguing that it corrupted the morals of white slaveholders and wounded their labourers by encouraging 'the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other'.⁵⁶ Jefferson was particularly worried about the effect that witnessing the daily exchanges between planters and slaves had on children, who 'nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities'.⁵⁷

There is much in *Notes* that is praiseworthy from an anti-slavery perspective. The fact that Jefferson had the work published under his name proved a boon for abolitionists, as it demonstrated that a key figure in the American Revolution was prepared to publicly oppose the system. Additionally, the book incorporated one of the first concrete proposals to abolish slavery in Virginia.⁵⁸ Jefferson's plan was for all those born into involuntary servitude after 1800 to be freed once they had reached the age of maturity (twenty-one for males and eighteen for females). Within a year of being released, the former slaves were to 'be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper'.⁵⁹ The scheme would be financed by increasing taxes and selling surplus land in the states affected by manumissions. Unlike similar suggestions of the time, Jefferson mentioned no provision for compensating masters affected by the loss of labour that such an overhaul would entail.⁶⁰ Jefferson was also keen to ensure that his proposal facilitated a gradual diminishing of the institution, rather than an immediate abolition. Accordingly, even with

⁵⁴ For information on Jefferson's reluctance to have *Notes* published, see K. Hayes, *The Road to Monticello: The Life and Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.243.

⁵⁵ J. Adams, 'Adams to Jefferson', Montreuil, 22 May 1785, in L. J. Cappon (ed.), *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.21; see appendix 1.6, p.331 for a short biography of Adams.

⁵⁶ T. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Wells & Lilly, - Court Street, 1829), pp.169-170. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008651842>; F. D. Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.204; A. Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.111.

⁵⁷ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.170.

⁵⁸ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, pp.40 & 54.

⁵⁹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.144; MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, p.128.

⁶⁰ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.167; MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, p.129.

the levying of heavy taxes, his arrangement would have taken around fifty years to reach its conclusion.⁶¹

Attempting to persuade sceptical readers, Jefferson stressed that the enforced captivity of African-Americans threatened Virginia's security. This concern was particularly evident in statements he made that suggested Americans would suffer the wrath of God should they continue holding slaves. Thus, Jefferson - who was not renowned for the strength of his religious convictions - affirmed that 'The almighty has no attribute which can take side with us' should there be a conflict between slaves and their owners.⁶² Nevertheless, he found reason to believe that his peers would eventually turn against slavery. In fact, Jefferson averred that the popular opinion of his neighbours was being persuaded by abolitionist rhetoric, noting that 'The spirit of the master' was 'abating' and seemingly paving the way 'for a total emancipation' in the near future.⁶³

Jefferson repeatedly criticised the institution in correspondence after publishing *Notes*. Initially his faith that Virginians could be persuaded to act against slavery remained undimmed. Writing to the English radical Dr Richard Price in 1785, Jefferson informed his correspondent that the abolitionist cause was 'gaining daily recruits, from the influx into office of young men grown & growing up'.⁶⁴ Three years later, Jefferson was invited to join the French anti-slavery society *Amis des Noirs* by a Parisian friend, Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville. Despite declining de Warville's overtures, Jefferson asserted: 'You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition ... of the condition of slavery: and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object'.⁶⁵ He re-affirmed his desire to act against slavery in a 1789 letter to Edward Bancroft. In the note, Jefferson outlined a plan to hire German labourers to work alongside his African-American field-hands to prepare the latter for a gradual transition to freedom.⁶⁶

As well as highlighting his displeasure at slavery, favourable Jefferson scholars point to the fact that their subject was 'a sincere and dedicated foe of the slave trade'.⁶⁷ Jefferson took several steps to challenge the international trade. For instance, he attempted to outlaw the importation of Africans into Virginia in 1776 by proposing a clause

⁶¹ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, pp.167 & 178.

⁶² Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.171.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. Richard Price', Paris, 7 August 1785, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.470; see appendix 1.6, p.334 for more information on Price.

⁶⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville', Paris, 11 February 1788, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.473; see appendix 1.6, p.331 for more information about Brissot de Warville.

⁶⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. Edward Bancroft', Paris, 26 January 1789, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.482-483; for information on Bancroft, see appendix 1.6, p.331.

⁶⁷ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.525.

be put in the state's constitution stipulating that 'No person hereafter coming into this country shall be held within the same in slavery under any pretext whatever'.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, much of this praise neglects the fact that opposition to the slave trade did not necessarily equate to a desire to see slavery abolished. Indeed, it was common for those who campaigned against the trade to do little to challenge slavery.⁶⁹ Jefferson was one of these men, especially after 1784. Even before the rejection of his Northwest Ordinance, there were limits to Jefferson's desire to dismantle Virginia's slaveholding culture. His frequent endeavours to pass responsibility for slavery certainly did little to help anti-slavery campaigners. Jefferson always maintained that the British were at fault for the system's presence in Virginia.⁷⁰ For example, he blamed the 'regal government' for the failure of Virginia's governors to accept his 1769 emancipation bill.⁷¹ Perhaps Jefferson's most notorious attempt to divert accountability occurred in his original draft of the Declaration of Independence. In the deleted paragraph from his proposed script, Jefferson alleged that King George III had 'prostituted his negative' to prevent the colonies banning the international slave trade.⁷²

Equally, Jefferson was guilty of defending the institution by claiming that slaveholding standards had become more enlightened following the American Revolution. In *Notes on Virginia*, he contended that American slavery 'was relatively humane when compared to slavery in Roman times'.⁷³ Such sentiments proved damaging to the anti-slavery cause. As we shall see, they echoed the paternalist view of the system that heavily influenced discourse on the topic in the late eighteenth century. This eventually developed into the 'positive good' thesis that advocates of slavery propounded in the nineteenth century.⁷⁴

Jefferson's conduct in his burgeoning political career also buttressed slavery. By leading calls for the abolition of the Virginian inheritance laws of primogeniture and entail in 1779, Jefferson undoubtedly backed a change that created a larger slaveholding middle

⁶⁸ Jefferson, 'The Virginia Constitution', in Boyd (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1, p.363.

⁶⁹ L. Bellamy, 'George Mason: Slave Owning Virginia Planter as Slavery Opponent?', *Top Scholar: The Research and Creative Database of WKU*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1524&context=theses>, p.v.

⁷⁰ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.22; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.134.

⁷¹ T. Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790. *With the Declaration of Independence*', 6 January 1821, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.34; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.20.

⁷² Jefferson, 'A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.99; Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, p.126 discusses Jefferson's habit of delegating responsibility.

⁷³ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.149; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.29.

⁷⁴ R. G. Parkinson, "'Manifest Signs of a Passion": The First Federal Congress, Antislavery, and Legacies of the Revolutionary War', in J. C. Hammond & M. Mason (eds.), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), pp.50-51.

class in Old Dominion. By the turn of the nineteenth century, nearly fifty percent of white Virginian landowners held at least one slave because of the revoking of colonial inheritance decrees. This growth in the planter class broadened public support for maintaining the system at a time when emancipation was arguably most possible.⁷⁵

Moreover, it is true that Jefferson ‘backed away from attacking the institution’ after 1785.⁷⁶ Perhaps the earliest indication of a change in his stance came when he rejected Jean Pierre Brissot De Warville’s invitation to join the French anti-slavery society *Amis Des Noirs* in 1788. Jefferson declined subscription to the organization because he thought that his political prominence meant it was ‘decent for me to avoid too public a demonstration of my wishes to see it abolished’.⁷⁷ Further, he feared that campaigning for manumission ‘might render me less able to serve it beyond the water’.⁷⁸

Where, then, did Jefferson’s complex views on slavery fit within the wider context of Virginian society in the Revolutionary era? On a general level, Jefferson’s position demonstrated the difficulties that the system presented in the New Republic. Despite their own appeals for liberty from British governance, Virginia held by far the largest slave population in any of the American colonies in 1770.⁷⁹ Elites in Old Dominion acknowledged the apparent contradiction between the ideals of the American Revolution and their ownership of slaves. Indeed, the state followed national trends by querying slavery’s future in the years following the Revolution. Distaste for the system was such that ‘slavery was considered a dying institution’ in many regions of the new nation.⁸⁰ Anti-slavery activism reached a peak after 1776, with pro-emancipation societies being created throughout the republic, leading to the approval of gradual manumission laws in most northern states. Revolutionary doctrines of freedom and equality played a pivotal part in these developments. Jeremy Belknap of Massachusetts certainly remarked that ‘slavery hath been abolished here by public opinion ... Several persons who had before entertained sentiments opposed to the slavery of the blacks, did then ... remonstrate agt the inconsistency of contending for our own Liberty & at the same time depriving other people of theirs’ in a letter composed to Virginian lawyer St. George Tucker in 1795.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, pp.6 & 46-47.

⁷⁶ H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.257.

⁷⁷ Jefferson, ‘To Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville’, in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.474.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.15 contains this data.

⁸⁰ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.56.

⁸¹ J. Belknap, ‘Queries respecting slavery in Massachusetts with answers (manuscript draft) by Jeremy Belknap’, April 1795, *Massachusetts Historical Society: Collections Online*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

The same principles had an impact in Virginia, where legislators took steps to undermine elements of the institution. One topic that most Virginians agreed about was the need for the international slave trade to be abolished. The trans-Atlantic trade had long been a source of grievance for Virginians, with many believing that the trafficking of African-born slaves had negative social and economic implications for the state. An article in Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* in 1771 was scathing in its coverage of the trade, commenting on the 'dreadful Sight of free born Men dragged from their native Country, and forced to work among them'.⁸² Equally, in August 1774, Rind's *Virginia Gazette* noted that citizens from Fairfax County had agreed 'that during our present difficulties and distress no slaves ought to be imported into the British colonies on this continent'.⁸³ Similar decisions came from Caroline and Princess Ann Counties. The residents of Princess Anne were particularly keen to avow their distaste for a traffic that they adjudged was 'injurious' to Virginian cultivation because it was 'preventing the population of freemen and useful manufacturers'.⁸⁴

Amongst Virginian leaders, Richard Henry Lee was a keen opponent of the traffic. In a letter of May 1775, Lee denigrated the transferring of Africans to the New World for being 'A System by which existing millions, and Millions yet unborn are to be plunged into the abyss of slavery, and of consequence deprived of every glorious distinction that marks the Man from the Brute'.⁸⁵ Moreover, George Mason campaigned tirelessly against the slave trade.⁸⁶ In 1774, Mason composed 'The Fairfax County Resolves', a document that appealed for colonial unity in the face of British attempts to impose unpopular taxation. In the manuscript, Mason stated his 'most earnest Wishes to see an entire Stop for ever put to such a wicked cruel and unnatural Trade'.⁸⁷ His opposition never dimmed. Thus, he was scathing of Virginia's delegates to the 1787 constitutional convention in Philadelphia for

http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?old=1&ft=End+of+Slavery&from=%2Fendofslavery%2Findex.php%3Fid%3D52&item_id=724, p.17; see appendix 1.6, p.331 for a brief biography of Belknap; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, pp.14-15 details the emancipation statutes passed in Northern states after 1776.

⁸² Associator Humanus, 'To Mess. Purdie & Dixon', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), 18 July 1771, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=71.PD.32>.

⁸³ *The Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 4 August 1774, p.2. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=74.R.30>.

⁸⁴ T. Abbot, 'Further Proceedings of Virginia', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 4 August 1774, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=74.R.30>; W. Nelson, 'Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Caroline', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 28 July 1774 (supplement), p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=74.PD.38>.

⁸⁵ R. H. Lee, 'To Gouverneur Morris', Philadelphia, 28 May 1775, in J. C. Ballagh (ed.), *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, Vol. 1: 1762 - 1788 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911), p.140; appendix 1.6, p.334 details Lee's career.

⁸⁶ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.22; Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.165.

⁸⁷ G. Mason, 'The Fairfax County Resolves', in R. A. Rutland (ed.), *The Papers of George Mason*, Vol. 1: 1749 - 1788 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p.207; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.16.

agreeing to a compromise that allowed the 'nefarious' international slave trade to continue until 1808.⁸⁸

The Society of Friends were equally candid about their distaste for the slave trade. The Quakers disavowed the traffic for its negative impact on Africans as well as its effect on white Virginians. As part of an anti-slavery petition presented to Congress in 1783, Virginian Quakers joined Friends from across America in requesting that statesmen bring an end to the international trafficking of bondsmen, which they declared 'contrary to "every humane and righteous consideration, and in opposition to the solemn declarations often repeated in favour of universal liberty"'.⁸⁹ Individual Quakers took the lead in expressing their revulsion at the trade. In 1782, Robert Pleasants penned a letter to the *Virginia Gazette*. In the dispatch, Pleasants decried the slave trade for depriving Africans 'of that valuable blessing liberty', as well as separating 'forever Husbands from Wives and Parents from Children'.⁹⁰

Given this widespread aversion, it is not surprising that Virginian lawmakers - including Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson - were asked to draft a bill preventing new slaves being brought into the state in 1777.⁹¹ The recommendations of the group bore fruit a year later when an act was passed that outlawed the importation of Africans into Virginia and placed a £1,000 fine on anyone who breached the conditions of the decree.⁹² Moreover, clause three of the bill stipulated that all future African imports were to be immediately freed.⁹³ By passing the edict, the Virginia General Assembly 'became one of the first governments in the modern world to abolish the slave trade'.⁹⁴ The law was re-enforced by another dictate of October 1785, which ordered that 'Slaves which shall hereafter be brought into this commonwealth, and kept therein one whole year together, or so long at different times as shall amount to one year, shall be free'.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ 'George Mason and James Madison Debate the Slave Trade Clause', in B. Bailyn (ed.), *The Debate on the Constitution: Federalist and Anti-Federalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle Over Ratification*, Vol. 2: January to August 1788 (New York: Library of America, 1993), p.706; J. Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions, on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, Vol. 3 - 2nd ed. (Washington: Pennsylvania Avenue, 1836), p.452.

⁸⁹ S. Urban (ed.), *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, Volume 54: For the Year 1784, part 1 (London: J. Nichols, 1784), p.121; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.59 holds the quote.

⁹⁰ R. Pleasants, *Letterbook of Robert Pleasants. 1754-1797*. Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/168, p.121. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/11435.

⁹¹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.24.

⁹² W. W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the laws of Virginia, from the first Session of the Legislature, in the year 1619*, Vol. 9 (Richmond: J. & G. Cochran, 1821), p.471. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001625679>; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, pp.36-37.

⁹³ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 9, p.471; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.19.

⁹⁴ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.331.

⁹⁵ W. W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the laws of Virginia, from the first Session of the Legislature, in the year 1619*, Vol. 12 (Richmond: George Cochran, 1823), p.182. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001625679>.

Four years after outlawing the slave trade, Virginian officials challenged slavery by approving legislation that permitted slaveholders to emancipate bondsmen 'by his or her last will and testament, or by any other instrument in writing'.⁹⁶ Prior to 1782, Virginians had abided by a 1723 statute which required masters to demonstrate that their slaves had performed a 'meritorious service' before being released.⁹⁷ The 1782 act requested that all prospective liberators pay five shillings to local officials and only pertained to the manumission of adult bondsmen who were under forty-five years old.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, the law still represented 'the most liberal antislavery bill' passed by Virginia's lawmakers before the abolition of the institution in 1865.⁹⁹ The act had an instant impact, with planters throughout the state manumitting their labourers. In fact, twenty Quaker families in Southampton County started the process of freeing their slaves as soon as the bill was passed.¹⁰⁰

The emancipation law represented the culmination of a softening of attitudes amongst Virginia's leaders, who - while refusing to follow northern states by providing for the gradual abolition of slavery - were at least prepared to recognise the efforts of African-Americans who had fought for the Patriot cause in the War of Independence. During the conflict, Virginia's Governors had signalled a change in mindset by consenting to the liberation of slaves who were deemed to have 'performed "meritorious services"' in combat.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, those who had assisted Virginian forces as substitutes for their owners were rewarded in 1783 when an act granted them the right to be 'deemed free in as full and ample a manner as if each and every one of them were specially named in this act'.¹⁰²

The Virginian Legislature also intervened to ensure that slaves received freedom when they were judged to have aided the former colony away from the battlefield. In May 1779, for instance, a bill was passed for the manumission of Kitt, who had given 'information ... against several persons concerned in counterfeiting money'.¹⁰³ Equally, in 1783, lawmakers secured the liberation of Aberdeen, who 'hath laboured a number of

⁹⁶ W. W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the laws of Virginia, from the first Session of the Legislature, in the year 1619*, Vol. 11 (Richmond: George Cochran, 1823), p.39. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001625679>.

⁹⁷ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.24.

⁹⁸ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.39; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.19; Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.547.

⁹⁹ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.101.

¹⁰⁰ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.488.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.487.

¹⁰² Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.309; Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.547.

¹⁰³ W. W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the laws of Virginia, from the first Session of the Legislature, in the year 1619*, Vol. 10 (Richmond: George Cochran, 1822), p.115. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001625679>.

years in the public service at the lead mines' and, consequently, secured his freedom 'for his meritorious services'.¹⁰⁴

By passing the laws of 1778, 1782 and 1783, Virginian legislators demonstrated a desire to challenge slavery that had, in part, been caused by the popularity of Revolutionary doctrines. The ideals of the American Revolution were reflected in some of the key documents produced in post-Colonial Virginia. Principally, a reworking of the state's constitution, penned by George Mason in July 1776, referenced Jefferson's egalitarian affirmations in the Declaration of Independence by asserting 'That all men are by nature equally free and independent'.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, chapter two of the manuscript lambasted King George III for 'prompting our negroes to rise in arms among us, those very negroes, whom, by an inhuman use of his negative, he hath refused us permission to exclude by law'.¹⁰⁶

Virginia's leaders were arguably reacting to developments in the public mood, which had shown signs of questioning the legitimacy of slavery in a nation founded on the principles of liberty. Jefferson's contemporaries made numerous statements that attest to a growing distaste for the system. One of the earliest critiques of the institution was delivered by the Virginian nationalist Arthur Lee in 1764. Responding to criticism of the American colonies levelled by the British author and economist Adam Smith, Lee admitted that slavery was 'shocking to justice and humanity'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, he felt that the system was damaging Virginian cultivation 'and must therefore be always an enemy to virtue and science'.¹⁰⁸ With these factors in mind, Lee closed his essay by stressing that involuntary servitude was 'abhorrent utterly from the Christian religion'.¹⁰⁹

Denunciations of slavery akin to Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* rebuke also appeared in the printed press. For instance, the author of an article published in Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* in July 1771 declared that he had 'often thought that we should have been more strenuous in our Opposition to ministerial Tyranny ... and manifested a more genuine Abhorrence of Slavery'.¹¹⁰ The piece, written under the pseudonym 'Associator Humanus', denigrated Virginians for acting as 'Tyrants over those who are incessant toiling to gratify

¹⁰⁴ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.309.

¹⁰⁵ [Anon], *A Collection of All Such Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, of a Permanent Nature, as are now in Force: With a New and Complete Index*, Vol. 1 (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants Jr & Henry Pace, 1803), p.1.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁰⁷ A. Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America from A Censure of Mr Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. With Some Reflections on Slavery in General. By an American* (London: T. Becket & P. A. De Hondt, 1764), p.37; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.19 discusses Lee's status as one of slavery's earliest critics.

¹⁰⁸ Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America*, p.38.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.43.

¹¹⁰ Humanus, 'To Mess. Purdie & Dixon', in *The Virginia Gazette*, 18 July 1771, p.1.

them'.¹¹¹ Additionally, 'Humanus' contended that slavery was 'a Practice which is a never-failing Source of Ignorance and Vice, of Indolence and Cruelty, amongst us'.¹¹² Visitor testimonies demonstrate that a popular distaste for slavery remained visible following the Revolution. After travelling through Virginia in the early 1780s, the Frenchman Marquis de Chastellux - who had served as a military officer for Virginia during the American Revolution - commented that the state's elites 'in general ... seem afflicted to have any slavery, and are constantly talking of abolishing it, and of contriving some other means of cultivating their estates'.¹¹³

Members of nonconformist Christian sects were especially critical of slavery. One group who frequently broadcast their revulsion for the institution were the Quakers. Individual Friends regularly expressed their opposition to the system. In 1775, for instance, Robert Pleasants wrote to John Thomas stressing that the abolition of the system in southern states would be 'to the honour, as well as the real advantage of America'.¹¹⁴ Pleasants was particularly blunt when confronting Quakers who had failed to emancipate their bondsmen. Corresponding with Fleming Bates in November 1780, the Quaker abolitionist started his letter by enquiring: 'Having been told that thou hast not yet manumitted thy negroes a query hath arisen in my mind to ask thee, why art thou so backward?'¹¹⁵ Bates was by no means a large-ranking slaveholder. A 1782 list of heads of households in Halifax County recorded that Bates held just one slave.¹¹⁶ Pleasants was not the only outspoken anti-slavery Quaker. A letter composed by an author writing under the guise 'A Friend to Liberty' was printed in the *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* in 1782. In the dispatch, 'A Friend' evoked Jefferson's fear of divine retribution to call for his fellow citizens to 'release our slaves from bondage', before posing the question 'how can we expect he [God] will decide in our favour?'¹¹⁷

Despite the Quakers' best efforts, the anti-slavery movement had clear weaknesses. Principal amongst these was the limited resistance to slavery displayed by Virginia's elites,

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ F. J. Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North-America, in the years 1780-81-82* (New York: [s.n.], 1828), p.294. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006538387>; see appendix 1.6, p.332 for more information about Chastellux.

¹¹⁴ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.35.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.128.

¹¹⁶ [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790; Records of the State Enumerations: 1782 to 1785 - Virginia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p.23.

¹¹⁷ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.18.

which was reminiscent of Jefferson's post-1784 decline. This fact may partially explain Jefferson's diminishing opposition to the system. Various statesmen were certainly adept at denouncing slavery, but not nearly as committed to undertaking concrete actions to undermine it. Many of Jefferson's failings after 1784 were emulated by Richard Henry Lee, who served in a range of prominent offices at both state and national levels. Lee opposed slavery in principle throughout his life. As early as August 1765, he penned a letter to the Lancaster County planter Landon Carter in which he declared his desire that 'In time to come, it may be known and sensibly felt I hope, that America can find Arms as well as Arts, to remove the Demon Slavery far from its borders'.¹¹⁸ Yet Lee and his family still held a large quantity of slaves after the American Revolution and continued to trade bondsmen for financial gain.¹¹⁹

Two men who later served on the national stage shared many of Jefferson's limitations. First, James Madison held a theoretical aversion to slavery. In fact, during the Revolutionary War he rejected one idea debated by Virginian legislators to provide white men with a slave and land if they fought for state forces. Instead, Madison asked: 'Would it not be as well ... to liberate and make soldiers at once of the blacks themselves, as to make them instruments for enlisting white soldiers?'¹²⁰ Madison's distaste for the system meant that he could declare it amongst his principal 'wishes ... to depend as little as possible on the labor of slaves' in 1785.¹²¹

However, Madison agreed with Jefferson that any attempt to end slavery needed to be gradual. Consequently, he warned that a general emancipation was an 'event which is dreaded' when corresponding with his brother, Ambrose Madison, in December 1785.¹²² Moreover, he refused to endorse Quaker anti-slavery petitions in 1787 as he thought them a 'public wound'.¹²³ Of greater significance was Madison's decision to dissuade northern delegates from interfering in matters relating to slavery at the 1787 American constitutional convention in Philadelphia. Madison certainly bowed to the demands of

¹¹⁸ R. H. Lee, 'Lee to Landon Carter', Chantilly, 15 August 1765, in J. C. Ballagh (ed.), *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, Vol. 1: 1762 - 1778 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911), pp.11-12; see appendix 1.6, p.332 for more information about Carter.

¹¹⁹ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.18.

¹²⁰ J. Madison, 'To Joseph Jones', Philadelphia, 28 November 1780, in W. T. Hutchinson & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 2: 20 March 1780 - 23 February 1781 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962), p.209; I. Brant, *The Fourth President: A Life of James Madison* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1970), p.56.

¹²¹ J. Madison, 'To Edmund Randolph', Orange County, 26 July 1785, in R. A. Rutland & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 8: 10 March 1784 - 28 March 1786 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p.328.

¹²² J. Madison, 'To Ambrose Madison', Richmond, 15 December 1785, in R. A. Rutland & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 8: 10 March 1784 - 28 March 1786 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p.442; R. Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.625; D. R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.277.

¹²³ Madison provided this critique in J. Madison, 'To Robert Pleasants', Philadelphia, 30 October 1791, in R. A. Rutland, T. A. Mason, R. J. Brugger, J. K. Sisson & F. J. Teute (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.91; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.38.

statesmen from South Carolina and Georgia by lobbying for the proposed ban on the international slave trade to be extended until 1808. He endorsed this position because he feared that the two recalcitrant states would secede from the American Union if their requests were not granted.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Madison worked to assuage doubts about the constitution amongst Virginian slaveholders. Principally, he responded to fears that the agreement diminished the property rights of planters by re-assuring sceptics that 'Another clause secures us that property which we now possess' in July 1788.¹²⁵

George Washington's views on slavery also frequently accorded with Jefferson's. Washington's suspicion of the institution became more pronounced after he had led American forces during the Revolutionary War. He discussed his abhorrence for slavery with a French friend and vocal opponent of the system, Marquis de Lafayette, in 1783. Lafayette had visited Washington in order to inform the General of a scheme he had implemented to cater for freed slaves on a specially formed plantation in French Guyana.¹²⁶ Washington praised Lafayette's 'benevolence' and declared his desire 'to join you in so laudable a work'.¹²⁷ Similarly, in a letter written to Robert Morris in 1786, the General affirmed: 'there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it'.¹²⁸

Nonetheless, Washington held over 200 slaves upon assuming the American Presidency in 1789 and consistently distanced himself from abolitionist appeals. Methodist preachers Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury certainly reported that he had refused to sign an anti-slavery petition in May 1785, despite being 'of our sentiments' on the topic.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Washington shared Jefferson's aversion to an immediate emancipation. Corresponding with Lafayette in 1786, the General suggested that 'To set them [slaves] afloat at once would ... be productive of much inconvenience and mischief'.¹³⁰ Therefore,

¹²⁴ 'George Mason and James Madison Debate the Slave Trade Clause', in Bailyn (ed.), *The Debate on the Constitution*, Vol. 2, p.708. Countering criticism from Mason in June 1788, Madison explained that 'The Southern States would not have entered into the Union of America, without the temporary permission of that trade'.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.707.

¹²⁶ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.24; see appendix 1.6, p.333 for more information about Lafayette.

¹²⁷ G. Washington, 'To the Marquis de Lafayette', Newburgh, 5 April 1783, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 26: *January 1, 1783 - June 10, 1783* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1938), p.300; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.25.

¹²⁸ G. Washington, 'To Robert Morris', Mount Vernon, 12 April 1786, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 28: *December 5, 1784 - August 30, 1786* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1938), p.408; J. J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (London: Faber, 2005), p.163; F. Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), p.186.

¹²⁹ T. Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London: Paramore, 1793), p.45; for information on both Coke and Asbury, see appendix 1.6, pp.331-332.

¹³⁰ G. Washington, 'To Marquis De Lafayette', Mount Vernon, 10 May 1786, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 28: *December 5, 1784 - August 30, 1786* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1938), p.424; W. M. S. Rasmussen & R. S. Tilton, *George Washington: The Man Behind the Myths* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.170; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.263; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.127.

he advocated a plan whereby the system could 'be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees'.¹³¹

The debates that slavery aroused when leaders discussed whether to ratify the American constitution in 1788 highlighted the competing ideals that eventually paralysed Virginia's position on the system. Numerous Virginian representatives denounced slavery during the deliberations. Thus, Zachariah Johnson, a middle-ranking planter, refuted concerns that the constitution empowered the American government to abolish slavery by avowing: 'The principle has begun since the revolution. Let us do what we will, it will come round'.¹³² Johnson denigrated those who were nervous about the possibility of a universal emancipation, asserting: 'Slavery has been the foundation of that impiety and dissipation which have been so much disseminated among our countrymen. If it were totally abolished, it would do much good'.¹³³ This uncompromising stance was echoed by the Governor of Virginia, Edmund Randolph, who rejected allegations that the constitution threatened slave property by averring: 'I hope that there is none here, who ... will advance ... that at the moment they are securing the rights of their citizens, an objection is started that there is a spark of hope that those unfortunate men now held in *bondage*, may ... be made *free*'.¹³⁴

Nevertheless, Virginia's leaders eventually supported amendments that ensured slavery maintained a foothold in the New Republic. Particularly damaging was article four of the constitution, which guaranteed that bondsmen who had escaped their native state would be returned to their masters by directing that 'No person held to Service or Labour in one State ... escaping into another, shall ... be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due'.¹³⁵

These paradoxes were evident in Patrick Henry's attitude towards the system. Henry - a key architect of the Virginian constitution - denigrated slavery for being 'as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible' in a letter written to Robert

¹³¹ G. Washington, 'To John Francis Mercer', Mount Vernon, 9 September 1786, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 29: *September 1, 1786 - June 19, 1788* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.5.

¹³² Z. Johnson, 'Zachariah Johnson, "of the Middle Rank," Favors Ratification Without Previous Amendments', 25 June 1788, in B. Bailyn (ed.), *The Debate on the Constitution: Federalist and Anti-Federalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle Over Ratification*, Vol. 2: *January to August 1788* (New York: Library of America, 1993), p.755.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, Vol. 3, p.598.

¹³⁵ 'Resolutions of the Conviction Concerning the Ratification and Implementation of the Constitution', in B. Bailyn (ed.), *The Debate on the Constitution: Federalist and Anti-Federalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle Over Ratification*, Vol. 2: *January to August 1788* (New York: Library of America, 1993), p.951.

Pleasants in 1773.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, he continued to own more than 100 slaves on his plantations in Virginia and Kentucky. The letter to Pleasants showed that Henry was unwilling to solve the dilemma, for he admitted: 'I am Master of Slaves of my own purchase! I am drawn along by the general Inconvenience of living without them'.¹³⁷ Henry's conflicted thinking manifested at meetings to ratify the American constitution in 1788. Henry declared that he 'detested' slavery 'with all the pity of humanity' when debating the merits of the national compact.¹³⁸ Yet, rather than propose measures to abolish involuntary servitude, the statesman lamented that there was not 'any human means to liberate them without producing the most dreadful and ruinous consequences'.¹³⁹

The convention also highlighted George Mason's inconsistency. At the meeting Mason criticised slavery for producing 'the most pernicious effect on manners'.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he denigrated the constitution for failing to include clauses that would 'secure us that property, which we have acquired under our former laws'.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Mason feared that the role the Federal government was allowed to play in future state policy would grant Congress the capacity to 'lay such a tax as will amount to manumission'.¹⁴² Such an event was unpalatable for Mason, who cautioned that a general emancipation would 'involve us in great difficulties and infelicity'.¹⁴³

Nor were Jeffersonian complexities limited to the perspectives of his fellow statesmen. Leading Church of England rector Devereux Jarratt held a position on slavery that matched Jefferson's post-1784 posture. Jarratt recorded that 'Slavery, as thousands of the slaves are treated, is indeed *shocking to humanity*' in his memoirs.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the Anglican preacher refused to completely denounce the system. In fact, he admitted to being unsure 'whether slavery in itself, *be inconsistent with the dictates of reason and religion*'.¹⁴⁵ Even this may have overstated Jarrett's stance. He was certainly labelled a

¹³⁶ P. Henry, 'Copy of Patrick Henry Letter to Robert Pleasants', 1773-01-18. Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 968, p.1. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/488.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹³⁸ Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, Vol. 3, p.590; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.47.

¹³⁹ Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, Vol. 3, p.591.

¹⁴⁰ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.268.

¹⁴¹ Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, Vol. 3, p.270; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.269.

¹⁴² 'George Mason and James Madison Debate the Slave Trade Clause', in Bailyn (ed.), *The Debate on the Constitution*, Vol. 2, p.706; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.181 also details Mason's opposition to the Constitution.

¹⁴³ Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, Vol. 3, p.270.

¹⁴⁴ D. Jarrett, *Thoughts on Some Important Subjects in Divinity; in a Series of Letters to a Friend* (Baltimore: Warner & Hanna, 1806), p.76. Retrieved from *Google Books*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=gSxNAQAAMAAJ&pg>.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

‘violent assertor of the propriety and justice of Negro-Slavery’ by the Methodist abolitionist Thomas Coke following conversations the pair had in 1785.¹⁴⁶

Overall, the examples of Jarrett and statesmen like Washington, Madison and Mason highlight how wary Virginian leaders were of challenging slavery, despite the popularity of Revolutionary doctrines of freedom and equality. Indeed, by withholding support from anti-slavery endeavours and buttressing the Deep South stance on issues such as fugitive slaves, elites made it harder for a serious challenge to be mounted against the institution.

Jefferson Overshadowed: The Quakers and Post-1782 Manumission

It would be a mistake, though, to think that the apathy of elite figures was symbolic of all Virginians. It is undeniable that some of Jefferson’s contemporaries went far further than him in challenging slavery. For instance, the famous Quaker abolitionist Robert Pleasants emancipated his slaves following the passage of the 1782 manumission law. Pleasants also frequently confronted those who spoke in favour of the system. Writing to Francis Irby in November 1784, Pleasants attacked his correspondent for supporting slavery and asserted that arguments in favour of the system ‘doth not Originate in equal justice, but interest, long custom, & habit’.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, in a letter to John Mitchie in December 1787, Pleasants claimed that his correspondent’s arguments for ‘keeping negros in that state’ were ‘more imaginary than real’.¹⁴⁸

Despite his humbler position in Virginian society, Pleasants did more than Jefferson to challenge illustrious figures who refused to act against slavery. Most notably, the activist wrote to George Washington in 1785 trying to convince the wartime hero to oppose the institution. Pleasants chided Washington for ‘siting [sic] down in a state of ease ... & extravagance on the labour of slaves’, before requesting that the General emancipate his labourers.¹⁴⁹ Pleasants reasoned that following this course ‘would be as productive of real happiness to mankind, as thy sword may have been’.¹⁵⁰

Pleasants was not the only Virginian Quaker to assume an uncompromising position. Indeed, his father, John, had been one of the earliest masters to provide for the release of his bondsmen when, in a will penned on 11 August 1771, he announced that his

¹⁴⁶ Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke’s Five Visits to America*, p.39.

¹⁴⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.86.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.137.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.103.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.103-104.

slaves 'shall be free if they chuse [sic] it, when they arrive to 30 years of age, and the laws of the land will admit them to be free, without being transported out of the country'.¹⁵¹ Pleasants Senior's manumissions ensured that future generations of African-Americans grew up as freemen in Virginia. When two men - Sterling Cox and Paul Grey - were registered as free blacks in Powhatan County in 1821, it was noted that they had been raised by African-Americans who had been liberated by Pleasants.¹⁵² The manumission prompted another of Pleasants' sons, Jonathan, to prepare for the gradual liberation of the slaves under his care in May 1776.¹⁵³

Religiously inspired emancipations were a frequent occurrence in Revolutionary-era Virginia. In 1776, prominent Quaker abolitionist Daniel Mifflin of Accomack County started the process of liberating over ninety labourers, having been 'convinced of the Iniquity and Injustice of retaining my Fellow Creatures in Bondage'.¹⁵⁴ Equally, John Cornwell of Sussex County announced that he was freeing his twenty-two-year-old slave, Cuffey, in November 1776 as he was 'fully persuaded that Freedom is the natural Right of all mankind, and that no Law moral or Divine hath given me a Right to a property in the persons of any of my Fellow Creatures'.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Mary Hargrave of Surry County released three slaves in order to complete 'the intention and desire of my late Husband Joseph Hargrave', as well as fulfil the religious mantra to do 'to others as I would be done by'.¹⁵⁶ This process continued over the following decade. Both Robert Pleasants' and Thomas Jefferson's private papers contain allusions to a large manumission undertaken by the Quaker Joseph Mayo, who freed more than 170 slaves in 1786.¹⁵⁷ Six years prior to his death, Mayo had composed a will which requested that his executors 'set free all and every one of the slaves of which I may die possessed, on account of their services to me whilst alive'.¹⁵⁸ The determination of individual Friends to rid themselves of slavery was reflected by resolutions the sect passed on a state level. In 1779, the Virginian Quaker Yearly

¹⁵¹ H. T. Catterall (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, Vol. 1: *Cases from the Courts of England, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky* (Washington, D. C.: Published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), p.105.

¹⁵² Cox, Sterling (M, 32): Free Negro Certificate, 1821, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Grey, Paul (M, 31): Free Negro Certificate, 1821, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁵³ Catterall (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.105 contains Jonathan Pleasants Jr.'s will.

¹⁵⁴ H. Justice, *Life and Ancestry of Warner Mifflin - Friend - Philanthropist - Patriot* (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1905), p.117. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012454865>.

¹⁵⁵ 'Black Water Monthly Meeting, Manumissions, 1776-1779', Haverford College Special Collections, Manuscript collection 1116/196, p.1. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/10301.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁵⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.142; Jefferson, 'To Dr. Edward Bancroft', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.482. In his letter to Bancroft, Jefferson used Mayo's manumission scheme as an example of the limits of African-American capability. This is discussed in more depth on p.125.

¹⁵⁸ Catterall (ed.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.98.

Meeting approved a dictate calling on all members 'to clear their Hands of this iniquity, by executing Manumissions for all those held by them in slavery who are arrived at full age'.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, the governors directed that anyone who refused to liberate their bondsmen 'should be admonished and advised to discontinue such practices'.¹⁶⁰

Quakers also presented anti-slavery petitions to the Virginia General Assembly. First, in November 1780, Friends requested that lawmakers introduce a bill ensuring that all slaves freed under existing laws have their liberty confirmed by legislative decree.¹⁶¹ The petition outlined endeavours that Quakers had made to guarantee that their labourers enjoyed the smoothest possible transition into free society. For instance, infirm bondsmen were largely to be 'maintained out of the Estates that they have laboured to procure'.¹⁶² Additionally, Quakers appealed for legislators to punish those who were re-enslaving emancipated blacks in May 1782.¹⁶³ Endeavouring to encourage lawmakers to rebuke the practice, the memorialists argued that recent economic downturns in Virginia had been related to God's displeasure at the mistreatment of former slaves, asserting that 'the evil sufferings of this ... part of mankind hath been one chief cause of the dreadful calamities which we have of late been visited'.¹⁶⁴

The Quakers were not the only religious denomination to campaign aggressively against slavery. In 1784, the Methodist General Assembly published an edict declaring the institution to be 'contrary to the Golden Law of God ... and the unalienable Rights of Mankind'.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, Assembly participants resolved that 'Every Member of our Society who has Slaves in his Possession, shall within twelve Months after Notice given to him ... record an Instrument, whereby he emancipates and sets free every Slave in his Possession who is between the Ages of Forty and Forty-five immediately'.¹⁶⁶ Further, the group mandated that subscribers be excluded from taking Communion until they had manumitted their labourers, while slaveholders were barred from joining the sect in future.¹⁶⁷

¹⁵⁹ 'Virginia Yearly Meeting Minutes, 1779 [extracts]', 1779-05, Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/159, p.1. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/11439.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁶¹ Quakers: Petition, 1780-11-29, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Quakers: Petition, 1782-05-29, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ A. Matthews, *Notes on the Proposed Abolition of Slavery in Virginia in 1785* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son University Press, 1903), p.7. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009597291>.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.8.

Virginian Methodists followed the Quakers by requesting that state lawmakers take steps to dismantle slavery. Two Methodist appeals were sent to legislators in November 1785. The signatories of the first application - who all lived in Frederick County - wrote to legislators after becoming 'clearly and fully persuaded that Liberty is the Birthright of mankind'.¹⁶⁸ Stating their abhorrence for the system, the memorialists asserted that 'the oppression exercised over' slaves 'exceeds the oppression formerly exercised by Great Britain over these states'.¹⁶⁹ These claims were echoed in another petition composed by Methodists from Pittsylvania County.¹⁷⁰ Some Baptists joined the Methodists and Quakers in challenging slavery. For example, the preacher David Barrow freed his slaves in 1784 after accepting a ministerial job in the Baptist church. Shortly afterwards he moved to Kentucky, where he continued to actively oppose the institution.¹⁷¹

Despite not being as vocal as Evangelical groups, wealthy liberators existed in reasonable numbers. For instance, an Accomack County judge, Charles Stockly, freed his thirty-three labourers in September 1787.¹⁷² Even those who lived in regions that were typically opposed to manumission took the bold step of freeing their chattels. In 1787, Benjamin Crawley of Amelia County released fifty slaves.¹⁷³ Such an act was courageous, for two years earlier Amelia had been one of six Southside counties to petition the Virginia Assembly for the repeal of the 1782 manumission act.¹⁷⁴

Jefferson's refusal to manumit his bondsmen contrasted with the example set by his mentor at the William and Mary College, George Wythe. In the years immediately following his wife's death in 1787, Wythe decided to rid himself of his eighteen bondsmen.¹⁷⁵ Wythe followed this gesture by providing his emancipated workers with funds to ensure their successful transition into free society.¹⁷⁶ The examples of Stockly, Crawley and Wythe illustrate that figures in prominent positions who held a moderate quantity of slaves could privately undermine the system. Thus, while it could be legitimately argued that Jefferson - by owning nearly 200 slaves - had more economically

¹⁶⁸ Electors: Petition, Frederick County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Electors: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁷¹ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.201; C. R. Allen Jr. (ed.), 'David Barrow's Circular Letter of 1798', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 1963), p.441.

¹⁷² Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.60 & 83 discusses Stockly's emancipation and wider manumissions.

¹⁷³ M. L. Nicholls, 'Passing Through This Troublesome World: Free Blacks in the Early Southside', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), p.62.

¹⁷⁴ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Nicholls, 'Passing Through This Troublesome World', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.62.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.105.

¹⁷⁶ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.125.

invested in the system than Wythe, the fact remains that he failed to match the dedication his mentor and others in a comparable situation showed.

Moreover, many planters with far lower profiles defied Jefferson's example by acting against slavery. Humbler liberations had been concluded before the 1782 manumission bill was enacted. In 1779, a bondsman named Will appealed for his freedom following the death of his King William County owner, Ann Colvin. Will convinced Virginian legislators that he had been legally freed by Colvin 'in consideration of the long & faithful & meritorious service' he had offered.¹⁷⁷ Liberations occurred regularly in the wake of the 1782 bill. Some emancipators were motivated by Jefferson's assertions in the Declaration of Independence. For instance, Benjamin Spratley of Surry County released twelve slaves in 1783 having been 'fully persuaded that freedom is the Natural Right of all Mankind'.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, Peter Sublett of Powhatan County penned a deed pertaining to the gradual emancipation of fifteen slaves. Sublett wrote that he was acting against the institution because he believed 'that all men are by nature Equally free & independent' and, moreover, 'from a ... conviction of the injustice & criminality of depriving my fellow creatures of this natural & dearest right'.¹⁷⁹ Comparable reasons were evident in Agathea Cornwell of Surry County's decision to liberate Edy once she had reached adulthood.¹⁸⁰ These instances demonstrate that manumissions were at least possible in late eighteenth-century Virginia. Equally, the persistent activities of the Quakers and Methodists highlight that abolitionist opinion existed to some extent in post-Revolutionary Virginia.

Finally, African-Americans demonstrated their desire to obtain freedom in numerous ways. Some purchased their liberty. In the period between 1782 and 1806, conservative estimates suggest that a third of those liberated in Norfolk County had bought their freedom or had it acquired by a relative.¹⁸¹ Many who could not persuade their owners to execute a manumission opted to run away. Such incidents occurred with great frequency. Indeed, it is extremely rare to find a newspaper of the epoch that does not include multiple appeals for information about absconders. Slaves' desire for freedom was clearly highlighted in the American Revolution. During the conflict it is estimated that as

¹⁷⁷ Will: Petition, King William County, 1779-11-04, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁷⁸ 'Deed of Manumission, 1783, issued by Benjamin Spratley, of Surry County, Va., for the emancipation of several African-American slaves', Surry County, Clerk, records, 1782-1856, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss3Su788a, p.1.

¹⁷⁹ Sublett, Peter (1747-1812), deed of emancipation, 1788, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2Su162a1, p.1.

¹⁸⁰ 'Deed of Manumission, 1784, issued by Agathea Cornwell, of Surry County, Va., to an African-American slave, Edy', Surry County, Clerk, records, 1782-1856, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss3Su788a, p.1.

¹⁸¹ I. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1998), p.281.

many as 6,000 slaves from Maryland and Virginia attempted to obtain liberty by fleeing to British lines.¹⁸² Jefferson recognised this desire in *Notes* when he suggested African-Americans would eventually seek their freedom, either 'with the consent of their masters' or via violent insurrection.¹⁸³

Why, then, did Jefferson not act against the institution by at least freeing some of his own slaves? On a private level, there is little doubt that he benefitted immensely from slavery. The proceeds of slave labour certainly enabled him to construct his Monticello plantation and lead the lifestyle of a Virginian aristocrat. Moreover, the market value of his bondsmen allowed him to pay off creditors through selling slaves on at least one occasion.¹⁸⁴ Freeing his workforce would, consequently, have deprived him of pivotal economic capital. For this reason, there is merit in the revisionist contention that Jefferson recognised that he could not afford to liberate his own slaves and, therefore, withdrew from publicly attacking the institution.¹⁸⁵ Nonetheless, other factors played an equally important part in the demise of Jefferson's anti-slavery activity.

Public Opinion: Predominantly Pro-slavery

Another reason behind Jefferson's refusal to continue attacking slavery was the fact that his personal stance on the topic was far in advance of that maintained by most Virginians in the two decades following 1769. In this scenario, Jefferson gradually recognised that any endeavour to dismantle slavery in the aftermath of the American Revolution would culminate in failure and potentially damage his political career. Although arguably too charitable to Jefferson - given the actions of the Quakers and other manumitters - there is merit to this view. As Ari Helo postulates, Jefferson's faith in 'human progress' and representative democracy meant that he only believed action could be legitimately taken against slavery when public opinion had decisively switched in favour of abolition. With good reason, Jefferson had conceded 'that the public mind would not ... bear the proposition' of a general emancipation when his first proposal to Virginia's lawmakers was rebuffed in 1769.¹⁸⁶ In fact, his emancipation proposal was greeted with opprobrium by peers. Jefferson's cousin Colonel Richard Bland - who had forwarded the scheme on behalf

¹⁸² McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.489.

¹⁸³ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.170.

¹⁸⁴ T. Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1773', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.8.

¹⁸⁵ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.9.

¹⁸⁶ See Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.2; Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.44.

of the young lawyer - was accused of being 'an enemy of his country' by those hearing the petition.¹⁸⁷

The enmity shown towards those who challenged the institution after the American Revolution further demonstrated the desire of many citizens to safeguard slavery. The Methodist Francis Asbury commented that 'the minds of the people' in Virginia were 'greatly agitated with our rules against slavery' when he toured the state in 1784 and 1785.¹⁸⁸ Asbury's testimony highlighted the fact that ordinary members of the public were not the only Virginians to dislike abolitionism. The Methodist reported visiting 'Doctor Samuel Smith' on his travels, who informed him of 'the resentment some of the members of the Virginia legislature expressed against those who favoured a general abolition'.¹⁸⁹

Incidents of violent oppression were frequently recorded by anti-slavery exhorters. Methodist Thomas Coke certainly complained that 'a mob came to meet me with staves and clubs' after he delivered an abolitionist sermon in 1785. Similarly, he had 'met with a little persecution' in Halifax County 'on account of the public testimony I bore against Negro-Slavery'. One person Coke encountered in Halifax had even 'pursued me with a gun in order to shoot me'.¹⁹⁰ Some individuals were noted for being particularly aggressive. Coke reported that Martin Keys had 'shut his door against the Preachers, because he has eighty Slaves'.¹⁹¹

Pro-slavery articles appeared in newspapers throughout the era. A pre-Revolutionary defence of the institution was published in Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* on 2 December 1773. The dispatch, penned by 'A Customer', quoted a biblical passage to demonstrate that God had 'granted to Adam, and his Posterity, not only a Dominion over "The Fish of the Sea, the Fowl of the Air, Cattle, and every Thing that creepeth upon the Earth," but likewise ... over the Negroes of Africa'.¹⁹² Newspapers also featured letters from observers angered by the growth of anti-slavery sentiment in Virginia. Responding to an emancipationist dispatch that appeared in the *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, one correspondent - writing under the pseudonym 'A Holder of Slaves' -

¹⁸⁷ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.6.

¹⁸⁸ Matthews, *Notes on the Proposed Abolition of Slavery in Virginia*, p.4; F. Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from August 7, 1771 to December 7, 1815*, Vol. 1: *From August 7, 1771, to July 4, 1786* (New York: N. Bangs & T. Mason, 1821), p.384.

¹⁸⁹ Asbury, *The Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury*, Vol. 1, p.390.

¹⁹⁰ Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America*, pp.35-36 & 69 contain all these examples.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.39 & 42-43.

¹⁹² 'A. Customer', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 2 December 1773, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=73.PD.56>.

claimed that America's bondsmen should remain in their present condition to prevent them 'taking up arms and waging war with their former masters'.¹⁹³

This hostility meant that the chances of a full emancipation plan being implemented had almost been nullified by 1776. In fact, when Virginia's statesmen discussed the former colony's constitution in 1776 and 1778, those in attendance recognised that they 'had to find a way around the obvious inconsistency' between the ideals of the Revolution and the state's economic reliance on slavery. Thus, anti-slavery passages proposed by George Mason were deleted from the state's Bill of Rights.¹⁹⁴

The weaknesses of Virginian abolitionism were highlighted by the limitations of the laws that were passed against slavery. For example, the 1778 act preventing the importation of slaves failed to hinder slavery overall. As Michael McDonnell highlights, the legislation was ineffective from an anti-slavery perspective, 'for it carefully excluded slaves brought in by their owners, slaves brought into the state by owners who were only passing through the country, and slaves belonging to newcomers planning to settle permanently in Virginia'.¹⁹⁵ Frequent amendments further diluted the bill's impact. In 1780, the decree was revised to allow planters fleeing conflict in South Carolina and Georgia to transport their slaves with them after lawmakers reasoned that it was 'incumbent upon the good people of Virginia to afford all possible relief to such our brethren in their present distressed situation'.¹⁹⁶ Virginia's statute books testify to the frequent use of this modification. In 1781, Lyman Hall of South Carolina was permitted to bring twenty-seven slaves with him to the state. Similar concessions were made to George Wade, who moved to Mecklenburg County, while nine years later Rozin Offcut fled to Virginia with five slaves.¹⁹⁷

The 1782 manumission act was comparably flawed. The legislation undoubtedly contained clauses that were designed to protect slave property. Consequently, it was a pale imitation of the gradual emancipation statutes passed in most northern states. For instance, the bill placed restraints on those who had been liberated by requiring them to carry 'written proof of freedom' when venturing outside their locality.¹⁹⁸ Laws approved immediately following the 1782 act demonstrated that legislators remained keen to

¹⁹³ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.19.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁹⁵ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.331 contains the quote and details about the bill.

¹⁹⁶ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 10, p.307; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.26.

¹⁹⁷ James (M, 25): Certificate of Importation, Mecklenburg County, 1781, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Sandy (M, 40): Certificate of Importation, Amelia County, 1781, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; George: Certificate of Importation, Fairfax County, 1790, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁹⁸ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.34.

enforce 'the bond between owner and owned'.¹⁹⁹ First, edicts agreed in late 1782 outlawed the practice of slave 'self-hire'. Self-hiring had provided enslaved African-Americans with an element of autonomy by permitting them to undertake work on other plantations if allowed by their owners. However, lawmakers banned the exercise after noticing that 'inconveniences' had 'arisen from persons permitting their slaves to go at large and hire themselves out'.²⁰⁰ Quickly following the self-hire ban was an act pertaining to 'the recovery of slaves, horses, and other property, lost during the war'. This decree empowered masters to re-enslave bondsmen who had fled during the War of Independence. It also re-enforced the perilous state of liberated African-Americans by including clauses that made no attempt to discern whether those found 'wandering about' were freemen or not.²⁰¹

Equally, Jefferson's pre-1784 aversion to slavery surpassed that exhibited by many of his fellow statesmen. Visitors to Virginia commented on the seeming reluctance of the states' elites to challenge slavery. Thus, François-Jean Marquis de Chastellux lambasted slaveholders for enjoying 'the empire' they exercised over their bondsmen. Chastellux was scathing of Virginians, whom he felt would 'retain this discriminating character longer than the other states'.²⁰² It is certainly true that no-one amongst the other Virginian signatories of the Declaration of Independence publicly attacked slavery like Jefferson had in *Notes on the State Virginia*. Moreover, none of his eminent contemporaries forwarded manumission bills to state legislators before or after 1776. Jefferson's early distaste for the institution measures up particularly well against George Washington's record, for the General rarely voiced concerns about the institution prior to 1776.²⁰³

Various factors contributed to this lack of action amongst elites. It is undeniable that the economic importance of slavery posed a substantial obstacle to emancipationist plans. As was the case with Jefferson, fiscal issues stunted abolitionists in the aftermath of the American Revolution because 'crucial export sectors of the southern states - tobacco in the upper South, rice and indigo in the lower South - depended on the labor of enslaved people'. These staples accounted for nearly a third of America's worldwide exports in the winter of 1789-1790, a fact that undoubtedly hampered endeavours to undermine slavery.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.36.

²⁰⁰ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.59; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.36.

²⁰¹ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, pp.23-25; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.36-37.

²⁰² Chastellux, *Travels*, pp.286 & 291.

²⁰³ K. Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), p.291; MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, p.131.

²⁰⁴ A. Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp.3-4. See p.3 for the quote.

As an ultimate paradox, the ideals and events of the American Revolution strengthened popular support for slavery. From a twenty-first century perspective, it is difficult to comprehend the contradiction between the apparently libertarian ideals of the Revolution and the holding of slaves. Yet most evidence suggests that planters did not see any contradiction in their position. As Robin Blackburn highlights, slaveholders generally believed that the right to 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness ... could only be claimed by members of a people with their own properly organized government'.²⁰⁵

Planters also contended that the goals of the Revolution would only be achieved if individuals possessed the liberty to maintain and increase their slave property.²⁰⁶ In this regard, the growth of the slaveholding middle class after the Revolution presented an intractable complication for abolitionists. These men, who had undertaken the bulk of the fighting during the Revolutionary War, expected their rights to property to be respected once victory had been secured.²⁰⁷ In 1785, twenty-two petitioners from Amelia County reminded lawmakers that they had 'risked our Lives and fortunes, and waded through Seas of Blood' to acquire and protect their possessions. Further, the citizens emphasised that 'When the British Parliament asserted a Right to dispose of our Property without our Consent, we dissolved the Union with our Parent Country, and established a Constitution & form of Government of our own'.²⁰⁸

The fact that thousands of slaves absconded with the intention of fighting for British forces further dented abolitionist ambitions. The practical impact of Lord Dunmore's declaration of freedom for blacks who fled to British lines was minimal, certainly when measured against the hysteria that greeted it. Philip Morgan suggests that as few as eight hundred slaves reached the British following the declaration.²⁰⁹ Yet the escape of slaves confirmed the worst fears of Virginians, who had long dreaded the prospect of a servile revolt. As early as 1736, indeed, the planter William Byrd II requested that the African slave trade be outlawed in his native state for fear 'that "multiplying these Ethiopians amongst us" would lead to a "se[r]vile war" that would "tinge our rivers as wide as they are with blood"'.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ R. Blackburn, 'Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Oct., 2006), p.649.

²⁰⁶ W. Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.211.

²⁰⁷ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.46 discusses the reluctance of the middle class to relinquish their slave property.

²⁰⁸ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁰⁹ P. D. Morgan & A. J. O'Shaughnessy, 'Arming Slaves in the American Revolution', in C. L. Brown & P. D. Morgan (eds.), *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p.189.

²¹⁰ Holton, *Forced Founders*, p.68.

John Banister of Petersburg provides a useful example of the negative psychological effects British raids had on slaveholders. In a letter of 1781, Banister complained that eleven of his 'best' bondsmen, who were 'Tradesmen chiefly', had defected to British forces.²¹¹ Banister feared losing the rest of his labourers when the British returned to target Petersburg.²¹² Some white Virginians reacted to this perceived betrayal by campaigning vehemently against African-Americans receiving their freedom. As a case in point, over 1,200 people signed petitions in 1784 and 1785 appealing for the 1782 emancipation decree to be repealed.²¹³ The activists claimed that no further liberations should be permitted because 'slaves taken by the British Army are now passing in this Country as free men' and alleged that 'free Negroes' had acted as 'agents, factors, and carriers' for stolen goods throughout the conflict.²¹⁴

Virginians had reacted angrily to the notion of increased liberations before the passage of the 1782 law. In June 1782, sixty-five inhabitants from Accomack County wrote to lawmakers having been 'much alarmed at several applications which they are informed will be made to the assembly at the approaching session for ... acts for the emancipation of all slaves'.²¹⁵ The signatories presented four reasons why they objected to the escalation in liberations. These became staple arguments in later pro-slavery dialogues. Principally, the petitioners asserted that 'the great number of negroes which have joined the enemy from this country' would unite with free blacks to 'greatly endanger our own'.²¹⁶ They also contended that the former slaves would 'subsist by pilfering' and warned that 'such an act would greatly tend to depreciate that part of our property which is still in slaves'.²¹⁷ Finally, the signatories protested that having to cater for a large quantity of recently released bondsmen would 'increase the demand on the people who are already highly taxed for other purposes'.²¹⁸

This hostility increased as the number of liberations grew. For instance, more than 200 citizens from Hanover and Henrico Counties appealed for the Virginia General Assembly to repeal the emancipation bill in November 1784, asserting 'that many Evils have arisen from a partial Emancipation of slaves under the act initiated ... authorizing the

²¹¹ Banister, John (1734-1788), Letter, 1781, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss4V819a5, p.2.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Freeholders & Inhabitants: Petition, Hanover County, 1784-11-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 was one of the first petitions delivered to lawmakers; McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, pp.489-490.

²¹⁴ Freeholders & Inhabitants: Petition, Hanover County, 1784-11-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.112.

²¹⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Accomack County, 1782-06-03, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.2.

manumission of slaves'.²¹⁹ Intriguingly, data contained in a state-wide survey of households in 1782 reveals that many who supported the Hanover County petition were small or middle-ranking slaveholders. Of the signatories who can be identified, Matthew Whitlock possessed twenty labourers in 1782, while Thomas Mallory and William Richardson both owned eleven. Samuel Fox (six) and John Austin (one) held even fewer.²²⁰ The appearance of such men amongst the petition's subscribers buttresses the contention that those in the emerging middle class opposed measures that were adjudged to affect their rights to property.

Criticism of the 1782 bill increased in subsequent years. Accordingly, inhabitants from Lunenburg County denigrated the emancipation act for being 'fatal to our rights of Property' in November 1785.²²¹ At the same time, lobbyists from Amelia, Halifax, Mecklenburg and Pittsylvania counties asserted that the bill 'hath produced, & is still productive of every bad effect'.²²² The memorialists also called on state lawmakers to reject concurrent Methodist proposals for the abolition of slavery. Such an endeavour was perceived to be an attempt 'to dispossess us of a very important part of our Property'. The petitioners, too, reasoned that the Methodist critique of slavery was 'unsupported by Scripture or sound policy'.²²³ The signatories came from a greater range of backgrounds than those who supported the earlier appeals in Hanover and Henrico Counties. Thus, John Coleman of Halifax County and John Goode of Mecklenburg possessed relatively large slaveholdings (58 and 38 labourers respectively).²²⁴ By contrast, Reuben Vaughan, with twelve slaves, held more modest wealth, while Henry Hayes of Mecklenburg owned no

²¹⁹ Freeholders & Inhabitants: Petition, Hanover County, 1784-11-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Freeholders & Inhabitants: Petition, Henrico County, 1784-11-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²⁰ Freeholders & Inhabitants: Petition, Hanover County, 1784-11-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-3 contains the names of the petitioners; information on the signatories can be found in [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States*, pp.28-29.

²²¹ Inhabitants: Petition, Lunenburg County, 1785-11-29, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²² Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

²²³ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²⁴ Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.5; [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States*, pp.22 & 35.

bondsmen at all.²²⁵ This cross-class rejection of manumission exemplifies the difficulties faced by those seeking to enact a gradual end to slavery in Virginia.

A further petition, penned by observers in Brunswick County in November 1785, shows that pro-slavery thought even existed in religious circles. The authors accused Quakers and Methodists who had pushed for a gradual emancipation law of ‘pretending to be moved by Religious principles’.²²⁶ To counteract Christian arguments for the abolition of slavery, the petitioners forwarded their belief ‘that it was ordained by the Great and wise Disposer of all things, that some Nations should serve others; and that all Nations have not been equally free’. Moreover, they highlighted the fact that ‘Abraham the Father of the Faithful, brought and kept slaves ... and that God speaking to Moses from Mount Sinai ... commands his people to buy and keep slaves:’.²²⁷ Having affirmed this, the 210 citizens from Brunswick pleaded ‘the inexpediency, the impolicy, and the impracticability of’ Methodist proposals and requested ‘that no act may ever pass in this assembly, for the general Emancipation of Slaves’.²²⁸

The emergence of Biblical statements in support of slavery is significant. Previous scholarship has largely focused on the use of Christian pro-slavery arguments in the antebellum era. Yet such ideas were clearly being formulated in the late eighteenth century. Indeed, when representatives from South Carolina and Georgia appealed for Congress to shelve Quaker anti-slavery appeals in 1790, part of their campaign included claims ‘that Christianity permitted slavery, that blacks were far better off enslaved in the South than free in Africa, that miscegenation would destroy American society, and that blacks were racially inferior in their intellect and personality’.²²⁹ The Brunswick County petitioners demonstrate that comparable sentiments were being circulated in Virginia at the same time.

Slavery served a particularly important political function for the Anglican Church in the aftermath of the American Revolution. Leading Anglicans alleged that greater religious tolerance had enabled nonconformist denominations to preach subversive doctrines to blacks. Accordingly, in 1779, Anglicans from Essex County protested to lawmakers that religious freedom had allowed ‘Licentious and Itinerant Preachers’ to hold meetings with slaves. These gatherings, it was argued, were ‘very injurious to the Christian Religion’.

²²⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3-4; [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States*, pp.32-33.

²²⁶ Inhabitants: Petition, Brunswick County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Parkinson, ““Manifest Signs of a Passion””, in Hammond & Mason (eds.), *Contesting Slavery*, p.51.

Consequently, the signatories requested that legislation be passed to ensure 'that no doctrine be permitted to be preached which may tend to subvert Government or disturb Civil Society'.²³⁰

The issues of slavery and emancipation sometimes divided families. In December 1780, for instance, James Moorman, Benjamin Johnson, John Venable and James Taylor asked lawmakers to annul the will of Charles Moorman, who had requested that his slaves be liberated following his death. The lobbyists, who had been assigned the task of enacting Moorman's instructions, objected to the provision as they feared it 'must tend greatly to the impoverishment of your petitioners'.²³¹ Further, they cautioned that 'the said slaves will thereby become burthensome to the publick [*sic*']'.²³²

Similar disputes plagued the Pleasants family. In 1790, Samuel Pleasants and Charles Logon requested that state governors annul an earlier request from Robert Pleasants that aimed to ensure the manumission of his father's slaves.²³³ Samuel Pleasants, Robert's brother, had inherited the labourers from his father before the 1782 manumission law was enacted. Consequently, he reasoned that 'When these Wills were made the emancipation of slaves so far from being permitted, was actually prohibited by the Laws of this County'.²³⁴ Moreover, Pleasants and Logon queried whether liberations should be ceased altogether in Virginia, arguing that 'The law permitting the emancipation of Slaves has given the emancipated slave a Liberty of doing evil, without placing him in such a situation, as either to be useful to ... the Society ... as a person formed in the habits of slavery is unfit to fill a place among freemen'. Accordingly, both men contended that 'it would perhaps be more advisable ... to block ... their Liberation at present - untill [*sic*] some general plan or system, may be brought forward that will fully embrace the subject in all its parts, so as gradually and insensibly to bring about their freedom'.²³⁵ Another relative, Eliza Pleasants, also refused to cede her slaves. Writing to Robert Pleasants, Eliza evoked the Quaker 'Golden Rule' to show that if slaveholders wished 'To do as we would be done by', they should keep their African labourers in slavery because they were better off 'under the

²³⁰ Inhabitants: Petition, Essex County, 1779-10-22, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

²³¹ Moorman, James; Johnson, Benjamin; Venable, John; & Taylor, James: Petition, Louisa County, 1780-12-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Logon, Charles & Pleasants, Samuel: Petition, Henrico County, 1790-11-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2.

direction of a good Master than sat at large in the World'.²³⁶ Parallel claims were used by Thomas Roderick Dew in 1832 to fend off anti-slavery critiques.

Finally, it is noteworthy that an aversion to slavery was not the principal factor behind every emancipation. Lorena Walsh's research has highlighted the manifold limitations of post-1782 manumissions. Principally, Walsh demonstrates that liberators were likelier to immediately release women and children than men, who were usually expected to work an extra few years in their prime before being afforded their freedom. Such a stance served two purposes. First, the master could get the most productive years out of their slave and then emancipate him before he reached old age. Equally, as female slaves and their children were largely dependent on the husband for their social and economic security, keeping males in bondage meant that liberated women 'had little choice but to serve as appendages to the planters' slave work force' until the release of their partner.²³⁷

Even those who professed an abhorrence for slavery in manumission documents were not necessarily telling the truth. Indeed, Ira Berlin rightly cautions that 'some emancipators merely mouthed antislavery rhetoric while ridding themselves of unwanted slaves'.²³⁸ Economic factors led many to free slaves. In Fairfax County, for instance, numerous masters were forced to downsize or turn to less labour-intensive cultivation of crops like wheat and corn because of poor tobacco yields. This meant they did not possess sufficient money to clothe or feed slaves and so chose to liberate those they deemed surplus to requirements.²³⁹ Finally, the promise of future freedom served as a way for masters to ensure the good behaviour of bondsmen during their time in slavery. Such examples show that it is not always right to believe that emancipators undermined slavery more than those - like Jefferson - who refused to free their slaves.

Jefferson the Master: Monticello in Context

The treatment masters meted out to their labourers was a key element of slavery. Jefferson's record as an owner was mixed in the Revolutionary era. A consideration for the health of his slaves was evident in his financial transactions. For instance, he insisted that

²³⁶ W. F. Hardin, "'This Unpleasant Business': Slavery, Law, and the Pleasants Family in Post-Revolutionary Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 125, No. 3 (2017), p.219.

²³⁷ L. S. Walsh, 'Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820', in I. Berlin & P. D. Morgan (eds.), *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.197.

²³⁸ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.280.

²³⁹ S. Hellman & M. McCoy, 'Soil Tilled by Free Men: The Formation of a Free Black Community in Fairfax County, Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 125, No. 1 (2017), pp.45-46.

all slaves be inoculated against smallpox during the American Revolution.²⁴⁰ Additionally, he paid a doctor 240 francs to protect Sally Hemings from the ailment whilst serving as American ambassador to France.²⁴¹ However, these transactions were not made purely from a concern for the welfare of slaves. Jefferson undoubtedly recognised the potential costs of illness to plantation profits and took steps to ensure the health of his working age labourers. Such actions had the added benefit of allowing him - and likeminded masters - to portray themselves as compassionate owners to external observers. Indeed, Jefferson was keen to emphasise the comparative lenity with which Old Dominion's slaves were treated in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.²⁴²

Other measures re-enforced this calculated balance between showing genuine commitment to slave wellbeing and the need to maintain a content and productive workforce. For instance, Jefferson endeavoured to ensure that slave families were able to live together at Monticello. In fact, he encouraged his labourers to marry partners on his plantation by presenting gifts to recently wed couples. At one stage, the Albemarle County planter even offered female workers 'a pot, and a bed' if they married another slave employed on his estate.²⁴³ Jefferson also tried to avoid inflicting corporal punishment on his workforce. From an early age, he was reluctant to see his bondsmen whipped, as he believed it degraded them 'in their own eyes'.²⁴⁴ Such decisions must be viewed in the context of the slave system and the master's desire for his labourers to remain subservient. Lorena Walsh has illustrated that slaves who had established familial connections were less likely to run away than those who had been separated from relations.²⁴⁵ Equally, excessive use of force risked provoking a violent backlash from the ill-treated slave. Although such incidents were rare, it was not unknown for slaves who had been assailed to retaliate against their owners. Given that most large plantations contained a far higher number of African-American workers than whites, it made sense not to risk inciting such an event.²⁴⁶

Nonetheless, other elements of Jefferson's conduct demonstrated a ruthless streak that highlighted his commitment to maintaining slavery at Monticello. Principally, he was

²⁴⁰ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.78.

²⁴¹ F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.233.

²⁴² Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.149.

²⁴³ E. M. Betts, 'Slaves and Slavery', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.7; Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness'", in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.149; Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.142 discusses general slaveholder practices regarding slave relationships.

²⁴⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', 23 January 1801, in B. B. Oberg (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 32: 1 June 1800 - 16 February 1801 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.499-500; Stanton, 'Jefferson's People', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.89.

²⁴⁵ L. S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.83.

²⁴⁶ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p.203.

merciless in his pursuit of runaways. Even in his days as an ideological lawyer, Jefferson had refused to countenance absconders. In 1769, he successfully appealed to readers of Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* for the return of Sandy, who had stolen one of his horses and fled the plantation. Jefferson's distaste for the slave manifested itself when he sold Sandy four years later for £100.²⁴⁷ His attitude towards those who escaped in the War of Independence further displayed this darker side. Jefferson lost twenty-three slaves in the conflict. Of the six fugitives he was able to recapture, five were sold, meaning that they were permanently separated from familial relations as punishment for their pursuit of liberty.²⁴⁸

Furthermore, Jefferson frequently traded slaves. In addition to selling labourers like Sandy, Jefferson regularly purchased bondsmen. An entry in his account book showed that he had bought 'Ursula, and her sons George and Bagwell of Fleming's estate for £210. 12.' on 21 January 1773.²⁴⁹ Similarly, on 31 March 1776, Jefferson acquired eleven slaves for £550.²⁵⁰ Jefferson also believed in working his elderly bondsmen hard. During his time as Ambassador to France, he queried with an overseer whether older slaves could 'make a good profit by cultivating cotton'.²⁵¹ This desire to extract the maximum possible profit led Jefferson to employ his slaves in an increasingly varied set of roles, including blacksmiths, sawyers and cobblers - in addition to field-hands - in the late 1780s. As well as undermining Jefferson's claims to be a liberal master, such examples surely cast doubt over the level of his anti-slavery commitment. It could certainly be argued that a man who acquired eleven slaves in 1776 was not seriously looking at ending his reliance on the institution. Likewise, Jefferson's desire to obtain the maximum productivity from all workers suggests that he was more concerned with profit margins than abolitionism by 1789.

Many aspects of the way Jefferson treated his labourers - and perceived slaveholding in his native state - reflected broader trends. Virginian observers certainly felt that bondsmen in

²⁴⁷ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), 14 September 1769, p.4. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=69.PD.36>; Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1773', in Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, p.8; Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.190.

²⁴⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.28.

²⁴⁹ Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1773', in Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, p.8

²⁵⁰ T. Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1776', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.9.

²⁵¹ T. Jefferson, 'To Nicholas Lewis', Paris, 11 July 1788, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.164.

their state were granted decent care, as Jefferson had argued in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.²⁵² In 1764, Arthur Lee postulated that accusations of cruelty to slaves levelled by the British economist Adam Smith were 'ill founded' and 'repugnant to truth'.²⁵³ Lee continued his rebuke of Smith by claiming 'that the habitations of the negroes are palaces, and their living luxurious; when compared with those of the peasants of' Scotland and Ireland.²⁵⁴ Lee's tract represented more than a refutation of Smith's allegations. Indeed, his insistence that Virginian labourers enjoyed better conditions than European labourers formed a key part of the necessary evil and positive good theses that were used to defend slavery in the nineteenth century.

While Lee's defence of slaveholders was exaggerated, it is undeniable that the nature of slavery altered in the period. Change was particularly noticeable following the American Revolution, when cultivation patterns transformed. Although tobacco continued to be the staple product of Virginian plantations in the decade following the Revolution, conflict with Britain - allied with soil exhaustion - caused a collapse in tobacco prices, forcing many Chesapeake planters to re-evaluate their choice of crop. Many - including Jefferson and George Washington - turned to mixed farming in the 1780s and 1790s, which involved the production of staples such as corn, dairy and wheat.²⁵⁵

Elements of planter conduct suggest that these developments were met with a mellowing of attitudes towards slaves. Influenced by the Humanitarian movement that emerged as part of the Great Awakening, late eighteenth century legislation endeavoured to deter masters from being excessively violent towards their slaves. Consequently, a law that 'virtually licensed a master to kill his "servant" in the course of administering punishment' was repealed in 1788.²⁵⁶ Some visitors to America commented on the apparent lenity afforded to slaves when compared with other slaveholding societies. For instance, Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville claimed that 'The Americans of the Southern States treat their slaves with mildness'.²⁵⁷ Other masters were acclaimed by non-Virginian observers. The Methodist preacher Thomas Coke certainly reported that one man he had visited in 1785 - Captain Dillard - was 'as kind to his Negroes as if they were White servants'. Further, Coke remarked that 'It was quite pleasing to see' Dillard's slaves 'so decently and comfortably clothed'.²⁵⁸ This improved treatment often had the desired effect

²⁵² Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.149.

²⁵³ Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America*, p.25.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.266.

²⁵⁶ Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.121.

²⁵⁷ J. P. Brissot De Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America: Performed in 1788* (Dublin: W. Corbet, 1792), p.284.

²⁵⁸ Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America*, p.40.

of ensuring a more content - and less rebellious - workforce. When speaking to the English tutor John Davis in the late eighteenth century, 'Old Dick' - a slave originally born near the Rappahanock River - praised one of his previous masters, who had 'tended the sick himself, gave them medicine, healed their wounds, and encouraged every man, woman and child to go to a Meeting-house'.²⁵⁹

As with Jefferson, however, any clemency was not extended towards runaways. Indeed, masters from all ranks worked to reclaim absconders. The pages of the *Virginia Gazette* were filled with advertisements from citizens seeking the return of fugitives. These appeals included some composed by neighbours of Jefferson. For instance, in May 1779, Edmund Cobbs of Albemarle County requested information about 'a negro fellow named KITT, about 40 years old, 5 feet 10 inches high, of a yellowish complexion' in the *Gazette*.²⁶⁰ Equally, planters from Albemarle asked for the return of two slaves in November 1784 and January 1785. One, named David, was thirty years old, while Robert Rich was only thirteen.²⁶¹

Other large-scale planters exhibited the same day-to-day behaviour as Jefferson. Robert Carter of Westmoreland County - who held somewhere in the region of 600 slaves in 1774 - certainly used the sale of slaves to punish misbehaviour and buttress his finances in the years prior to the American Revolution. Moreover, Carter recorded selling a female slave, Mary Anna, to traders in Jamaica as punishment for her 'cruelly Beating one of my Children' in 1767. Carter requested 'Bullion, or Madeira Wine' as a trade for the seamstress.²⁶² The Tidewater planter also reflected Jefferson's conduct by ordering that slaves who had attempted to flee his plantation during the American Revolution be sold.²⁶³ Nevertheless, Carter opposed the whipping of his workforce. The Westmoreland County planter's aversion to corporal punishment was particularly marked following his conversion to Baptism in 1777. Thus, in 1780, he informed one of his overseers that they were not

²⁵⁹ J. Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p.380.

²⁶⁰ E. Cobbs, 'Sixty Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Nicolson), Williamsburg, 1 May 1779, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=79.DN.13>.

²⁶¹ 'Virginia Gazette or American Advertiser (Hayes)', Richmond, 13 November 1784, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1784.xml&adId=v1784110057>; 'Virginia Gazette or American Advertiser (Hayes)', Richmond, 8 January 1785, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1785.xml&adId=v1785010075>.

²⁶² Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.23 details the incident; information on the number of slaves at Nomini Hall is derived from P. V. Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia, 1773-1774', in J. Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters, 1767-1774: Student at Princeton College, 1770-72, Tutor at Nomini Hall in Virginia, 1773-74* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1900), p.128.

²⁶³ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.111.

allowed 'to correct, in any manner what ever, either old or young negro belonging to me'.²⁶⁴

George Washington held many of Jefferson's views about the upkeep of slaves and actively sought to be perceived as a caring owner by contemporaries. In fact, Washington instructed a new overseer at Mount Vernon to 'take all necessary and proper care of the Negroes committed to his management using them with proper humanity and discretion' in 1762.²⁶⁵ Moreover, the General endeavoured to ensure that provisions for his labourers were kept at a reasonable level, for he believed that his slaves had 'a just claim to their Victuals and cloaths'.²⁶⁶ Therefore, after being informed that the number of blankets on one of his farms was 'exceedingly low', Washington requested that the manager at Mount Vernon purchase '150 or two hundred of them if good and large'.²⁶⁷ Washington's attempts to appear benevolent impressed observers. Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville acclaimed his behaviour. Despite denouncing Washington for possessing 'a numerous crowd of slaves', the Frenchman re-assured readers that they were 'treated with the greatest humanity: well fed, well clothed, and kept to moderate labour; they bless God without ceasing, for having given them so good a master'.²⁶⁸

The two Founders shared comparable views about the disciplining of slaves. Just as Jefferson 'all but banned physical punishment' at Monticello, Washington only allowed overseers to whip his labourers once he had granted them 'his written permission to do so'.²⁶⁹ Washington also provided healthcare for workers when they fell ill.²⁷⁰ Indeed, when a male servant became sick in January 1760, Washington reported that he 'had him brot. [*sic*] home in a Cart for better care'.²⁷¹ Washington's accounts illustrate that he was prepared to spend money on ailing slaves. In 1761, he recorded giving '4. 0. 0 .' to Mary Thomas for 'nursg [*sic*] Negroes'.²⁷² Medical attention was one of the few areas in which slaves generally enjoyed an advantage over free blacks. While masters - economically - had little option but to tend for slaves who were unwell, free African-Americans were largely

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.107 contains the quote.

²⁶⁵ G. Washington, 'Agreement with Edward Violet', 5 August 1762, in W. W. Abbot & D. Twohig (eds.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, Vol. 7: *January 1761 - June 1767* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.143.

²⁶⁶ G. Washington, 'To Lund Washington', Falls of Delaware So. Side, 10 December 1776, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 37: *November 1, 1798 - December 13, 1799* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.535.

²⁶⁷ G. Washington, 'To Daniel Parker', Newburgh, 18 June 1783, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 27: *June 11, 1783 - November 28, 1784* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1938), p.21.

²⁶⁸ De Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America*, pp.289-290.

²⁶⁹ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.62.

²⁷⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers*, p.209.

²⁷¹ G. Washington, 'Monday, Jany. 28th', in D. Jackson & D. Twohig (eds.), *The Diaries of George Washington*, Vol. 1: *1748 - 1765* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), p.230.

²⁷² G. Washington, 'Cash Accounts', 1761, in W. W. Abbot & D. Twohig (eds.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, Vol. 7: *January 1761 - June 1767* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.4.

poor and, consequently, 'dependent on the good-heartedness of employers, neighboring planters, local white physicians, or city hospitals for health care'. Such assistance was not always forthcoming.²⁷³

Despite offering medical attention to the ailing, Washington frequently traded slaves before the American Revolution. Indeed, he sold bondsmen in a lottery involving the estate of a family who were in debt to his wife.²⁷⁴ Like Jefferson, a calculating streak was evident in Washington's conduct. Just before the American Revolution, the future President instructed an agent to trade flour in exchange for slave women 'not exceeding ... 16' to ensure that his estate remained well stocked with female labourers of child-bearing age.²⁷⁵ Moreover, Washington was as keen as Jefferson to regain the services of runaways. As early as 1761, he appealed for the return of four absconders in an issue of the *Maryland Gazette*.²⁷⁶ He was also reluctant to allow his slaves to become literate at this stage. One of his slaves, Ona Judge, testified to the fact 'she had no education, nor any valuable religious instruction' in later recollections given to the anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*.²⁷⁷

James Madison was equally guilty of pursuing slaves who had fled his Montpelier plantation in Orange County. For example, Madison placed three advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette* pleading for the return of a seventeen-year-old boy named Anthony in 1786.²⁷⁸ Madison went a stage further than Jefferson and Washington by pursuing a fugitive that was not under his command. In September 1782, Madison reported himself 'very glad to find that the recovery of Mr. Pendleton's slave hath at length been accomplished'. Consequently, he resolved to 'immediately relieve Col: Jameson from the task I had consigned to him' of recapturing the rebellious bondsman.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, Madison asserted his authority when he felt necessary. In 1787, he wrote to his father detailing how one slave had 'been very attentive & faithful to me ... particularly since I left Virginia'. However, this was only because the labourer's 'misbehavior in Fredericksburg was

²⁷³ T. L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Healthcare of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* - 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p.2.

²⁷⁴ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.20.

²⁷⁵ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.31.

²⁷⁶ *The Maryland Gazette* (Green & Rind), 20 August 1761, p.3. Retrieved from *Archives of Maryland Online: Maryland Gazette Collection*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc4800/sc4872/001280/html/m1280-0596.html>; Wiencsek, *An Imperfect God*, p.99; L. S. Walsh, 'Slavery and Agriculture at Mount Vernon', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), pp.70-71; J. Rhodehamel, 'Review: George Washington on Slavery: "My Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret"', in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 16 (Summer 1997), p.130.

²⁷⁷ 'Washington's Runaway Slave', in *The Liberator*, No. 762, 22 August 1845, p.1. Retrieved from *Encyclopaedia Virginia: A Publication of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/media_player?mets_filename=evr11869mets.xml.

²⁷⁸ R. A. Rutland & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 9: 9 April 1786 - 24 May 1787 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), p.155, footnote 1; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.375.

²⁷⁹ J. Madison, 'To Edmund Pendleton', Philadelphia, 24 September 1782, in W. T. Hutchinson & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 5: 1 August 1782 - 31 December 1782 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967), p.157.

followed by some serious reprehensions, & threats from me, which have never lost their effect'.²⁸⁰

Nor was Jefferson alone in regularly trading slaves. Transactions involving bondsmen were commonplace before and after the American Revolution. For instance, John King of Goochland County received £75 for selling two bondsmen to 'Major Robert & Archer Paune' in 1768.²⁸¹ Likewise, Augustine Smith of Middlesex County sold thirty-six slaves in 1772 'in Consideration of the Sum of Two Thousand pounds Current Money to me in hand paid by ... Philip Ludwell Grymes, William Churchill & Christian Jones'.²⁸² Communities occasionally clubbed together to buy bondsmen for neighbours who found themselves in financial difficulties. In fact, in March 1778, citizens from Goochland County raised funds to purchase sixteen slaves for Mary Barclay after she had been left poor following the passing of her husband.²⁸³ Transactions continued unabated after the Revolution. In 1780, Matthew Wills paid Samuel Wills of Warwick County 'for a Negro Woman named Hanah [sic] and her Child Venus', while eight years later Tabitha Arbuckle of Accomack County sold fifteen slaves she had inherited from her husband James for the sum of £250.²⁸⁴ Comparably, Tarlton Payne of Goochland County received £340 for the sale of eight labourers to James Roberts in 1786.²⁸⁵ Future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Marshall represented another figure who was involved in the trafficking of African-Americans. On 3 July 1787, the young lawyer recorded purchasing 'one negroe wench named Dicey with her child'. On the same day, he reported selling numerous labourers to Mrs Jacqueline Amber Esquire.²⁸⁶

Nor was Jefferson alone in employing his slaves in a diverse set of roles to obtain maximum profit. On many plantations, slaves acquired skills as 'millers, blacksmiths, machinists, and coopers' to boost the slaveholding economy.²⁸⁷ Indeed, Ira Berlin has demonstrated that 'Throughout the Upper South, plantations and farms housed many more skilled workers and many fewer field hands' in the aftermath of the American

²⁸⁰ S. J. Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher: James Madison, Republicanism, and Slavery* (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2008), p.103.

²⁸¹ Will (M): Bill of Sale, Goochland County, 1768, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸² 'Deed, 1772, of Augustine Smith (of Middlesex County, Va.)', Temple family papers, 1675-1901, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1T2478b, p.1.

²⁸³ Goochland County: Deed, 1778-03-19, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

²⁸⁴ 'Receipt, 1780, issued by Samuel Wills, of Warwick County, Va. (now Newport News,) to Matthew Wills for the sale of two African-American slaves, Hanah and her daughter Venus', Charles City County, records, 1642-1842, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss3C3807a, p.1; Peter: Bill of Sale, 1788, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁵ David: Bill of Sale, 1786, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁶ J. Marshall, 'Bill of Sale', Richmond, 3 July 1787, in H. A. Johnson, C. T. Cullen & N. G. Harris (eds.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 1: *Correspondence and Papers, November 10, 1775 - June 23, 1788. Account Book, September 1782 - June 1788* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), pp.232-233.

²⁸⁷ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.267.

Revolution.²⁸⁸ Various advertisements for runaways recorded the array of skillsets that Virginian slaves had mastered. Thus, in 1777, William Spratley described his slave, Jacob, as being 'pretty ingenious; he makes horn combs, coarse sewing needles, and hair brushes'.²⁸⁹ Additionally, John Walden of Caroline County labelled Ben 'a pretty good shoemaker' in 1779. In the same year, Edmund Cobbs of Albemarle County noted that Kitt had 'worked at the carpenters business and can do coopers work'.²⁹⁰ Equally, John Breckenridge noted that his twenty-five year old 'mulatto man named JOE' was 'a good Barber, and a handy fellow about a Gentleman's person' when advertising for the slave's return in 1786.²⁹¹ Such developments show that Jefferson often followed the actions of his fellow slaveholders.

Jefferson the Authoritarian? Variety on Eighteenth Century Plantations

However, there are respects in which Jefferson was more authoritarian than some masters. Robert Carter of Westmoreland County certainly granted his slaves more autonomy than Jefferson. In fact, historian Andrew Levy believes that 'Carter's slaves had as much freedom as any in Virginia'.²⁹² For instance, Carter permitted his bondsmen to construct their own houses and maintain 'small Lots of ground' to grow their own 'Potatoes, peas, &c' prior to the American Revolution. Carter was not the only master to do so. The increasing diversity of the plantation economy occasionally offered slaves greater freedom. As Ira Berlin highlights, some masters even allowed their labourers to sell 'items of handicraft and produce from their gardens' at market.²⁹³ Of course, promoting greater independence aided both master and slave. Carter and others who allowed labourers such freedoms undoubtedly benefitted economically from not having to spend as much money on feeding their workforce. Further, decent food provisions were pivotal for plantation output, for 'if slaves were to work at all productively, they had to have sufficient food'. Consequently, any way of supplementing food supplies without paying money helped the owner

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.269.

²⁸⁹ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), Williamsburg, 2 May 1777 (supplement), p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=77.P.32>.

²⁹⁰ *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Nicolson), Williamsburg, 9 October 1779, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=79.DN.39>; Cobbs, 'Sixty Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Nicolson), 1 May 1779, p.3.

²⁹¹ 'Virginia Gazette or American Advertiser (Hayes)', Richmond, 10 May 1786, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1786.xml&adId=v1786050010>.

²⁹² Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.54.

²⁹³ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.270.

immensely.²⁹⁴ Finally, the increasingly versatile nature of slave labour actively strengthened the institution's economic foothold by highlighting 'slavery's viability'.²⁹⁵

Nonetheless, other aspects of Carter's conduct showed him to be more liberal than many of his contemporaries. He undoubtedly supported slaves when they became embroiled in arguments with overseers and white workers.²⁹⁶ In September 1773, Carter reported that one of his bondsmen, Thomas, had been involved in a row with a white employee after a gelding under their care had died. Carter chose not to report the overseer's testimony, instead listing what 'Thomas believes' as the correct version of events.²⁹⁷ Carter also bucked prevailing trends by allocating his slaves an extra day's holiday at Easter. Philip Vickers Fithian - who tutored Carter's children at Nomini Hall - reported on Easter Monday in 1774 that the 'Negroes are now all disbanded till Wednesday morning'. During their time off, bondsmen were permitted to leave Nomini Hall in order to attend 'Cock Fights through the County'.²⁹⁸ Moreover, Carter refused to become embroiled in the trading of slaves after the American Revolution, insisting to potential bidders: 'I nither give nor Sell Negroes'.²⁹⁹ Finally, Carter permitted his slaves to become literate. For these reasons, Fithian reported that his employer was widely recognised as 'the most humane to his Slaves of any in these parts!'³⁰⁰ A small number of planters followed Carter's example by allowing their slaves to learn to read and write. In March 1772, James Walker of Dinwiddie County certainly requested information on the whereabouts of Dick, who he feared was attempting 'to pass for a Freeman, as he can read and write'.³⁰¹

The correspondence of William Lee demonstrates that the James City County planter possessed a desire to see his slaves well provided for. Unlike Jefferson, this extended to instructing overseers to ensure that labourers were not overworked. In a letter to a supervisor penned on 24 June 1788, Lee exhorted the employee - Mr. Ellis - 'to take all possible care of the People'. Accordingly, he informed Ellis that pregnant labourers 'should never be hard worked or oppressed in any manner & the Children shd. [sic] always be plentifully fed & have necessary cloathing [sic]'. Further, Lee requested that his slaves 'be treated as human Beings, whom Heaven has placed under my care, not only to minister to

²⁹⁴ Cooper, Terrill & Childers, *The American South*, Vol. 1, p.238.

²⁹⁵ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.279.

²⁹⁶ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.53 discusses Carter's support for his slaves.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.151.

²⁹⁸ Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia', in Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters*, p.143; for more information about Fithian, see appendix 1.6, p.335.

²⁹⁹ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.110.

³⁰⁰ Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia', in Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters*, p.69.

³⁰¹ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, 5 March 1772, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=72.PD.11>.

my luxury, but to contribute to their happiness'.³⁰² Such sentiments invariably contained a self-serving streak. Keeping slaves content certainly reduced the likelihood of rebellion, which was always a key concern for masters. Overworking labourers also risked causing ill health, with the additional costs that this entailed. Nevertheless, Lee's demands contrast with Jefferson's desire to see more vulnerable slaves, particularly the elderly, worked to their maximum.

A greater concern for slave welfare than Jefferson revealed appears in the commonplace books of William Cabell of Amherst County. In an entry composed on 20 July 1773, Cabell noted that he had 'agreed with Theoderick Scruggs to be an overseer at my two upper plantations over 18 or 20 hands'. Importantly, Cabell instructed Scruggs 'not to correct my slaves immediately' and 'not to work them at unreasonable times such as in the night or in rains or snows'.³⁰³ Scruggs evidently failed to heed this advice. Just over a month later, an entry in Cabell's diary outlined how the planter had sacked Scruggs after receiving reports 'of his cruelty to slaves & his baseness in other respects'.³⁰⁴ As we shall see in later chapters, Jefferson was far slower to deal with cruel overseers. Unlike Cabell, moreover, Jefferson's diaries show little concern for slaves who worked in adverse conditions.

The way James Madison treated his slaves occasionally differed to the means pursued by Jefferson. For instance, rather than sell labourers who had fled his plantation for British forces during the American Revolution - as Jefferson had - Madison decided to free his only runaway, Billy, because he believed his presence at Montpelier would prove disruptive to other bondsmen.³⁰⁵ Madison explained that he did not want to penalise the fugitive 'merely for coveting that liberty for which we have paid the price of so much blood, and have proclaimed so often to be the right ... of every human being'.³⁰⁶

Nevertheless, multiple examples show that Jefferson treated his slaves with greater lenity than was often the case in Revolutionary-era Virginia. For example, an advertisement in Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* in 1768 reported that a thirty-year-old bondsman

³⁰² W. Lee, 'Letterbook', 24 June 1778, Lee family papers, 1638-1867, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1L51f, p.265.

³⁰³ W. Cabell, 'Commonplace Book, May 21, 1773 - Nov. or Dec. 1773', Cabell, William (1730-1798), commonplace books, 1769-1795, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss5:5C1117:1-9, p.11.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.

³⁰⁵ J. Madison, 'To James Madison Sr.', Philadelphia, 8 September 1783, in W. T. Hutchinson & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 7: 3 May 1783 - 20 February 1784 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p.304.

³⁰⁶ Madison, 'To James Madison Sr.', in Hutchinson & Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 7, p.304; W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), pp.303-304; Brant, *The Fourth President*, p.56.

named Sterling had received punishment from a previous owner that had left him with 'intolerable marks ... all over his body, his breast especially I know to be so, as I saw it at the time of his being whipped'.³⁰⁷ A September 1783 appeal for the return of a runaway bondsman named Anthony highlighted another case of serious mistreatment. Anthony's master, Charles Yates - a merchant who possessed a large quantity of bondsmen - admitted that the absconder could be easily identified having 'formerly had two or three severe whippings (which his back will show) for his obstinacy and bad behaviour to his overseers'. Furthermore, Yates conceded that Anthony's 'consciousness of deserving further correction, probably made him abscond'.³⁰⁸

Nor were these the worst illustrations of cruelty. For example, Landon Carter - who owned over 400 slaves at the time of the American Revolution - recorded punishing runaways by 'tying their necks and heels'. Moreover, Carter threatened two workers who had killed his sheep with 'exemplary death' in 1777.³⁰⁹ Carter believed that masters needed to take a tough approach to their slaves. In correspondence composed in 1769, the Sabine Hall owner criticised one of his sons for being too lenient to his bondsmen, asserting: 'he loves to encourage people for doing nothing when for my part I think they ought to be severely punished'.³¹⁰

Visitors to America occasionally chided Virginians for mistreating their labourers. One English traveller to the state denigrated planters for 'the unkindness, ignominy, and often barbarity of their treatment'.³¹¹ Another observer noted how absentee planters often left the management of plantations to overseers, who 'whips them about, and works them beyond their strength ... sometimes till they expire'.³¹² Some Virginians acknowledged the cruel treatment that was handed out by their contemporaries. For instance, the Anglican minister Devereux Jarratt lamented that 'Slaves are treated, in America, so inhumanly, in thousands of instances, and by thousands of masters, as must be very abhorrent to every tender, reflecting mind'.³¹³

³⁰⁷ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), Williamsburg, 23 June 1768, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=68.PD.27>.

³⁰⁸ 'Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser (Nicolson & Prentis)', Richmond, 20 September 1783, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=v1783.xml&adId=v1783090012>.

³⁰⁹ R. Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.xvii & 228-229.

³¹⁰ L. Carter, 'Landon Carter to John Boughton', 1769, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/cart7.xml&style=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/display_doc.xml, p.1.

³¹¹ [Anon] (ed.), 'Travelers' Impressions of Slavery in America from 1750 to 1800', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Oct., 1916), p.404.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p.407.

³¹³ Jarrett, *Thoughts on Some Important Subjects in Divinity*, p.82.

Slave testimonies also contained details of mistreatment. One account, provided by a slave named 'Old Dick', illustrated many of the hardships Virginian bondsmen endured in the Colonial epoch. Dick - who relayed his experiences to the English tutor John Davis in 1798 - was born on a Tidewater plantation owned by 'Squire *Musgrove*' in the 1730s.³¹⁴ When his original master passed away, Dick came under the ownership of one of Musgrove's sons. After having a fight with a fellow bondsman, his new owner 'sold me to a *Georgia* man for two hundred dollars'.³¹⁵ When his period in Georgia had ended, Dick was purchased by a planter in Annapolis, Maryland. After marrying a fellow slave, Dick saw his family life disrupted when his wife and children were sold to planters in Fairfax County, Virginia, and Port Tobacco, Maryland, in the aftermath of the American Revolution.³¹⁶ Dick was subsequently auctioned off to 'Squire *Kegworth*' of Alexandria after his Maryland owner was declared bankrupt. Dick's plight did not improve under Kegworth, whom he rated as 'a wicked one' because 'He would talk of setting us free; you are not, he would say, Slaves for life, but only for ninety-nine years'.³¹⁷ Both long working hours and frugal food provisions were strictly enforced at Kegworth's plantation. Dick described how he 'was up an hour before sun, and worked naked till after dark. I had no food but *Homony*, and for fifteen months did not put a morsel of any meat in my mouth, but the flesh of a possum or a racoon that I killed in the woods'.³¹⁸ The aging bondsman was, moreover, the victim of assaults from white staff during his life. Indeed, he recalled being made 'lame of the left leg by the malice of an overseer who stuck a pitch-fork into my ham'.³¹⁹

Olaudah Equiano's recollections of his brief time in Virginia were equally powerful. Equiano - whose account of his experiences in slavery fanned abolitionist sentiment in Britain - recorded that he had encountered a female slave on a Virginian plantation 'who was cooking, and had a large iron on her head, which locked her mouth so that she could scarcely speak, and could not eat or drink'.³²⁰ Further examples of mistreatment were detailed in the diary of Phillip Vickers Fithian. On 23 December 1773, Fithian recorded being horrified at a story relayed to him by an overseer from a neighbouring plantation in Westmoreland County. The employee, named Morgan, boasted about the punishments he had inflicted on slaves. For those he thought guilty of 'Sullenness [*sic*], Obstinacy, or

³¹⁴ Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America*, p.378.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.382.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.383.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.387.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.388.

³²⁰ O. Equiano, *The Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African: From an Account Written by Himself* (New York: Samuel Wood & Sons, 1829), p.12. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101686767>; for more information about Equiano, see appendix 1.6, p.333.

Idleness', Morgan recommended: 'strip him, tie him fast to a post; take then a sharp Curry-Comb, & curry him severely til he is well scraped ... call a Boy with some dry Hay, and make the Boy rub him down for several Minutes, then salt him, & unlose him'.³²¹ Morgan's methods of obtaining secrets from slaves were equally cruel. The overseer endorsed tying the worker being interrogated to a piece of wood with a sharp peg placed under their foot. Morgan then rotated the plank until the victim divulged the information he was seeking to garner.³²²

In a supplementary extract, Fithian detailed Robert Carter's shock to find a slave employed as coachman by a local planter chained to his chariot to prevent him absconding while on duty. Fithian lamented that the slave would likely be 'delivered into the pityless Hands of a bloody Overseer' when he returned home.³²³ Overall, Fithian disapproved of the conduct that Virginians displayed toward their slaves. Shortly before leaving his post at Nomini Hall, the tutor lamented that 'The ill Treatment which this unhappy part of mankind receives here, would almost justify them in any desperate attempt for gaining that *Civility*, & *Plenty* which tho' denied them, is here, commonly bestowed on Horses!'³²⁴

Violence on the plantation sometimes caused fatalities. In one incident, William Pitman bound a young slave and 'stomped him to death'.³²⁵ On 21 April 1775, Purdie's *Virginia Gazette* reported that Pitman, of George County, had been found guilty of 'the murder of his negro boy'.³²⁶ Comparable events occurred on John Meacom's Southampton County estate. In November 1780, Meacom's wife, Ann, presented a petition on behalf of her family requesting that lawmakers bequeath Meacom's wealth to his family after he had been convicted and executed earlier in the year for 'the murder of one of his slaves'.³²⁷

Perhaps the most extreme allegations of mistreatment appeared in an article printed in the *Virginia Gazette* during December 1773. The dispatch - which was written by 'Lucius' - outlined instances of extreme violence meted out on Robert Munford's Amelia County plantation. 'Lucius' alleged that 'Some Time last Summer, a Negro Woman of his, not able any longer to stand the Scourge, which was daily inflicted upon her, contrived to make her Escape'. The bondswoman was found by a local planter 'who declared to me that

³²¹ Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia', in Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters*, p.69.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *Ibid.*, p.136.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.248.

³²⁵ J. Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), p.24.

³²⁶ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 21 April 1775 (supplement), p.4. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=75.P.23>.

³²⁷ Meacom, Ann & Children: Petition, Southampton County, 1780-11-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

the Abuse she had received far exceeded any Thing of the Kind he had ever seen'.³²⁸ Nevertheless, the slave was still returned to Munford, who 'tied her up and tortured her to Death'. In another instance, Munford reputedly whipped and castrated a male slave named Hampsin.³²⁹ 'Lucius' suggested that such incidents were commonplace, claiming: 'it is strange, passing strange! that upwards of fifty Slaves should all die, on one Plantation, of natural Deaths, in the Space of fifteen or twenty Years, and in so healthy a Part of the Country too'.³³⁰

Legislators were partially to blame for the continuing administration of corporal discipline. In fact, some laws introduced after the Revolution arguably made it easier for masters to escape censure for abusing slaves. For instance, bills approved in October 1785 banned all 'negroes or mulattoes' from being witnesses in court cases. This meant that it became harder for planters to be indicted for cruelty without white support for the afflicted.³³¹ Equally, the edict legitimised violence against bondsmen by permitting justices to whip slaves found attending 'unlawful assemblies' or visiting neighbouring plantations without obtaining a pass.³³²

Jefferson differed from his contemporaries in other respects. For instance, advertisements for runaways demonstrate that many slaveholders were not concerned about separating slave families. In November 1771, David Ross of Richmond sought the return of a sixteen-year-old bondswoman named Jemima, who 'was brought up in *Williamsburg*, and has relations upon Queen's Creek'.³³³ Another subscriber - Peterfield Trent - reported that Peter Brown had fled his plantation. Trent believed that Brown had escaped to Gloucester County, 'As he has a Wife at Mr. Benjamin Hubbard's'.³³⁴ Furthermore, Peter Aylett requested information about forty-year-old Pedro, who had absconded from his home in Richmond in April 1788. Aylett reported that Pedro 'may endeavor to get to Prince Edward, having relations there, as he was once the property of Patrick Henry, Esq; of that county'.³³⁵ The devastation that removing a slave from their

³²⁸ Lucius, 'To Mr. Purdie', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, 23 December 1773, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=73.PD.60>.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 12, p.182.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, 14 November 1771, p.2. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=71.PD.50>.

³³⁴ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, 16 June 1774, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=74.PD.28>.

³³⁵ 'Virginian Independent Chronicle (Davis), Richmond', 9 April 1788, in L. A. Windley (ed.), *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, Vol. 1: *Virginia and North Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), p.393.

family caused is demonstrated by the fact that around forty percent of runaways advertised in Virginian newspapers during the 1780s 'had been sold at least once before in their lives'.³³⁶

Moreover, it is arguable that George Washington was a stricter master than Jefferson. Washington certainly showed an authoritarian streak before the American Revolution. For example, the General recorded that he 'Severely reprimanded young Stephens for his Indolence, & his father for suffering of it' on 28 January 1760.³³⁷ Washington's response to the capture of an escapee in 1766 was particularly extreme. Describing the man - named Tom - as 'both a Rogue and a Runaway', Washington ordered Captain Josiah Thompson to sell the slave 'in any of the Islands you may go to' in the West Indies.³³⁸ To guarantee that the rebel would not escape, Washington requested Tom be 'handcuffd [sic] till you get to Sea, or in the Bay'.³³⁹ Tom was not the only Virginian bondsman to suffer this fate. In March 1780, Charles Yates of Fredericksburg sent a letter to a group of merchants in St. Kitts requesting the return of Robin, who had been exiled to the island by an overseer for misbehaving whilst Yates was away.³⁴⁰

Slave dwellings at Mount Vernon were also poor. Washington acknowledged this shortcoming in 1775, when he told Lund Washington - then manager of his plantation - that he feared 'Some of our negro quarters are so very bad, that I am obliged to have them mended, so as to last this winter'.³⁴¹ Nonetheless, it is evident that Washington failed to improve the situation. In a letter addressed to the Englishman Arthur Young in December 1793, he conceded that his slave huts still 'might not be thought good enough for the workmen or day labourers of your Country'.³⁴²

³³⁶ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.46.

³³⁷ G. Washington, 'Extracts from Washington's Diary', in J. Sparks (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington: Being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private, Selected and Published from the Original Manuscripts; With a Life of the Author, Notes, and Illustrations*, Vol. 2 (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1834), p.511. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008688489>.

³³⁸ G. Washington, 'To Captain Josiah Thompson', Mount Vernon, 2 July 1766, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 2: 1757 - 1769 (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print, 1931), p.437; Wienczek, *An Imperfect God*, pp.131-132 discusses the incident; Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.46; J. T. Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (London: Collins, 1976), p.386; J. B. Lee, 'Mount Vernon Plantation', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.17.

³³⁹ Washington, 'To Captain Josiah Thompson', in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 2, p.437.

³⁴⁰ C. Yates, 'Yates to Collins, Wilson, and Ponsonby, merchants in St. Kitts, March 1780', *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, [http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/yates/yates1780.04.15.xml&style=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/display_shdoc.xml](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/display_shdoc.xml&style=/xml_docs/slavery/documents/display_shdoc.xml).

³⁴¹ D. J. Pogue, 'The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon', in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p.18.

³⁴² G. Washington, 'To Arthur Young', Philadelphia, 12 December 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 33: July 1, 1793 - October 9, 1794 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), pp.177-178. The quote appears on p.178; Wienczek, *An Imperfect God*, p.350 demonstrates the limited standard of slave housing at Mount Vernon.

Other masters failed to adequately provide for their slaves. There is evidence that the economic difficulties wrought by the American Revolution culminated in a decline in slaves' living conditions. As Lorena Walsh observes, 'Slaveowners who could not provide well for themselves were unlikely to provide well for their slaves'.³⁴³ A letter composed by William Burt in 1788 certainly suggests that the Amherst County planter had not afforded his labourers satisfactory supplies of food or clothing. In the dispatch, Burt informed his correspondent - William Cocke of Buckingham County - that he had been forced to raise two extra hogs and was sending three lots of clothing to appease 'the two negroes that applied to you for meal' and 'the 3 Wenches that applied to you for Blankets & Cloaths'.³⁴⁴ Clothing was often an area in which masters skimmed, with the average planter - Jefferson included - only affording their labourers two pairs of clothes every year.³⁴⁵ Of course, some masters - often with an eye on public perceptions - made efforts to ensure that their labourers were comfortably clad. However, many 'allowed their slaves to wear ill-fitting, dirty, or torn garments'.³⁴⁶ Such examples illustrate the limitations of paternalism and show that ownership methods and slave living standards varied across plantations. This highlights why it is misleading to view slaveholding in the post-Revolutionary era through a Jeffersonian prism.

Race and Colonization: The Limits of Jefferson's Imagination³⁴⁷

Of all the topics explored in this chapter, it is Jefferson's comments on race that have been most damaging to his reputation. Interestingly, evidence suggests that he subscribed to the conviction 'That all men are created equal' in the years prior to the American Revolution.³⁴⁸ While detailing Samuel Howell's claim for freedom in 1769, Jefferson certainly voiced his 'first known public comment on the natural rights of man', when he asserted that 'Under the law of nature, all men are born free'.³⁴⁹ Additionally, Jefferson's early diaries included plans to erect a cemetery on his Monticello plantation in which both black slaves and white

³⁴³ Walsh, 'Slave Life, Slave Society, and Tobacco Production in the Tidewater Chesapeake', in Berlin & Morgan (eds.), *Cultivation and Culture*, p.190. See pp.190-191 for the decline in availability of these staples.

³⁴⁴ Burt, William, letter, 1788, Amherst County, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2B9575a1, p.1.

³⁴⁵ Cooper, Terrill & Childers, *The American South*, Vol. 1, p.239.

³⁴⁶ Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery*, p.84.

³⁴⁷ J. Appleby, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Psychology of Democracy', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p.165.

³⁴⁸ Jefferson, 'The Declaration of Independence', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.102.

³⁴⁹ Jefferson, 'Argument in the case of Howell vs. Netherland', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1, p.376; A. Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), p.100 holds the first quote; A. Gordon-Reed, 'Logic and Experience: Thomas Jefferson's Life in the Law', in W. D. Jordan (ed.), *Slavery and the American South: Essays and Commentaries* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), p.10.

family members could be buried.³⁵⁰ As leading revisionist Henry Wiencek admits, the idea suggests that - at least before 1776 - 'Jefferson harbored doubts about the supposed "evil" of miscegenation'.³⁵¹

However, this outlook altered radically after 1776, with Jefferson eventually concluding that America could never become a biracial nation. Some scholars have even argued that Jefferson's inability to perceive African-Americans as genuine Americans was evident in the Declaration of Independence. For instance, Robin Parkinson asserts that - by emphasizing that George III had incited rebellion amongst America's blacks - Jefferson was classifying African-Americans as 'enemies, all "domestic insurrectionists" who sought to undermine the Revolution'.³⁵² Accordingly, the most important document in American history 'forwarded an argument for exclusion and racial discrimination'.³⁵³ The future President's conduct and statements do little to dispel Parkinson's conclusions. Throughout the War of Independence, Jefferson opposed African-American enrolment in Virginian forces. During his time as Governor of Virginia, Jefferson repeatedly rejected calls to permit slaves to fight against the British.³⁵⁴ Overall, it is clear that Jefferson 'acted on the assumption that neither free blacks nor black slaves could be safely trusted with arms' during the conflict with Britain.³⁵⁵

Jefferson's aversion to African-Americans was revealed in his proposals for Virginian constitutional reform. In fact, in the aftermath of the Revolution he drafted a revision of Virginia's laws that would have banned blacks from bearing arms and testifying in court 'except in pleas of the commonwealth against negroes or mulattoes'.³⁵⁶ The ideas - many of which were accepted by lawmakers in 1785 - also referenced Jefferson's support for colonization and his opposition to blacks and whites forming intimate relationships. In section two of his plan, Jefferson stated that all African-Americans brought into the commonwealth illegally were to be freed, but only on the condition that they leave Virginia within twelve months of being granted their liberty.³⁵⁷ Furthermore, the fifth clause proposed that 'If any white woman shall have a child by a negro or mulatto, she and her

³⁵⁰ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.22.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

³⁵² R. G. Parkinson, 'Exclusion at the Founding: The Declaration of Independence', in R. Hammersley (ed.), *Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p.59; Jefferson, 'The Declaration of Independence', in Boyd (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1, p.426.

³⁵³ Parkinson, 'Exclusion at the Founding', in Hammersley (ed.), *Revolutionary Moments*, p.60.

³⁵⁴ Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.139.

³⁵⁵ Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.24.

³⁵⁶ T. Jefferson, 'A Bill Concerning Slaves', October 1785, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.471. This copy was dated as 1785 by Jefferson but it is believed to have copied from his 1779 proposals.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.470.

child shall depart the commonwealth within one year thereafter'.³⁵⁸ Finally, Jefferson's fear of black rebellion was outlined in point ten, in which he called for 'stripes' to be meted out to any African-American found attending 'unlawful assemblies' or delivering 'seditious speeches'.³⁵⁹

Jefferson's most renowned affirmations about African-Americans were contained in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. His investigation of race in *Notes* incorporated a study of Native Americans, whom he thought were 'equal to the white man'.³⁶⁰ Jefferson commenced his analysis of blacks by stating that Virginia's slaves could never be successfully integrated into society following their emancipation because of 'Deep rooted prejudices entertained by' both races and 'the real distinctions which nature has made'.³⁶¹ The most important of these 'distinctions' was 'that of colour', which Jefferson declared was 'fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us'.³⁶² This difference in skin colour, Jefferson concluded, meant that Europeans possessed a 'superior beauty' to Africans.³⁶³

Jefferson continued his evaluation by outlining further 'physical distinctions' which highlighted 'a difference of race'.³⁶⁴ First, he noted that black men 'secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour'.³⁶⁵ Jefferson also criticised his African-American labourers for requiring 'less sleep' than white men. Paradoxically, a few paragraphs later he observed that his workers had a 'disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions'.³⁶⁶ Jefferson buttressed his analysis by unfavourably comparing American slaves' intellect with that of white servants in the Roman epoch.³⁶⁷ He then denigrated the work of the black intellectual Ignatius Sancho, which he thought ranked 'at the bottom of the column' when compared with white compositions.³⁶⁸ Similarly, Jefferson derided the poetry of Phyllis Wheatley. Wheatley's poems, which were published in 1773, represented 'the greatest challenge to Jefferson's affirmation of blacks' inferior imagination' and 'made her a

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.471.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.472.

³⁶⁰ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.144 & 146; T. Jefferson, 'To General Castellux', Paris, 7 June 1785, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.517 contains the quote; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.29.

³⁶¹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.144.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.145.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.145-46.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.149.

³⁶⁸ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp.147-148; R. P. Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness': The Early American Republic and the Construction of Race", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2012), p.77.

transatlantic literary superstar'.³⁶⁹ However, Jefferson was unimpressed, labelling Wheatley's accomplishments 'below the dignity of criticism'.³⁷⁰

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that *Notes* did not show Jefferson to believe blacks to be lacking in every facet. Although he stated that 'nature has been less bountiful to' African-Americans 'in the endowments of the head', Jefferson asserted that 'in those of the heart she will be found to have done them justice'.³⁷¹ Equally, he defended blacks against accusations that they had a 'disposition to theft'. Jefferson argued that this alleged tendency 'must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense', for 'The man, in whose favour no laws of property exist, probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favour of others'.³⁷²

Nonetheless, Jefferson still finished the investigation by concluding 'as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind'.³⁷³ Endeavouring to fend off criticism from Enlightenment-inspired readers in Europe, Jefferson asserted that the perceived weaknesses of America's black population were not a consequence of their enslaved status. To buttress this conjecture, he noted that the capabilities of mixed-race Americans were superior to those of African-Americans, claiming: 'The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life'.³⁷⁴

As well as asserting the inferiority of the black race, Jefferson affirmed his abhorrence for interracial relationships in *Notes*. Indeed, he avowed that blacks could not live freely in Virginia 'without staining the blood of his master'.³⁷⁵ *Notes on Virginia* also contained the first of many statements in which Jefferson compared the behaviour of enslaved African-Americans to that of children.³⁷⁶ In the publication, Jefferson asserted that bondsmen possessed a child-like lack of 'forethought' that made them unfit for freedom.³⁷⁷

³⁶⁹ Forbes, "The Cause of This Blackness", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.76; see appendix 1.6, p.335 for information about Wheatley.

³⁷⁰ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.147.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.149.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.150.

³⁷⁴ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.148; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.28.

³⁷⁵ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.151; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.568; J. A. Blackman, 'Confronting Thomas Jefferson, Slave Owner', in *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Nov., 1992), p.220; Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.23.

³⁷⁶ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.71.

³⁷⁷ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp.145-146.

This belief that liberated African-Americans should not be permitted to remain in Virginia meant that Jefferson felt slavery could only be abolished if all free blacks were expatriated from the state.³⁷⁸ In *Notes*, Jefferson affirmed that ‘Deep rooted prejudices’ meant Virginia could never become a biracial society. Accordingly, he concluded that, ‘When freed’, Virginia’s former slaves were ‘to be removed beyond the reach of mixture’.³⁷⁹ Jefferson’s colonization proposal in *Notes on Virginia* contained two clauses that illustrated his own prejudice. First, he suggested that only the children of existing slaves should be manumitted, thus guaranteeing that all labourers alive when his bill came into force would be condemned to a lifetime of slavery.³⁸⁰ Most instructively, though, by ensuring that living bondsmen would not receive the liberty afforded to their offspring, Jefferson was approving the splitting of slave families, with children being separated from their parents and removed from Virginia. However, Jefferson was ambivalent to the distress that this would cause. In fact, he later argued that factoring in such objections would be akin to ‘straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel’.³⁸¹

The accusation that African-Americans were not mentally equipped for freedom was restated in Jefferson’s subsequent correspondence. In a letter of 1789, for instance, he attributed the failure of the Quaker Joseph Mayo’s endeavours to educate a group of liberated blacks to the nature of the African-Americans concerned, whom he claimed needed to be closely monitored to prevent them stealing.³⁸² Thus, Jefferson informed Edward Bancroft that the lack of success enjoyed by the scheme proved that ‘to give liberty to’ blacks was ‘like abandoning children’.³⁸³

In mitigation, it would be erroneous to conclude that Jefferson stuck rigidly to the sentiments contained in *Notes*. Indeed, one criticism that could be levelled at Jefferson’s detractors is that his opinions on African-Americans have been oversimplified. Some extracts from *Notes* even demonstrate that he was unsure of the validity of his statements concerning black intellectual capacity. Jefferson’s conclusion certainly allowed him room for manoeuvre, for he forwarded his thesis of black inferiority ‘as a suspicion only’. Perhaps

³⁷⁸ Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.22.

³⁷⁹ The quotes are contained in Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp.144 & 151.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.144.

³⁸¹ T. Jefferson, ‘A Plan of Emancipation: To Jared Sparks’, Monticello, 4 February 1824, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.1487; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson’s Ethics*, p.86.

³⁸² Jefferson, ‘To Dr. Edward Bancroft’, in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.482; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson’s Ethics*, p.71.

³⁸³ Jefferson, ‘To Dr. Edward Bancroft’, in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.482; Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.101; C. Dierksheide, ‘“The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race”: Jefferson and the “Amelioration” of Slavery, ca. 1770-1826’, in *Early American Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p.176.

realising that he had been too extreme in his critique, Jefferson affirmed that his suppositions 'must be hazarded with great diffidence'.³⁸⁴

Jefferson's post-*Notes* letters hinted that his stance on African-Americans had softened from his position in 1785. Just a month after *Notes*' release, Jefferson forwarded a copy of the publication to the French General Marquis de Chastellux. In the accompanying note to Chastellux, Jefferson claimed: 'I have supposed the black man, in his present state' to be inferior to white men, 'but it would be hazardous to affirm, that, equally cultivated for a few generations, he would not become so'.³⁸⁵

It is also worth noting that Jefferson's negative perception of African-Americans had not always led him to support colonization. In his 1774 *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, Jefferson made no mention of his belief that emancipated African-Americans should be forced to leave Virginia. Nor did his private correspondence before the American Revolution contain any allusions to this view.³⁸⁶ Consequently, Adam Rothman has argued that the events of the Revolution were a key factor behind Jefferson's later hostility towards blacks. During the War of Independence, twenty-three members of the Monticello slave community fled to the British army. This event persuaded Jefferson that enslaved Virginians would collude against the state when presented with an opportunity. Consequently, Jefferson affirmed that free African-Americans had to be removed from Virginia to prevent reprisals against their former masters.³⁸⁷

Why else, though, did Jefferson possess such views? A principal factor may be that his opinions echoed wider perceptions of African-Americans. Anti-black perspectives had certainly been a growing facet of Virginian society since the first Africans had been transported to the colony in 1619. This prejudice was reflected in much of the legislation that was passed in the seventeenth century. As early as 1643, racial differences were being enshrined in Virginian law. In that year, an act was passed that saw additional 'tax levied on African women'.³⁸⁸ Thereafter, punishments meted to black workers were often more severe than those handed to whites who misbehaved. In 1649, three indentured servants,

³⁸⁴ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.150.

³⁸⁵ T. Jefferson, 'Thomas Jefferson's Thoughts on the Negro: Part I', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan., 1918), p.68; Jefferson, 'To General Chastellux', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, pp.517-518 contains the quotes.

³⁸⁶ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.27.

³⁸⁷ Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.116.

³⁸⁸ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.2.

two white and one black, were captured after fleeing their master. All the absconders were reprimanded, but the black runaway was forced to endure 'thirty lashes and a *life of servitude*', whereas the white escapees were only 'given an extra four years of service and thirty lashes'.³⁸⁹ Further decrees in 1670 prevented African-Americans from possessing white citizens as servants.³⁹⁰ Racial differences were highlighted again in 1691, when a statute was passed that required all free blacks to leave Virginia within six months of being manumitted. Moreover, the bill stipulated that white women who formed intimate relationships with black men were to be deported.³⁹¹

Lawmakers remained keen to guarantee that free African-Americans were not permitted equitable treatment after the American Revolution. Indeed, clause two of the 1782 'act to authorize the manumission of slaves' ensured that white society enjoyed control over blacks by mandating that all liberated bondsmen should carry a certificate attesting to their freedom. If they did not comply, the former labourers would be re-enslaved by state authorities.³⁹² The rights of African-Americans were further infringed upon by a statute passed in October 1785. The decree, titled 'An act concerning slaves', barred all blacks - either slave or free - from being witnesses in court cases and dictated that 'No slave shall go from the tenements of his master or other person with whom he lives, without a pass'. Finally, clause four of the bill prevented slaves from purchasing arms, attending assemblies or preaching.³⁹³ Less obviously discriminatory laws highlighted the importance that Virginian society placed on restricting blacks. For example, legislators approved an act defining those who should 'be deemed a mulatto' in 1782. Lawmakers concluded that anyone who had 'one-fourth part or more of negro blood' would be afforded this classification.³⁹⁴

Anti-black sentiment regularly appeared in the compositions of Virginian observers. Arthur Lee certainly made similar claims to Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* assertions in his 1764 *Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America*. In fact, Lee derided Africans for being 'a race the most detestable and vile that ever the earth produced'.³⁹⁵ Lee voiced numerous negative stereotypes to buttress his case, noting that blacks were 'very dextrous rogues' who were 'so prone to lying, that they exercise this faculty on every

³⁸⁹ R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbriss, 2013), p.28.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.32.

³⁹¹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.3; Nicholls, 'Passing Through This Troublesome World', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.52.

³⁹² Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, pp.39-40.

³⁹³ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 12, p.182.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.184.

³⁹⁵ Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America*, p.30.

occasion'.³⁹⁶ Anticipating the future arguments that would be propounded by Jefferson and other advocates of colonization, Lee stated that the number of African-Americans in Virginia meant there would be 'fearful odds' if 'they ever be excited to rebellion'.³⁹⁷

Newspaper articles also revealed examples of anti-black opinion. In December 1773, 'A Customer' penned a letter to the *Virginia Gazette* in which he aimed 'to silence those Writers who insist upon the Africans belonging to the same Species of Men with the white People'.³⁹⁸ Instead, 'A Customer' asserted 'that God formed them in common with Horses, Oxen, Dogs, &c. for the Benefit of the white People alone, to be used by them either for Pleasure, or to labour with their *other* Beasts'.³⁹⁹ Racial prejudice often appeared in planter diaries of the epoch. Writing at the time of the American Revolution, Landon Carter of Sabine Hall observed: 'every day I discover, the sordidness of a Slave'.⁴⁰⁰

As with Jefferson, anti-black perceptions increased when a significant number of African-Americans fled their masters to fight against the Patriot cause. While the level of black dissidence was exaggerated by concerned observers, it is undeniable that a considerable portion of the state's slaves pursued their freedom during the conflict.⁴⁰¹ The scars from this sedition did not heal quickly. Accordingly, labourers who gained their freedom following the 1782 manumission law were forced to live 'precarious and marginal lives, in an increasingly racist society'.⁴⁰²

The visible rise of free African-American communities following the passage of the 1782 manumission bill only increased racial prejudice. Virginia possessed the largest autonomous black population in America at the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁰³ Such was the fear and, at times, contempt that free blacks were subjected to that 'Even the most liberal-minded white compassion ... did not extend to anything approaching social or political parity'.⁴⁰⁴ Numerous observers registered their opposition to the growing quantity of free blacks in Virginia. A letter that appeared in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* in 1782 voiced common fears of the consequences that continued emancipations might have on Virginia's white population. In the piece, the author argued that liberating Virginia's bondsmen and permitting them to remain in the state would 'mongrel the nation and destroy our celestial complexion'.⁴⁰⁵ A further correspondent, 'A Scribbler', expressed

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.40.

³⁹⁸ 'A. Customer', in *The Virginia Gazette*, 2 December 1773, p.1.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.63.

⁴⁰¹ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.486.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p.490.

⁴⁰³ R. McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* - 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.71.

⁴⁰⁴ Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, p.116.

⁴⁰⁵ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.xv.

beliefs that were reminiscent of Jefferson's statements in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Writing in response to an anti-slavery article that had been published in the *Virginia Gazette*, 'A Scribbler' argued that slavery should not be abolished because of 'racial differences'. 'A Scribbler' concluded that these distinctions were not environmental but biological. Accordingly, he contended that, despite the endeavours of white men to improve their status, 'American [Indian] and African organs had proved impenetrable, and the savages still remained savage'.⁴⁰⁶

Many statesmen entertained doubts about the intellectual ability of blacks. Scholars have generally acknowledged that George Mason held similar anxieties to Jefferson. James Broadwater certainly asserts that Mason maintained 'widespread concerns about the capacity of slaves to adjust to freedom'. One rumour - believed to have originated in the 1770s - even suggested that Mason had warned a young Thomas Jefferson against appealing for an immediate emancipation due to worries about the ability of African-Americans to live as freemen.⁴⁰⁷

George Washington's writings illustrate that he, too, did not view blacks as his equals in his youth. Indeed, Washington frequently labelled his slaves 'a Species of Property' before the American Revolution. As Joseph Ellis demonstrates, this was 'very much as he described his dogs and horses'.⁴⁰⁸ Washington also voiced many of the stereotypes attached to black people. In an early case of negative typecasting, Washington asserted - during the winter of 1749-50 - that, because of the cold nights in Fredericksburg, he had 'never had my Cloaths of [*sic*] but lay and sleep in them like a Negro'.⁴⁰⁹

Petitions delivered to the Virginia General Assembly reveal the extent of popular hostility directed towards African-Americans by those from a poorer background than Jefferson. In 1785, the inhabitants of four Virginian counties requested that a Methodist anti-slavery appeal be rejected for fear 'of all the rapes, murders, and outrages, which a vast multitude of unprincipled, unpropertied, revengeful, and remorseless Banditti are capable of perpetrating'.⁴¹⁰ Further, the citizens demanded that legislators 'immediately & totally repeal' the 1782 emancipation bill because the slaves liberated since the passage of the decree had 'been guilty of Thefts & outrages, Insolences & Violences, destructive to the

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁴⁰⁷ J. Broadwater, *George Mason: Forgotten Founder* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.36.

⁴⁰⁸ Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.45.

⁴⁰⁹ G. Washington, 'To Richard', 1749-1750, in W. W. Abbot (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, Vol. 1: 1748 - August 1755 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.44.

⁴¹⁰ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2-3.

Peace, Safety, & Happiness of Society'.⁴¹¹ It is noteworthy that many who signed the petition were from a low-to-middle ranking background. Thus, Simon Holt and John Murphy of Halifax County owned twelve and thirteen slaves respectively in 1782, while James Boyd held just two.⁴¹² Richard Hutchinson (eleven) and Thomas Vaughan (seven) of Mecklenburg County also conformed to this description.⁴¹³

When these examples are considered, it is not surprising that visitors to Virginia commented on the growing racial tensions. For instance, the Marquis de Chastellux contended 'that prejudices are more durable, the more absurd, and the more frivolous' in Virginia.⁴¹⁴ Chastellux represents an interesting case study on 'Enlightened' perceptions of race, for he voiced discriminatory views. Indeed, Chastellux - who was a frequent contact of Jefferson - stated his belief in a diary composed while touring America that 'the more we regard the negroes, the more must we be persuaded that the difference between them and us, consists in something more than complexion'.⁴¹⁵ Nor was Chastellux the only member of Jefferson's associates to entertain a prejudiced stance. Benjamin Rush postulated that the skin colour of Africans had been caused by leprosy and, therefore, 'saw more hope in altering the Negro's color than in changing the white man's repulsion for it'.⁴¹⁶ The examples of Chastellux and Rush demonstrate that Jefferson was not alone amongst Enlightenment thinkers in subscribing to notions of racial difference, as some revisionists have alleged.⁴¹⁷ Indeed, key figures in the growth of Enlightenment doctrines had developed such thinking. David Hume, for instance, claimed: 'there are NEGROE slaves dispersed over all of EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity'.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹¹ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

⁴¹² Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3-4; [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States*, pp.22-23.

⁴¹³ Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.4-5; [Anon], *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States*, pp.32 & 34.

⁴¹⁴ Chastellux, *Travels*, p.291.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.295.

⁴¹⁶ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.560.

⁴¹⁷ Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness'", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, pp.67-68.

⁴¹⁸ B. Gabriel, *The Press and Slavery in America, 1791-1859: The Melancholy Effect of Popular Excitement* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), p.6 contains the quote. Pages 4-8 show further examples of Enlightenment figures claiming racial differences.

Given the growth of racial tensions, it is not surprising that colonization enjoyed a degree of popularity amongst Virginians. As Drew McCoy demonstrates, 'Colonization or removal as a condition of emancipation was an old idea that reached as far back as a 1691 Virginia statute and the activities of Pennsylvania Quakers in the early eighteenth century'.⁴¹⁹ The 1691 law - which formed Colonial policy for thirty-two years - had made it mandatory for all slaves emancipated by their masters to leave Virginia within six months of their liberation.⁴²⁰ Similarly, the first genuine proposal for the abolition of slavery in North America, released in 1714, contained the proviso that all African-Americans be expatriated upon receiving their freedom. If they refused, blacks would be forced to remain in slavery.⁴²¹

However, it was only after the American Revolution that colonization obtained anything approaching popular approval. A key reason for the increase in backing for repatriation was the widespread fear of African-American rebellion. Such concerns appeared in the Declaration of Independence, which accused George III of inciting insurrection amongst Virginia's Native and African-American populations.⁴²² The War of Independence exacerbated these worries. The fears of Old Dominion's white citizens were heightened when the Colonial Governor of Virginia - Lord Dunmore - promised freedom to any slave who had fought for the British in the war.⁴²³ Throughout the conflict, newspapers ran stories about enslaved African-Americans 'undermining the cause of liberty and freedom' by rebelling against their masters.⁴²⁴

That said, not all advocates of colonization supported the measure because they dreaded an African-American insurrection. Some conceived that Virginian society and the economy would benefit if slaves and free blacks were removed to Africa. Thus, the New Jersey-born tutor Phillip Vickers Fithian recorded that he and Robert Carter's wife had agreed that both races would be happier and more prosperous 'if these poor enslaved Africans were all in their native desired Country' and replaced with 'industrious Tenants, who being born in freedom, by a laudable care, would not only enrich their Landlords, but would raise a hardy Offspring to be the Strength and the honour of the Colony'.⁴²⁵

⁴¹⁹ McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.282.

⁴²⁰ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.19.

⁴²¹ D. B. Kates Jr., 'Abolition, Deportation, Integration: Attitudes Toward Slavery in the Early Republic', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Jan., 1968), p.45.

⁴²² Parkinson, 'Exclusion at the Founding', in Hammersley (ed.), *Revolutionary Moments*, p.56; Jefferson, 'A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.99.

⁴²³ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.134.

⁴²⁴ Parkinson, 'Exclusion at the Founding', in Hammersley (ed.), *Revolutionary Moments*, p.59.

⁴²⁵ Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia', in Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters*, p.145.

Jefferson's idea of repatriating free African-Americans enjoyed support amongst some of his political contemporaries. James Madison certainly shared Jefferson's belief that expatriation was the most legitimate way of ending slavery. Indeed, it can be asserted that Madison 'had no other thought than that of deportation as a correlative of emancipation'. Accordingly, he 'cautiously endorsed' William Thornton's proposal to expatriate Virginia's black population in a letter composed in 1788.⁴²⁶ Madison's first clear declaration on the topic appeared in his 1789 'Memorandum on an African Colony for Freed Slaves'. In the composition, the Orange County planter conjectured that exiling America's bondsmen to Africa represented 'the best hope yet presented of putting an end to the slavery in which not less than 600,000 unhappy negroes are now involved'.⁴²⁷ Additionally, Madison queried whether free African-Americans were fit to be incorporated into Virginian society because he adjudged them to have 'retain[ed] the vices and habits of slaves'.⁴²⁸

Nonetheless, in many respects Jefferson's stance on race was extreme by the standards of the late eighteenth century. An interesting case study concerning attitudes towards blacks occurred during the Revolutionary War, when Virginians debated whether African-Americans should be allowed to enrol in American forces. Following eighteen months of discussion, Virginia's legislators agreed that blacks who 'produced a certificate affirming their free status from a local justice of the peace' were able to fight for the Patriots. The regulation was forced by the fact that many recruiters - in their desperation to swell battalions - had already 'happily accepted black Virginians, free and unfree' into their forces before official orders were approved.⁴²⁹ Although the enlistment of blacks was limited in scope, the bill still set Virginia apart from other southern states. For instance, Maryland would not adopt similar legislation until 1780, while all states south of Old Dominion failed to enact comparable laws.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ J. Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1921), p.74; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.552; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.7.

⁴²⁷ J. Madison, 'Memorandum on an African Colony for Freed Slaves', 20 October 1789, in C. F. Hobson, R. A. Rutland, W. M. E. Rachal & J. K. Sisson (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 12: 2 March 1789 - 20 January 1790. With a supplement, 24 October 1775 - 24 January 1789 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), p.437; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.200.

⁴²⁸ Madison, 'Memorandum on an African Colony for Freed Slaves', in Hobson et al. (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 12, p.437.

⁴²⁹ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.261 contains both quotes.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

Patriot leaders acknowledged the debt they owed to black combatants by passing the 1783 bill liberating slaves who had served as substitutes for their masters. The statute was glowing in its description of labourers who had fought in the absence of their owners. Those being released were, according to legislators, to 'enjoy the blessings of freedom as a reward for their toils and labours', having 'contributed towards the establishment of American liberty and independence'.⁴³¹ The wider respect afforded to African-Americans who represented Revolutionary forces is demonstrated by the fact that a significant amount of the 147 listed emancipators in Accomack County between 1782 and 1800 had fought for Virginia - and, therefore, alongside blacks - in the War of Independence.⁴³²

Leading Virginian statesmen also contradicted Jefferson by supporting the use of black soldiers. In particular, George Washington backed the enlistment of African-Americans. Despite entertaining misgivings about proposals to recruit free blacks, Washington consented to the measure on 30 December 1775, having learnt of Lord Dunmore's proclamation promising slaves their freedom if they represented the British military.⁴³³ Thereafter, the General commanded divisions incorporating black people for the remainder of the conflict. Throughout the period, Washington treated African-American soldiers on an equal level to white men and gave little indication that he felt 'blacks to be an inferior species'.⁴³⁴ Of course, Washington's decision was motivated by expedience rather than a desire to dismantle racial barriers. Nonetheless, the enlistments had important effects after the Revolution. First, many slaves who served during the war were granted their liberty following the conclusion of the conflict. More pertinently, the respect afforded those who had fought 'helped set the stage for the first emancipation in the North' and set the wheels in motion for Virginia's 1782 manumission act.⁴³⁵

Nor was the Revolution the only time that Washington served alongside black men. In fact, he had captained a Virginian regiment that contained four African-Americans, whom he valued as 'really Useful as well as Likely', as early as 1755.⁴³⁶ Washington's use of blacks extended beyond the battlefield. For instance, he hired black physicians to treat ailing slaves. Indeed, the General remunerated 'a Negroe Doctr [sic]' for caring for sick

⁴³¹ Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.308; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.36; McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.487.

⁴³² Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.61.

⁴³³ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, pp.2 & 146; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.278; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.204; Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.162; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.21.

⁴³⁴ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.220; Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.162; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.167; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.138; P. D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery", in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Dec., 2005), pp.414-415.

⁴³⁵ P. Finkelman, 'Review: [untitled]', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (Winter 1999), p.104; Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, p.308.

⁴³⁶ Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes'", in *Journal of American Studies*, p.409.

employees in both November 1763 and August 1766.⁴³⁷ Washington also employed African-American overseers at Mount Vernon. At one stage in 1786, the General used trusted slaves as supervisors on three of his five farms.⁴³⁸ If one were to look at these decisions from a sceptical perspective, it is true that Washington benefitted from employing African-Americans in these roles. Black doctors certainly charged less than white physicians. Equally, appointing African-American overseers served to divide slave communities, whilst encouraging loyalty to the master on the part of the promoted bondsperson.

Yet the above instances, when combined with additional aspects of Washington's private conduct, highlight a more advanced position on race than Jefferson entertained. Most importantly, Washington - unlike Jefferson - accepted that blacks were capable of intellectual achievement. In late 1775, Washington received a poem from the African-American lyricist Phillis Wheatley, in which the author heaped praise on the General.⁴³⁹ In his reply to Wheatley, sent in February 1776, Washington applauded the poet's work, for he felt its 'style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your great poetical Talents'.⁴⁴⁰ Washington was so impressed by Wheatley that he offered her the chance to visit him at either his army base or Mount Vernon, as he would 'be happy to see a person so favoured [sic] by the Muses'. While ego governed some of his behaviour towards Wheatley, it is noteworthy that Washington's attitude contrasted strongly with Jefferson's, who used *Notes on the State of Virginia* to deride the poet.⁴⁴¹ Washington had previously stated his admiration for Wheatley in a letter addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Reed on 10 February 1776. In the communication, Washington hailed Wheatley as a 'great poetical Genius' and admitted that he 'had a great Mind to publish the Poem'.⁴⁴²

There is also evidence that James Madison did not fully ascribe to Jefferson's derogatory view of blacks. Like Washington, Madison supported the participation of

⁴³⁷ G. Washington, 'Cash Accounts', November 1763, in W. W. Abbot & D. Twohig (eds.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, Vol. 7: *January 1761 - June 1767* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.268; G. Washington, 'Cash Accounts', August 1766, in W. W. Abbot & D. Twohig (eds.), *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, Vol. 7: *January 1761 - June 1767* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.458; Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes'", in *Journal of American Studies*, p.410.

⁴³⁸ Rasmussen & Tilton, *George Washington*, p.198; Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.283-284; Walsh, 'Slavery and Agriculture at Mount Vernon', in Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, p.67; Flexner, *Washington*, p.390 claims that all five of Washington's farms were ran by black overseers in 1788; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.39.

⁴³⁹ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.22.

⁴⁴⁰ G. Washington, 'To Phillis Wheatley', Cambridge, 28 February 1776, in P. D. Chase (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series*, Vol. 3: *January - March 1776* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), p.387.

⁴⁴¹ Washington, 'To Phillis Wheatley', in Chase (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington*, Vol. 3, p.387; Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes'", in *Journal of American Studies*, p.415; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.51.

⁴⁴² G. Washington, 'To Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Reed', Cambridge, 10 February 1776, in P. D. Chase (ed.), *The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series*, Vol. 3: *January - March 1776* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), p.290; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.208; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.89.

African-Americans in the War of Independence. As we have seen, Madison had reacted to a proposal to offer slaves as an incentive to white men who joined American forces by suggesting that African-Americans be liberated and allowed to serve instead.⁴⁴³ Madison felt that manumitted bondsmen should be drafted into Virginia's militia because such a scheme 'wd. certainly be more consonant to the principles of liberty which ought never to be lost sight of in a contest for liberty'.⁴⁴⁴ Equally, Madison supported blacks in legal matters after the Revolution. In 1778, he undoubtedly worked to have a slave, Toby, pardoned after he had been sentenced to death for burglary.⁴⁴⁵

Nor were Jefferson's statements concerning African-Americans an accurate representation of the opinions maintained by his former tutor at William and Mary College, George Wythe. In fact, as Alan Taylor postulates, Wythe 'was a rare Virginian to argue that the races could peacefully live together in freedom as equals'.⁴⁴⁶ Wythe certainly adopted Michael Brown - a Virginian African-American - in the early 1780s and educated him to become a gentleman.⁴⁴⁷ Nor did Robert Carter maintain Jefferson's aversion to African-Americans. Throughout his writings there are no comments that hint towards Carter possessing a comparable prejudice to Jefferson. Indeed, Carter's actions consistently demonstrated that he believed African-Americans deserved greater rights. Thus, he allowed his slaves to attend desegregated religious meetings and dances at Nomini Hall. Philip Vickers Fithian even recorded that Carter's sons had danced and played the banjo with slaves in February 1774.⁴⁴⁸ Carter's faith in his bondsmen was such that he risked the wrath of fellow whites to support his slaves. In April 1781, Carter was rebuked by Richard Henry Lee for breaking Virginian protocol and sending two African-Americans to receive staples of corn he was owed. Undeterred, Carter repeated the act a month later.⁴⁴⁹

Religious abolitionists were also less prejudiced than Jefferson. Robert Pleasants was a high-profile Quaker of the era who openly challenged the belief that blacks were inferior to whites. In a letter to the *Virginia Gazette* in June 1782, Pleasants - writing under the pseudonym 'A Virginian' - asserted that any deficiencies in African-American intellect could be ascribed 'to their Education and usage'. To buttress his contentions, Pleasants

⁴⁴³ J. Madison, 'To Joseph Jones', Philadelphia, 28 November 1780, in W. T. Hutchinson & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 2: 20 March 1780 - 23 February 1781 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962), p.209; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.139; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.78.

⁴⁴⁴ Madison, 'To Joseph Jones', in Hutchinson & Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 2, p.209; Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher*, p.101.

⁴⁴⁵ J. Madison, 'Session of Virginia Council of State', 12 June 1778, in W. T. Hutchinson & W. M. E. Rachal (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 1: 16 March 1751 - 16 December 1779 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962), p.243.

⁴⁴⁶ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.105.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia', in Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters*, p.103; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.104.

⁴⁴⁹ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.109.

stated that African-Americans were 'as capable of improvement as the whites, and several of them have discovered good genius's [sic] for trades'.⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, Pleasants affirmed that 'blacks and whites could co-exist as equals' in a dispatch sent to the Virginian lawyer St. George Tucker. The Quaker acted upon this conviction by outlining plans to create a schooling system for black children.⁴⁵¹

Dissenting denominations were generally in advance of their fellow citizens in their views on race. In 1779, the annual meeting of Virginia's Quakers implored local groups to 'advise & assist' liberated African-Americans 'on all occasions particularly in promoting their instruction in the principles of the Christian religion' and 'the pious Education of their Children'.⁴⁵² Thereafter, many Quaker meeting-houses staged evening literacy classes for slaves throughout the 1780s.⁴⁵³ Furthermore, Methodists in Pittsylvania County denounced the prejudice displayed by their contemporaries in a petition sent to the Virginia General Assembly in November 1785. The memorialists - perhaps referencing Jefferson's comments in *Notes on the State of Virginia* - declared 'That the arguments drawn from the difference of Hair, Features and Colour, are so beneath the man of sense, much more the Christian, that we would not insult the honourable ... assembly by enlarging upon them'.⁴⁵⁴ Instead, the petitioners contended that any intellectual deficiencies possessed by Virginia's slaves were a consequence of 'the deep debasement of' their condition, which they deemed a 'necessary consequence of slavery'.⁴⁵⁵

Additional evidence demonstrates that at least a minority of Virginians derided the view that African-Americans were inherently inferior to their masters.⁴⁵⁶ Newspapers of the epoch suggest that some amongst the lesser-known members of Virginian society rejected notions of racial inequality. In a letter that appeared in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* in January 1788, a correspondent writing under the pseudonym 'Juveniles Vindex' undoubtedly criticised his fellow Virginians for believing that African-Americans were a lesser race than whites. 'Vindex' argued that God 'never designed that one part of his

⁴⁵⁰ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.121.

⁴⁵¹ M. K. Curtis, 'St. George Tucker and the Legacy of Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), p.1153 contains the quote; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.357; Stanton, 'Jefferson's People', in Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, p.95; Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness'", in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.167.

⁴⁵² 'Virginia Yearly Meeting Minutes, 1779 [extracts]', 1779-05, Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/159, p.2.

⁴⁵³ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.157.

⁴⁵⁴ Electors: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.1-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.25.

people should be so subject to the other, as [in] the state of abject servitude now legalised in Virginia'.⁴⁵⁷

Moreover, many whites were prepared to assist blacks in legal matters. For example, some made representations in favour of African-Americans seeking to obtain their freedom. In December 1783, Thomas Hope of Halifax County used his capacity as executor of Walter Robertson's will to appeal for state legislators to allow Robertson's former slaves - Anne and Margaret Rose - to be freed and permitted to stay in Virginia. This was slightly against the terms of Robertson's original testament - composed prior to the passing of the 1782 emancipation laws - which had asked for the two slaves to be taken 'to a port in great Brittain [*sic*], where he well knew, that the Laws of that Kingdom, would declare us free, to all intents and purposes'.⁴⁵⁸ Combined, Robertson and Hope's actions on behalf of the two bondswomen illustrate that at least some Virginians believed African-Americans could perform a full role in free society.

African-Americans sometimes worked alongside whites to challenge elites. For instance, Philip Morgan highlights incidents in which poorer Virginians assisted slaves in their endeavours to escape plantation life as evidence that positive relationships could be formed across the racial divide.⁴⁵⁹ It is certainly true that many advertisements for runaways suspected that local whites had aided bondsmen in fleeing. In June 1768, Jane Vobe of Williamsburg requested assistance in locating her thirty-five-year old slave, Nanny, who she thought had 'gone off with some of the comedians who have just left this town, with some of whom ... she had connections, and was seen very busy talking privately with'.⁴⁶⁰ Similarly, Richard Hipkins appealed for the return of his young slave, Peg, in 1775. Hipkins reported that Peg had been transported from Essex County to Norfolk County aboard a 'sloop' which was being driven by a white man. Further, the master alleged that his slave had been 'prevailed on to go off, as she went away without the least provocation, and never was guilty of the like before'.⁴⁶¹

There is also evidence that Jefferson's belief in colonizing free blacks was not widely held in the Revolutionary era. In fact, Robert Forbes highlights the enlistment of African-Americans in the same regiments as white soldiers as 'powerful evidence that the

⁴⁵⁷ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.87.

⁴⁵⁸ Rose, Ann & Margaret: Petition, Halifax County, 1783-12-05, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁵⁹ P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.306.

⁴⁶⁰ *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), 30 June 1768, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=68.PD.28>.

⁴⁶¹ *The Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), 12 January 1775, p.3. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=75.Pi.03>.

removal of blacks was not viewed as necessary, or even desirable' before 1785.⁴⁶²

Furthermore, it can be argued that the planters who freed their labourers after the approval of the 1782 emancipation act were not advocates of Jefferson's plan, for there was no requirement in the bill for liberated slaves to leave Virginia. This fact even suggests that state legislators held no objections to free African-Americans remaining in Virginia, for amendments requiring emancipated blacks to leave the state were not enacted until 1806.

Amongst leading figures, James Monroe was not an enthusiastic supporter of colonization until the Gabriel Prosser rebellion of 1800. Thus, he rejected 'legislation to exile all manumitted slaves from the state within a year of their emancipation' while serving in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1788.⁴⁶³ Other eminent politicians queried the viability of expatriation. Indeed, Patrick Henry labelled the idea 'impracticable' in 1766.⁴⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, many abolitionists in Virginia rebuffed colonization as a remedy for America's slavery problem. Francis Asbury's diary and correspondence certainly attest to the fact that the Methodists were sceptical about the expediency of Jefferson's solution, while Robert Pleasants later stated his aversion to expatriation ideas.⁴⁶⁵

Conclusions: A Missed Opportunity

Placing Jefferson within the context of his era shows that - despite reflecting some wider tendencies concerning slavery, ownership and race - the extent to which he was representative of Virginian society in the years between 1769 and 1789 has been overplayed by scholars.⁴⁶⁶ The reasons behind these similarities and differences offer a glimpse into the evolution of Jefferson's views and Virginian society during this tumultuous epoch in American history.

The aspect in which Jefferson enjoyed most parallels with his peers in the Revolutionary era was ownership. Those who praise Jefferson are keen to emphasise that he was a benevolent master by the improving standards of mid-to-late eighteenth century Virginia.⁴⁶⁷ The foregoing analysis questions this reading. Jefferson certainly followed wider trends by buying and selling slaves with apparent disregard for the disruptive impact this had on broader plantation relationships. He also ruthlessly pursued runaways and issued

⁴⁶² Forbes, "'The Cause of This Blackness'", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.81.

⁴⁶³ A. Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1999), p.574.

⁴⁶⁴ Broadwater, *George Mason*, p.37.

⁴⁶⁵ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.237; McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.186 details Asbury's scepticism.

⁴⁶⁶ G. Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p.38.

⁴⁶⁷ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.503 discusses this tendency.

instructions for all his slaves, be they children or the elderly, to be worked hard by overseers. Indeed, even Robert Carter - generally considered to be one of the more liberal owners of the epoch - endeavoured to regain slaves who absconded from Nomini Hall during the Revolutionary Wars.⁴⁶⁸ Finally, by working from dawn until dusk for six days a week, slaves at Monticello were undertaking similar duties to those on other plantations.⁴⁶⁹

Moreover, elements of Jefferson's views on race were popular in Virginia. Prejudice against African-Americans was a part of Virginian society throughout the era, as it had been before the Revolution. In particular, the range of petitions delivered to the Virginian General Assembly in 1785 remonstrating at the rapid increase of the state's free black population highlight an increasing antipathy towards blacks that crossed social divisions.⁴⁷⁰ This antagonism partially explains Jefferson's position. Brought up in a society that treated blacks as subordinates, it is not surprising that Jefferson ascribed to negative stereotypes. Arthur Lee's 1764 exposition on slavery and testimony provided by Methodist anti-slavery activists certainly illustrate that Jefferson was not alone in contending that African-Americans were inferior to whites. This questions Robert Forbes' assertion that Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* sentiments represented a sea-change in Virginian perceptions of race.⁴⁷¹

Aspects of Jefferson's position on slavery evolved in a similar fashion to wider Virginian beliefs. Legislators certainly matched Jefferson's early efforts against the system by enacting relatively anti-slavery laws in 1778, 1782 and 1783. Jefferson, meanwhile, succeeded in ensuring that slavery was not permitted in new states admitted to the northwest of Virginia through the 1787 Ordinance. The activities of both Jefferson and Virginia's lawmakers, though, waned quickly towards the end of the period.⁴⁷² Jefferson also shared much in common with his fellow statesmen. The conviction that slavery could only be abolished gradually - a keystone of early Jeffersonian thought - obtained widespread approval amongst elites. Moreover, the contradictions in Jefferson's post-Revolutionary stance - especially his frequent criticism of slavery while doing nothing to challenge his own reliance on the labour of slaves - were obvious in the conduct of most of his peers. Leading figures in Virginia queued up to denounce slavery and stress their desire

⁴⁶⁸ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.111.

⁴⁶⁹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.62.

⁴⁷⁰ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3.

⁴⁷¹ Forbes, "The Cause of This Blackness", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.65.

⁴⁷² McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.488.

to see it abolished.⁴⁷³ Yet none took the most obvious anti-slavery step of all and manumitted their own labourers during the fifteen years after the American Revolution. Indeed, only George Washington eventually liberated all his slaves.⁴⁷⁴

Nonetheless, in every aspect there were important differences between Jefferson's position and that of some Virginians. Principally, the analysis illustrates that Jefferson's prejudice was more firmly held than that of many Virginians. Thus, while he was not alone in thinking blacks inferior, Jefferson's dismantling of African-American intellect in *Notes on the State of Virginia* was still extreme by eighteenth century standards.⁴⁷⁵ Although this does not mean that most Virginians disagreed with Jefferson's assertions, it is noteworthy that few stated comparable views as openly as the author of the Declaration of Independence. These perspectives were particularly scarce amongst leading figures. Thus, despite making statements that undermined African-Americans, George Washington and James Madison both showed themselves to be more prepared than Jefferson to acknowledge black accomplishment. Washington's treatment of Phyllis Wheatley is a strong example of this.⁴⁷⁶

Equally, many Quakers and Methodists held positions on race that were far in advance of Jefferson's. For instance, Robert Pleasants highlighted the predominant Quaker opinion that blacks were degraded by their enslaved status, as opposed to being inherently inferior.⁴⁷⁷ For this reason, Friends rejected the belief that free African-Americans had to be removed from Virginia. Overall, Jefferson was not a great indicator of perceptions on colonization. Although the idea was beginning to obtain greater support as the number of free African-Americans swelled, Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* articulated one of the first expatriation proposals since the early eighteenth century.⁴⁷⁸ The lack of thought given to colonization is exemplified by the fact that the 1782 manumission act contained no provision for the removal of those liberated by their masters. Similarly, the 1778 bill that terminated Virginia's involvement in the slave trade allowed all Africans transported into the state illegally to enjoy their freedom.⁴⁷⁹

Regarding slavery, Jefferson's representativeness has been comparably overstated. On the one hand, his refusal to emancipate his slaves must be contrasted with the conduct

⁴⁷³ J. J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), pp.17-18 describes this inactivity.

⁴⁷⁴ Flexner, *Washington*, p.385.

⁴⁷⁵ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.481.

⁴⁷⁶ Forbes, "The Cause of This Blackness", in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.73; Morgan, "To Get Quit of Negroes", in *Journal of American Studies*, p.415.

⁴⁷⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.121.

⁴⁷⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers*, p.123.

⁴⁷⁹ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.197.

of those who freed their labourers during the period. Jefferson's post-1784 decline also means that his early actions against slavery failed to match the consistent endeavours of both the Quakers and the Methodists throughout the post-Revolutionary epoch. This failure can be somewhat explained by his reluctance to part with a system that sustained him economically and his strong prejudices, which prevented him seeing free blacks making useful citizens in his native state. Combined, these factors meant that he missed the opportunity to free his own slaves and mount a sustained assault on slavery.

Paradoxically, the analysis has illustrated that Jefferson's willingness to act against slavery was dampened by the fact that his position on the topic was well in advance of that maintained by many smaller and middle ranking planters. These individuals vigorously defended their right to own human property following the American Revolution and were often openly hostile to those who advanced an anti-slavery agenda.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, Jefferson was right to postulate that the 'public mind' would not have countenanced the gradual abolition plans passed in northern states in the early years of the New Republic.⁴⁸¹ The fact that hundreds of petitioners in 1785 could evoke arguments surrounding racial differences and scripture to defend slavery further demonstrates that it would have been impossible to oversee the eradication of the institution at this time.⁴⁸² Additionally, no other leader of the Revolutionary generation was prepared to forward a manumission bill to Virginian legislators, as Jefferson did in 1769. Nor did Jefferson's Virginian peers produce ideas that would have prevented slavery's future expansion, like the Northwest Ordinance.⁴⁸³ For all these reasons, it is misguided to see Jefferson as an accurate example of the broad range of opinion contained in Virginia in the years after the American Revolution.

Having discerned these trends during the Revolutionary epoch, the project now investigates whether any changes in Jefferson or Virginia's position can be discerned in the years between 1789 and 1809, when the author of the Declaration of Independence served as a national statesman.

⁴⁸⁰ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.90.

⁴⁸¹ Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.44.

⁴⁸² Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Brunswick County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

⁴⁸³ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.510.

Chapter Three: 1789-1809 - Jefferson the Statesman

In September 1789, Thomas Jefferson was recalled from his post as American ambassador to France. Upon returning to the United States, he was appointed the nation's first Secretary of State by the newly elected President, George Washington. The promotion marked the start of a twenty-year period that also saw Jefferson assume the roles of Vice President and (between 1801 and 1809) President of America.¹ The eight years following Jefferson's inauguration were amongst the most important in the formative days of the American Republic. Just two years into his Presidency, Jefferson oversaw the purchase of territories to the west of America that nearly doubled the size of the country.² As well as securing the Louisiana region, Jefferson pursued domestic policies that reduced the national debt and decreased the taxes levied on citizens. Most importantly, he supervised the official end of American involvement in the international slave trade when Congress voted to close the traffic from January 1808.³

Jefferson's ascent to the most powerful position in the New Republic was in stark contrast to the situation in which Virginia's African-American population found themselves. Despite an increase in emancipations following the enactment of liberal manumission laws in 1782, the number of enslaved Virginians augmented from 293,000 in 1790 to 392,000 in 1810.⁴ By the conclusion of Jefferson's Presidency the chains of bondage had been tightened by legislation - approved in 1806 - that required all slaves liberated in future to leave Virginia within one year of receiving their freedom.⁵ Such developments reflected a wider decline in Revolutionary ideals. Not only did slavery become more entrenched, but 'planter elites fought off the evangelical challenge to bring back a measure of hierarchy to the organisation of religion in the South'.⁶

This chapter places Jefferson's perspectives on slavery, race and colonization within the context of Virginian society between 1789 and 1809. By doing so, it determines whether previous scholarship has overstated the extent to which Jefferson reflected wider opinion during his time as a national statesman. Moreover, Jefferson's conduct as a master is compared with that of his fellow planters in Old Dominion. Reasons behind the

¹ J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), p.120.

² H. Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.251.

³ W. D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.130.

⁴ R. McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* - 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), pp.71-72.

⁵ W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p.348.

⁶ D. Brown & C. Webb, *Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.82.

similarities and differences that emerge are highlighted. The chapter starts with an introduction that outlines important events in the epoch. The topics of slavery, ownership and race are then evaluated individually, before the evaluation reaches a conclusion concerning the discussed issues. Ascertaining Jefferson's position in these years is crucial, for the period between 1789 and 1809 has been widely viewed as one that witnessed a decline in both his and Virginia's anti-slavery activism.⁷ Furthermore, David Brown and Clive Webb assert that 'Many Virginians followed' Jefferson's 'line of thinking' regarding the necessity of colonization in this era.⁸

The following passages buttress elements of this reading but demonstrate that Jefferson should not be regarded as indicative of the range of opinions held in his native state. Instead, his position on slavery was again influenced by public opinion, which became increasingly hostile to abolitionist efforts. Furthermore, the analysis supports Alan Taylor's assertion that paternalism did not improve the lives of slaves to the extent previously believed.⁹ Importantly, Jefferson is found to be complicit in the daily suffering that African-Americans endured, for he continued his involvement in the trading of slaves. Moreover, the policies of his administration contributed to the growth of America's internal slave market. The picture is even bleaker when it comes to race. The chapter finds that, although his assertions of black inferiority became more accepted, Virginian perceptions of African-Americans were still not as negative as Jefferson's. Nonetheless, his influence on wider views was visible in the growth of colonization plans that referenced his proposal in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Despite these negative conclusions, anti-slavery activism had not disappeared entirely in America by 1810. Northern states continued their efforts to diminish slavery, with New York and New Jersey joining Vermont, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts in implementing gradual emancipation schemes. By 1804, therefore, all states north of Pennsylvania had passed laws permitting the phased abolition of slavery.¹⁰ In the South, meanwhile, North Carolina followed Virginia, Delaware and Maryland in banning the further importation of labourers via the Atlantic slave trade.¹¹

Nevertheless, abolitionist thought enjoyed little overall success below the Mason-Dixie line. Despite the incursions of the 1780s, the colonial status-quo was maintained in

⁷ J. E. Ferling, *The First of Men: A Life of George Washington* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), pp.475-476; W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.511.

⁸ Brown & Webb, *Race in the American South*, p.82.

⁹ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.51.

¹⁰ F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.342.

¹¹ U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* - 2nd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p.121.

all states south of Washington, D. C. until the American Civil War.¹² James Madison alluded to the obstacles facing southern emancipationists when he noted in 1791 that 'the States holding fewest slaves are those which most readily abolished slavery altogether'.¹³ These broader trends were evident in Virginia, which still possessed more bondsmen than any other state in 1800.¹⁴ Numerous factors contributed to this inertia. Economic conditions hindered endeavours to rid the South of slavery. The financial significance of the institution was buttressed by the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin in 1793.¹⁵ The impact of Whitney's creation was demonstrated by the growth of cotton production in America. Just 6,000 bales of the material were manufactured in slaveholding states in 1792. By 1810 the amount had risen to 178,000.¹⁶ This mass production of cotton 'transformed plantation profit margins' and had a profound impact on the lives of slaves.¹⁷ Of greatest consequence to Virginian bondsmen was the increase in their value as property. Famine and a subsequent downturn in demand for tobacco had meant that many planters owned a surplus of labourers in the 1780s. In the years after the passage of the 1782 emancipation bill, some masters reacted to this excess supply of workers by liberating their slaves. However, the advent of the cotton gin created a heightened demand for labourers in the Deep South states of Georgia and South Carolina. This, in turn, increased the value of slaves, leading many Virginian slaveholders to sell large numbers of African-Americans to planters in the Cotton Belt, rather than pursue their emancipation.¹⁸ Indeed, the quantity of slaves in South Carolina more than tripled between 1790 and 1810, creating a change in the political balance in the South.¹⁹

As well as intensifying its role in the Deep South, slavery continued to expand its geographical reach throughout Virginia, with planters steadily maintaining their westward move from Tidewater areas to the Piedmont and - increasingly - west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In fact, for the first time since Africans arrived in Virginia in 1620, there were more slaves recorded in the Piedmont than the Tidewater in the 1790 census.²⁰ Both

¹² J. J. Ellis, 'Introduction', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.5.

¹³ J. Madison, 'James Madison to Robert Walsh', 27 November 1791, in J. N. Rakove (ed.), *James Madison: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1999), p.743; A. Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.106; Brown & Webb, *Race in the American South*, pp.68-69.

¹⁴ A. Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p.3; See appendix 1.5 on p.330 for the dispersion of slavery in the Tidewater in 1790.

¹⁵ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.90.

¹⁶ Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, p.126.

¹⁷ A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), p.xvii.

¹⁸ A. Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility: Manumission in Brunswick County, Virginia, 1782-1862', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (Nov., 2004), p.555; Rothman, *Slave Country*, p.4.

¹⁹ Brown & Webb, *Race in the American South*, p.83.

²⁰ Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.542.

economic and social concerns precipitated this trend. Soil exhaustion had made the cultivation of tobacco - largely the chosen crop of middle-ranking farmers - increasingly difficult in eastern counties, forcing yeomen to seek fertile ground in the west. Moreover, living conditions in eastern counties were generally less pleasant than those in central and western Virginia. English preacher Harry Toulmin certainly recalled that 'The climate and country' of Norfolk County - stationed on the eastern seaboard - were 'very unpleasant' when he visited in 1793.²¹

Slavery: The Decline of Revolutionary Ideals

The importance of the Piedmont was mirrored on a national level by arguably its most famous resident, Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's stance on slavery became increasingly complex during his career as a national statesman. In private correspondence, at least, he still sounded anti-slavery, especially when conversing with those he knew were hostile to the system. Thus, Jefferson registered his distaste for slavery when writing to the Virginian lawyer St. George Tucker in 1797. Jefferson was responding after receiving a copy of Tucker's anti-slavery pamphlet *A Dissertation on Slavery*. Jefferson praised Tucker's work and appealed for a gradual abolition to be 'permitted to proceed peaceably to its ultimate effect'.²² This aversion was maintained into his Presidency, during which Jefferson regularly lamented the institution in his letters. In fact, at various times he labelled slavery 'a burden' and 'a blot' on southern states.²³ Equally, he claimed to be frustrated at the limitations that the Presidency placed on his anti-slavery capacity and admitted to finding it 'painful' that he could not speak in favour of emancipation when writing to the anti-slavery campaigner George Logan in 1805.²⁴ Nonetheless, he still positioned himself behind the emancipationist cause, stating: 'Should an occasion ever occur in which I can interpose with decisive effect, I shall certainly ... do my duty with promptitude & zeal'.²⁵

²¹ M. Tinning & G. Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793: Reports on Kentucky and Virginia by Harry Toulmin* (San Marino, Ca.: Henry E. Huntington Library, 1948), p.24; Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.542 discusses the impact of soil depletion in Virginia; see appendix 1.6, p.335 for more information about Toulmin.

²² T. Jefferson, 'To St. George Tucker', Monticello, 28 August 1797, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.485; see appendix 1.6, p.335 for a biography of Tucker.

²³ T. Jefferson, 'To William A. Burwell', Washington, 28 January 1805, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.491; C. Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race": Jefferson and the "Amelioration" of Slavery, ca. 1770-1826', in *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p.190 discusses Jefferson's frustration; for information about Burwell, see appendix 1.6, p.332.

²⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. George Logan', Washington, 11 May 1805, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8: 1801 - 1806 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p.352; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.86.

²⁵ Jefferson, 'To Dr. George Logan', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8, p.352.

Jefferson's conduct demonstrated that he was prepared to act on his words, but only to a limited extent. Most importantly, he liberated two of his labourers. First, on 24 December 1794, an entry in his *Farm Book* noted that Jefferson had 'manumitted and made free Robert Hemings, son of Betty Hemmings'.²⁶ Fourteen months later he recorded receiving '30.D.' from James Hemings after completing his emancipation.²⁷

Jefferson's work against the international slave trade represented his most noteworthy slavery-related achievement as a national statesman. His continuing distaste for the trafficking of Africans into slavery was expressed when corresponding with Christopher Ellery in 1803. Replying to questions from the Rhode Island senator about the punishment meted to a man who had breached regulations against the trade, Jefferson registered his abhorrence at the protagonist's actions. After outlining the negative effects of the offender's deeds upon his family, Jefferson rejected calls for the case to be reheard because he felt sympathy for 'the condition of the unhappy human beings whom he forcibly brought away from their native country'.²⁸ Consequently, Jefferson was delighted when Congress outlawed the United States' involvement in the international trade in 1806. His sixth annual address as President congratulated Americans for ceasing their 'participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa'.²⁹

Nonetheless, Jefferson's attacks on the international slave trade cannot conceal the fact that his opposition to slavery waned during his public career. Indeed, he often proved a hindrance to those seeking to challenge slavery. Jefferson certainly withheld support for anti-slavery proposals. In August 1796, for instance, he claimed he was 'not prepared to decide' on the viability of a general manumission plan forwarded to him by the Quaker activist Robert Pleasants. Revealingly, Jefferson warned Pleasants 'that private liberalities will never be equal but to local ... effects'.³⁰ Similarly, he rebuffed George Logan's request to endorse an emancipationist poem in 1805 because he feared that acknowledging the pamphlet 'would cause political alarm'.³¹ Jefferson failed to support the composition as he felt such constructs were 'one of those little irritating measures, which ...

²⁶ T. Jefferson, 'Freeing of Robert Hemings', 24 December 1794, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.15.

²⁷ T. Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1796', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.16.

²⁸ T. Jefferson, 'To Christopher Ellery', Washington, 19 May 1803, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.490.

²⁹ T. Jefferson, 'Sixth Annual Message', 2 December 1806, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.528.

³⁰ T. Jefferson, 'To Robert Pleasants', 27 August 1796, in B. B. Oberg (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 29: 1 March 1796 - 31 December 1797 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p.177.

³¹ Jefferson, 'To Dr. George Logan', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8, p.352; E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p.6.

would ... lessen my powers of doing them good in the other great relations in which I stand to the publick [*sic*].³² This decline was further revealed by statements Jefferson made that suggested he no longer believed the institution could be abolished. In a letter penned to William Burwell in 1805, the President admitted that he had 'given up the expectation of any early provision for the extinguishment of slavery among us'.³³

Although Jefferson's excuse for not pursuing an aggressive anti-slavery posture had some validity - especially when one considers that he was campaigning to be elected President from 1795 onwards - it undeniably supported claims that he was more concerned about his popular image than the eradication of slavery.³⁴ This suggestion is buttressed by his refusal to join the Virginia Abolition Society (VAS), formed in Richmond in 1791. By contrast, other leading figures from the Revolutionary era - including Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and Benjamin Franklin - subscribed to similar groups in northern states. More pertinently, James Wood was elected Vice-President of the VAS while serving as Governor of Virginia between 1796 and 1799.³⁵ Jefferson's friends were left frustrated by his inaction. One French dignitary bemoaned the fact that Jefferson saw 'so many difficulties in their emancipation ... that it is thus reduced to the impossible'.³⁶ This disenchantment was elucidated in a letter Jefferson received from 'A Slave' in 1807, in which the unidentified correspondent chided him for refusing to act against the 'fatal wound' that slavery represented.³⁷

Recent scholarship has also highlighted that the majority of the policies overseen by the Jefferson administration strengthened slavery.³⁸ Jefferson undoubtedly assisted southern congressmen in their endeavours to ensure that the system was permitted in the Louisiana Territories following their purchase in 1803.³⁹ Furthermore, he allowed the Governor of Indiana - William Henry Harrison - to effectively traverse the terms of the 1787 Northwest Ordinance by legislating for the employment of black indentured servants in a

³² Jefferson, 'To Dr. George Logan', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8, p.352; McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.130 discusses Jefferson's rejection of the poem.

³³ Jefferson, 'To William A. Burwell', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.491.

³⁴ M. D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.153 & 1000; this accusation is also discussed in R. G. Kennedy, *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.29.

³⁵ P. Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson - 2nd ed.* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p.252; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp.28 & 176; D. B. Davis, *Was Thomas Jefferson an Authentic enemy of slavery? An inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 18 February 1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.6 contains information on Hamilton, Jay and Franklin; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.435; D. J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.128.

³⁶ Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.95.

³⁷ T. N. Baker (ed.), "'A Slave" Writes Thomas Jefferson', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan., 2011), p.153.

³⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.103.

³⁹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.103; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p.180.

condition that was similar to slavery.⁴⁰ Moreover, the 1806 ban on the international slave trade contained important limitations that ensured it could not dent American slavery. Principally, the bill failed to hinder the rapidly expanding internal slave trade.⁴¹ By abolishing the trans-Atlantic trade without challenging America's interstate traffic, Jefferson's government harnessed a culture that 'witnessed the rise of professional traders, local and long-distance, who dominated the marketplace' in the early nineteenth century.⁴² Overall, 124,000 slaves were sold by planters in Maryland and Virginia in the decade following 1810, with an estimated 77,000 being resettled in the states acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.⁴³

Many factors contributed to the decline of Jefferson's anti-slavery activities. First, revisionists have stressed that economic self-interest governed his decision to distance himself from the abolitionist movement. Evidence certainly suggests that Jefferson's desire to challenge slavery diminished quickly in the 1790s, as he recognised the financial value of the institution to his Monticello estate. While serving as Secretary of State, for instance, Jefferson worked closely with Eli Whitney when the latter was patenting the cotton gin. Far from being concerned about the impact of the innovation on America's slaves, Jefferson expressed his delight at the development.⁴⁴ In fact, he asked Whitney whether the device could be 'worked by hand, & by how many hands?'⁴⁵ This self-centredness was elucidated in Jefferson's correspondence. For example, when writing to his son-in-law in 1792, Jefferson relayed his delight at the treatment meted out by one of his overseers. Revealingly, Jefferson stated his desire that his slaves 'may enable me to have that treatment continued by making as much as will admit it'.⁴⁶

However, financial self-interest only partially explains Jefferson's dwindling faith in abolition. To fully understand why his opposition to slavery declined it is necessary to look at wider Virginian attitudes to the system. In many respects, Jefferson's inconsistent stance

⁴⁰ G. R. Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans: "An American Dilemma" from Slavery to the White House* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.50.

⁴¹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.104.

⁴² B. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.177.

⁴³ J. Sidbury, 'Thomas Jefferson in Gabriel's Virginia', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), pp.206-207.

⁴⁴ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.259 provides this critique of Jefferson.

⁴⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Eli Whitney', Germantown, 16 November 1793, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), pp.248-249.

⁴⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', Philadelphia, 19 April 1792, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.12.

reflected broader difficulties Old Dominion had with the topic. Numerous wealthy Virginians still felt compelled to register their private distaste for slavery, particularly when speaking to observers who disliked the institution. The accounts provided by visitors to the state demonstrate that discontent with the system was shared by many of Jefferson's contemporaries. Thus, John Bernard - an English comedian who toured America from 1797 to 1811 - asserted: 'I do not remember a single instance of a planter defending the origin of his possessions, or one who defended the continuance of slavery by other than this single argument; that human agency is required in the cultivation of the Southern soil'.⁴⁷ Virginian observers also maintained that anti-slavery feeling held roots in their state. The lawyer George Tucker certainly noted in 1801 that many citizens were 'for laying the axe to the root, and at once extirpating this growing evil'.⁴⁸

Yet subtle changes to the anti-slavery movement were becoming evident. Jefferson's conviction that the future abolition of slavery needed to be a gradual undertaking undoubtedly gained adherents. In 1790, the Virginian planter Ferdinando Fairfax noted: 'It seems to be the general opinion, that emancipation must be gradual, since, to deprive a man, at once, of all his right in the property of negroes, would be the height of injustice'.⁴⁹ Indeed, it became difficult to find anyone who thought the institution could be instantly eradicated. The Virginia Abolition Society even advocated the creation of a law 'declaring the Children of Slaves now born, or to be born after the passing of such Act to be Free, as they come to proper ages', having acknowledged 'the objection that probably would arise to a general and immediate Emancipation'.⁵⁰ This perspective was common amongst Nonconformist emancipationists. When writing to James Madison in June 1791, the Quaker abolitionist Robert Pleasants articulated the 'strong desire I have of seeing some plan for a gradual Emancipation promoted in this state'.⁵¹ Similarly, leading Baptist John Leland conceded that abolition was 'not the work of a day'.⁵²

⁴⁷ J. Bernard, *Retrospections of America, 1797-1811* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1887), p.147; see appendix 1.6, p.331 for more information about Bernard.

⁴⁸ G. Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia, on the Subject of the Late Conspiracy of the Slaves; With a Proposal for their Colonization* (Baltimore: Bonsal & Niles, 1801), p.5. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008677246>.

⁴⁹ F. Fairfax, 'Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States', in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine* (December 1, 1790), p.285; see appendix 1.6, p.333 for more information about Fairfax.

⁵⁰ R. Pleasants, *Letterbook of Robert Pleasants. 1754-1797*. Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/168, pp.198-200. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://tritych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/11435. Page 200 holds the first quote, p.198 contains the second.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.184.

⁵² J. Leland, 'The Virginia Chronicle', in J. Leland & L. F. Greene (eds.), *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland, Including Some Events in his Life, Written by Himself, With Additional Sketches, &c. by Miss L. F. Greene* (New York: G. W. Wood, 1845), p.97. Retrieved from *Google Books*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=bMAiAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA96&lpg;> see appendix 1.6, p.334 for more information about Leland.

Many elite Virginians reflected Jefferson's complex position on the system. The lawyer St. George Tucker certainly matched Jefferson by becoming one of the few eighteenth-century Virginians to publish a plan to abolish slavery. Tucker's scheme was outlined in his *Dissertation on Slavery*, which was released in Philadelphia in 1796.⁵³ In one striking extract, the lawyer criticised Virginians for 'imposing upon our fellow men ... a slavery, ten thousand times more cruel than the utmost extremity of those grievances and oppressions, of which we complained'.⁵⁴ Believing that Old Dominion's citizens would 'concur in any feasible plan for the abolition of it', Tucker submitted the *Dissertation* to both Houses of the Virginian Legislature, where it was rejected by officials.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, Tucker doubted the viability of an immediate emancipation. In private correspondence he conceded that a swift abolition would be difficult to achieve in Virginia because racial prejudice and economic necessity had 'combined to cherish an evil, which is now so thoroughly incorporated in our Constitution, as to render ineffectual, I fear, every attempt to eradicate it'.⁵⁶ Accordingly, his plan to eliminate slavery would have taken more than a century to reach its conclusion.⁵⁷ Chastened by the rebuttal of his peers, Tucker stopped publicly condemning slavery after 1796 - instead choosing to direct his ire against the system in correspondence with friends.⁵⁸ His reaction, in this respect, was comparable to Jefferson's response following the rejection of his 1784 Northwest Ordinance.

Jefferson's inertia was commonplace amongst Virginian statesmen. James Madison undoubtedly rebuffed an invitation to support an anti-slavery petition composed by Robert Pleasants in 1791. Madison informed Pleasants that backing an attack on involuntary servitude would contradict the wishes of his constituents and leave him 'chargeable at least with want of candour, if not of fidelity'.⁵⁹ Similarly, James Monroe shared Jefferson's scepticism towards abolitionist groups, despite describing slavery as 'an evil' in 1802.⁶⁰

⁵³ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.88.

⁵⁴ St. G. Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in C. N. Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States with Selected Writings* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), p.403.

⁵⁵ St. G. Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', 29 June 1795, *Massachusetts Historical Society: Collections Online*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?old=1&ft=End+of+Slavery&from=%2Fendofslavery%2Findex.php%3Fid%3D52&item_id=637, p.4; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.88.

⁵⁶ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.1.

⁵⁷ Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, p.444; Jordan, *White over Black*, p.559; J. J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), p.106; P. Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker's Plan to End Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), pp.1235 & 1242.

⁵⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.106.

⁵⁹ J. Madison, 'To Robert Pleasants', Philadelphia, 30 October 1791, in R. A. Rutland, T. A. Mason, R. J. Brugger, J. K. Sisson & F. J. Teute (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.91; Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.114; D. R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.305.

⁶⁰ J. Monroe, 'To Thomas Jefferson', Richmond, 11 June 1802, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 3: 1796 - 1802

Monroe also felt that the eradication of slavery should be a slow procedure. In a letter to Jefferson, composed in the aftermath of the Gabriel Prosser rebellion, Monroe asserted that emancipation needed to be 'a process gradual and certain ... without ... inconvenience to ourselves'.⁶¹

Furthermore, Jefferson's caution was often evident in George Washington's attitude to slavery. Indeed, Washington told one aide that he did 'not like to even think, much less talk' about the system during his Presidency.⁶² Washington's reluctance to challenge slavery was noted by visitors to Mount Vernon. The English commentator John Bernard certainly recorded that Washington had argued that the degraded condition of America's slaves meant that 'liberty in their hands would become a scourge' in 1798.⁶³ However, Washington was prepared to denigrate groups that promoted abolition. When the Quakers presented an anti-slavery petition to Congress in 1790, Washington criticised the 'Memorial' for being 'not only an ill-judged piece of business, but ... a great waste of time'.⁶⁴

Like Jefferson, some of the legislation Washington endorsed as President bolstered slavery. Of principal importance was the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act, which hindered African-Americans by 'setting out a precise mechanism for reclaiming escaped slaves' from neighbouring states.⁶⁵ Moreover, Washington failed to abide with laws in Philadelphia (then American capital) that pertained to the emancipation of anyone held in slavery for over six months. Washington avoided breaching the rule by arranging for his slaves to be returned to Mount Vernon before they had served for six months in the Presidential household.⁶⁶

Elements of Jefferson's stance also reflected trends below the ruling classes. Principally, his failure to release most of his bondsmen was indicative of wider conduct.

(New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p.353; A. Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1999), p.577.

⁶¹ Monroe, 'To Thomas Jefferson', 11 June 1802, in Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe*, Vol. 3, p.353.

⁶² G. Washington, 'To Alexander Spotswood', Philadelphia, 23 November 1794, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 34: *October 11, 1794 - March 29, 1796* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.47.

⁶³ Bernard, *Retrospections of America*, p.91.

⁶⁴ G. Washington, 'To David Stuart', New York, 15 June 1790, in D. Twohig, M. A. Mastromarino & J. D. Warren (eds.), *The Papers of George Washington: Presidential Series*, Vol. 5: *January - June 1790* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), p.525 contains the quote; K. Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), p.296; J. B. Lee, 'Mount Vernon Plantation: A Model for the Republic', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.36; F. Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), p.184; P. F. Boller Jr., 'Washington, the Quakers, and Slavery', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Apr., 1961), p.84 all describe Washington's habit of ignoring abolitionists.

⁶⁵ H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: Macmillan, 2004), p.319; G. W. Van Cleve, 'Founding a Slaveholders' Union, 1770-1797', in M. Mason & J. C. Hammond (eds.), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p.132.

⁶⁶ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.29.

Overall, less than ten percent of Virginian masters emancipated all their slaves in the two decades following the approval of the 1782 manumission act.⁶⁷ Many planters matched Jefferson by only liberating favoured slaves. For instance, George was freed by William Chilton in the early nineteenth century 'in consideration of' his 'honesty and general good conduct'. Nonetheless, Chilton still possessed seven slaves in 1810.⁶⁸ The same was true of Robert Lawrence, who finalised the emancipation of Isaac after he had reached maturity in 1802. Lawrence was recorded in the 1810 census as holding three slaves.⁶⁹ In Petersburg, meanwhile, Alexander Glass Strachan held eleven slaves in 1810, despite manumitting a female slave and her three children four years earlier.⁷⁰ Delivering autonomy to those who had performed a 'good service' was one of several ways in which masters used emancipations to encourage deference amongst bondsmen. Others promised a future release to workers. When Samuel Holmes produced a deed of liberation for three slaves in 1803, he stipulated that none of the workers were to be released until eleven years later, by which time they would be twenty-five, thirty-four and thirty-six years old.⁷¹ Such solutions proved acceptable for two reasons. First, promising a future emancipation marked a convenient 'compromise between their antislavery leanings and their need for laborers'. Further, offering a delayed manumission on the condition that bondsmen followed their owner's orders served 'as a safety valve, releasing pressure and thus preventing violence' on the plantation.⁷²

Lesser known figures paralleled Jefferson's stance by stressing a distaste for the system while retreating from endorsing the anti-slavery movement. For instance, the physician Robert Carter wrote a letter to his two sons in 1803 outlining how 'From the earliest point of time when I began to think of right and wrong, I conceived a strong disgust

⁶⁷ M. A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), p.489; E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.63.

⁶⁸ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.64 discusses Chilton's manumission; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH25-GRY> : accessed 1 January 2018), Wm Chilton, Culpeper, Culpeper, Virginia, United States; citing p. 85, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 68, FHL microfilm 181,428 contains information on Chilton.

⁶⁹ Isaac: Deed of Emancipation, Isle of Wight County, 1802, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 ; information regarding Lawrence was derived from 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-KBQ> : accessed 1 January 2018), Robert Lawrence, Isle of Wight, Virginia, United States; citing p. 33, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 69, FHL microfilm 181,429.

⁷⁰ Clements, Lucy: Deed of Emancipation, Petersburg, 1806, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; information regarding Strachan was found in 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZKL> : accessed 1 January 2018), Alex G Strachan, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 121, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427.

⁷¹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.39 & 79-82 discusses the varying uses of emancipation and the example of Holmes.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp.66 & 79 contains the quotes.

to the slave trade and all its barbarous consequences'.⁷³ Yet the doctor admitted that his children would eventually 'inherit this misfortune' because 'Partial emancipation as it has been conducted in this State has certainly been attended with inconveniences to society'.⁷⁴ Indeed, Carter shared Jefferson's pessimism about the chances of abolition ever happening in Virginia, postulating: 'if I may judge of the future by the past, I cannot suppose that this happy temper of mind will very soon prevail in Virginia, or any State to the Southward of it'.⁷⁵ Most instructively, a lack of action against slavery was evident amongst Jefferson's Albemarle County neighbours. In fact, the region had to wait until 1819 before one of its residents - Edward Coles - emancipated all his slaves.⁷⁶ Local historian J. L. Cooper accurately describes the situation in Albemarle when he states that, despite often questioning the legitimacy 'of a society based on the enslavement of others ... few owners of slaves acted upon those feelings'.⁷⁷

The anti-slavery cause was particularly undermined by the Gabriel Prosser uprising of 1800. Prosser and his fellow insurgents had plotted to seize the Virginian capital, Richmond, and take James Monroe - the state's Governor - hostage until their demands for freedom were met. The insurgency was only prevented by bad weather and two slaves informing their owner of the coup.⁷⁸ The backlash from Prosser's rebellion was severe, with accusations that African-Americans had been granted too much freedom appearing soon after the plot was discovered. For instance, an article published in the *Fredericksburg Herald* on 23 September 1800 claimed that the ideals of the American and French Revolutions - while 'intelligible, and admissible, in a land of freemen' - were 'dangerous and extremely wicked in this country, where every white man is a master, and every black man is a slave'.⁷⁹ The author conjectured that this fragile situation meant that Revolutionary doctrines would inevitably lead to 'either a general insurrection, or a general emancipation'.⁸⁰

Virginian lawmakers - who were still almost universally mid-to-large ranking slaveholders - responded to the outcry by passing bills that prevented masters teaching their slaves to read and write. Comparable legislation limited the freedom of African-

⁷³ R. Carter, 'Letter of Advice to My Children', Hampton, 12 October 1803, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C2466a1, p.3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ J. L. Cooper, *A Guide to Historic Charlottesville & Albemarle County, Virginia* (London: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p.78.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ W. G. Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution: Thomas Jefferson and Gabriel's Uprising', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp.17-19.

⁷⁹ 'The Prosser Conspiracy (1800)', in K. S. Walters (ed.), *American Slave Revolts and Conspiracies: A Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, Ca.: ABC-Clio, 2015), p.204.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Americans to attend religious meetings.⁸¹ More damagingly, in July 1806, representatives passed a bill mandating that all slaves emancipated in future were required to leave Virginia within one year of receiving their freedom.⁸² The subsequent decline in liberations was stark. In Petersburg County - where over 170 bondsmen had been granted their liberty between 1782 and 1806 - no masters released their slaves in the five years following the edict's passage.⁸³ Parallel trends were evident in Loudoun County, where just nine African-Americans were released in the twelve years after 1806, compared with sixty-three in the previous sixteen years.⁸⁴ Virginians acknowledged the intention of the act. In a petition of 1809, citizens from Amelia County complained that 'the law prohibiting emancipation' had forced a free African-American - Frank - to delay manumitting his wife and children prior to his death.⁸⁵

'slavery will exist in Virginia perhaps for ages': The Rise of Pro-slavery Discourse⁸⁶

Jefferson's desire to challenge slavery was further affected by a growing antagonism to abolition that went far beyond his loss of faith in the anti-slavery movement. In fact, Jefferson admitted in 1805 that he thought the time to challenge slavery had passed because slaveholders had persuaded 'themselves either that the thing is not wrong, or that it cannot be remedied'.⁸⁷ Other Virginian statesmen joined Jefferson in bemoaning the lack of popular enthusiasm for emancipation. While serving in the House of Representatives in 1791, for instance, James Madison refused to discuss a Quaker petition calling for the abolition of the inter-state slave trade, as he recognised that 'Those from whom I derive my public station are known by me to be greatly interested in that species of property'.⁸⁸ Likewise, the French journalist and politician Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville recorded how George Washington had informed him that 'Almost all the Virginians ... believe that the liberty of the blacks cannot soon become general' when he had stayed at Mount Vernon in late 1788.⁸⁹

⁸¹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.100.

⁸² Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.100; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.122 & 124-125.

⁸³ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.101.

⁸⁴ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.131; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.264.

⁸⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Amelia County, 1809-12-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁸⁶ F. Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from August 7, 1771 to December 7, 1815*, Vol. 2: *From July 15, 1786, to November 6, 1800* (New York: N. Bangs & T. Mason, 1821), pp.306-307.

⁸⁷ Jefferson, 'To William A. Burwell', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.491.

⁸⁸ Madison, 'To Robert Pleasants', in Rutland et al. (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14, p.92; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.5-6.

⁸⁹ J. P. Brissot De Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America: Performed in 1788* (Dublin: W. Corbet, 1792), p.290; for more information about De Warville, see Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.55.

Although leaders undoubtedly utilised popular hostility to excuse their failure to take a more aggressive posture, a wealth of evidence shows that anti-slavery thought was diminishing. Indeed, De Warville complained that planters in Old Dominion talked 'not ... of projects for freeing the negroes ... No, the indolent masters behold with uneasiness, the efforts that are making to render freedom universal'.⁹⁰ De Warville was in no doubt why Virginians refused to countenance a general emancipation, citing their 'character ... manners and habits ... They seem to enjoy the sweat of slaves ... and disdain the idea of labour'.⁹¹

There is evidence from all tiers of society to support De Warville's scepticism. For example, the lawyer St. George Tucker assumed a pro-slavery stance after his *Dissertation on Slavery* had been rebuked by Virginia's governors. Tucker has previously received strong praise from Jefferson revisionist Paul Finkelman, who argues that the *Dissertation* represented the only 'concrete proposal for ending slavery' presented by an eighteenth-century Virginian.⁹² Similarly, George Van Cleve has described Tucker's position as 'remarkably progressive'.⁹³ However, Finkelman and Van Cleve fail to acknowledge that the lawyer maintained consistent misgivings about the validity of his appeals for a gradual abolition. In a letter of June 1795, Tucker claimed that the Saint Domingue revolt had prompted him 'to suspend my Opinion, & to doubt whether it will not be wiser to set about amending the Condition of the Slave, than to make him a miserable free man'.⁹⁴ In the same correspondence, Tucker - preceding later positive good claims - asserted that labourers benefitted from being 'better cloathed [*sic*], lodged, & fed, than if it depended upon themselves to provide their own food raiment & houses'.⁹⁵ These doubts intensified in the ensuing years so that, by 1803, Tucker was dismissing his emancipation scheme as a 'Utopia idea' that he doubted would 'receive countenance' amongst his fellow Virginians.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the lawyer concluded an 1806 court case by adjudging that the terms of the Virginian Bill of Rights were 'not by a side wind to overturn the rights of property, and give freedom to those very people whom we have been compelled from imperious circumstances to retain, generally, in the same state of bondage that they were in at the

⁹⁰ De Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America*, p.290.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.281.

⁹² Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, pp.1216-1217.

⁹³ Van Cleve, 'Founding a Slaveholders' Union, 1770-1797', in Mason & Hammond (eds.), *Contesting Slavery*, p.123.

⁹⁴ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁹⁶ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.107; P. Hamilton, 'Revolutionary Principles and Family Loyalties: Slavery's Transformation in the St. George Tucker Household of Early National Virginia', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Oct., 1998), p.543.

revolution'.⁹⁷ Indeed, Tucker denied that the Bill of Rights had pertained to African-Americans at all, stressing that the compact 'was notoriously framed with a cautious eye to this subject, and was meant to embrace the case of free citizens, or aliens only'.⁹⁸

Additionally, the level of James Monroe's opposition to slavery is questionable when some of his statements are measured against Jefferson's private disavowals. For instance, Monroe initially disagreed with Jefferson's idea of repatriating blacks implicated in the 1800 Gabriel Prosser rebellion to Sierra Leone, for he felt doing so 'would put culprits in a better condition than the deserving part of those people'. This was because the system was banned in the African country.⁹⁹ Consequently, Monroe queried whether Sierra Leone's laws authorized temporary servitude, as he believed that keeping the insurgents enslaved would be a 'means of raising a fund to defray the charge of transportation'.¹⁰⁰

The growth of pro-slavery thought in Virginia is apparent in the suspicion that greeted some of Jefferson's statements on the issue. Jefferson received criticism from elements of the southern press for 'being soft on slavery' whilst campaigning for the American Presidency in 1800.¹⁰¹ One columnist in the *Virginia Gazette* even queried 'Shall we then embark ... with [Thomas Jefferson], on the tempestuous sea of liberty'.¹⁰² Political rivals played on these doubts. During the 1796 Presidential election campaign, Federalist journalist W. L. Smith printed a review into Jefferson's credentials entitled *The Pretensions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency Examined*. In the piece, Smith queried 'what must the citizens of the *southern states* ... think of a *secretary of the United States* ... who, at the hazard of the primary interests of those states, promulgates his approbation of a speedy emancipation of their slaves?'¹⁰³ Similar sentiments were published in the *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser* in September 1803 by an observer called 'Cincinnatus'. Cincinnatus alleged that Jefferson privately hoped 'for a SUCCESSFUL INSURRECTION among the blacks, provided the scheme of the person making it, for a GENERAL EMANCIPATION, should not

⁹⁷ H. T. Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, Vol. 1: *Cases from the Courts of England, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky* (Washington, D. C.: Published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), p.112.

⁹⁸ Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.112; for Tucker's notes, see St. G. Tucker, *Hudgins v. Wright Case Material*, Box 71, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Special Collections Research Centre, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, p.7. Retrieved from *William and Mary: Digital Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://digitalarchive.wm.edu/handle/10288/16635>.

⁹⁹ J. Monroe, 'To Thomas Jefferson', Richmond, 15 June 1801, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 3: 1796 - 1802 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903) p.352; H. Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971), p.199.

¹⁰⁰ Monroe, 'To Thomas Jefferson', 15 June 1802, in Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe*, Vol. 3, p.353.

¹⁰¹ Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.20.

¹⁰² D. R. Egerton, 'Gabriel's Conspiracy and the Election of 1800', in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (May 1990), p.200.

¹⁰³ W. L. Smith, *The Pretensions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency Examined; and the Charges against John Adams refuted. Addressed to the citizens of America in General; and particularly to the electors of the President [Part I]* (Philadelphia: [s.n.], 1796), p.10.

succeed'.¹⁰⁴ Cincinnatus believed that Jefferson's ideals represented a direct attack on 'the PROPERTY' rights 'of his own fellow-citizens'.¹⁰⁵ Although he did not respond to the claims, it is inevitable that - given his concern for his popular image - such negative coverage affected Jefferson's approach to slavery.

Overall, pro-slavery dispatches appeared in Virginian newspapers with greater frequency. In 1790, a letter advocating the strengthening of the system was published in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle*. The author argued that African-Americans were 'unworthy' of the 'rights and priveledges [sic]' of freedom.¹⁰⁶ A similar indictment was circulated by the planter Frances Corbin. In a broadside directed to his fellow Virginians, Corbin criticised a recent Quaker petition against the slave trade, arguing that the 'memorial' was 'in *direct opposition* to the 9th section of the first article of the Constitution'.¹⁰⁷ Corbin continued by labelling the 'debates' that the appeal had caused 'dangerous and impolitic', for they had 'excited doubts and fears, alarms and apprehensions thro' all the southern states'.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, he appealed for readers to rebuke Quaker endeavours, asking: 'Do you not consider this memorial as the first step towards a general emancipation? ... Would you not rather crush this *crocodile* in its egg than suffer it to grow up into the size of a monster and devour you?'¹⁰⁹

Criticism of abolitionists continued in the nineteenth century. In January 1803, the Scottish Presbyterian minister Alexander McLeod delivered a sermon in New York calling for the eradication of slavery throughout America. A reader of the *Virginia Gazette*, who named himself 'Z', lambasted McLeod. Despite conceding that 'It is at all times disagreeable to attack or censure those who are employed in expounding the Scriptures', Z thought 'it should be remembered that the pulpit of the church ought never to be ... perverted for the purpose of propagating opinions hostile to the government of the country and the laws of the union'. Thus, the author postulated that 'The justice or propriety of Negro slavery in America is a subject which is to be discussed by congress and

¹⁰⁴ Cincinnatus, 'To the Citizens of the United States, No III', in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 28 September 1803, p.2 (slide 6 of link). Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=9tJtKg94vZsC&dat=18030924&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.165 discusses the letter.

¹⁰⁷ F. Corbin, 'A Plain Planter Begs Leave to Ask His Fellow Citizens a Few Questions', 1790, South-eastern Broadside Collection, Library of Virginia Manuscripts & Special Collections Broadside Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. Retrieved from *DbVa: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/items/show/129>.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

the legislatures of the several states individually, and not by every canting haranguer who chuses [*sic*] to mount the rostrum'.¹¹⁰

This hostility influenced representatives. A statute passed in 1795 endeavoured to deter emancipationists from supporting African-Americans in freedom suits by mandating that those who testified in favour of the slave were required to pay \$100 to the master concerned if the appeal failed.¹¹¹ This bill was buttressed three years later when new laws banned members of anti-slavery societies from serving as jurors on such cases.¹¹² This antagonism persuaded some to stop campaigning against slavery. For instance, the General Baptist Association voted unanimously to cease debating the topic in 1793 after concluding that any decision on the system 'belongs to the legislative body'.¹¹³ Equally, in January 1798, the Methodist exhorter Francis Asbury conceded: 'slavery will exist in Virginia perhaps for ages; there is not a sufficient sense of religion nor of liberty to destroy it'.¹¹⁴ More revealingly, Asbury alleged that even those amongst the 'Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, in the highest flights of rapturous piety, still maintain and defend it'.¹¹⁵ These pronouncements support the contention - demonstrated in chapter two - that religious societies were more outspoken in their defence of slavery than scholars have previously thought. Accordingly, Ira Berlin is right to assert that 'Antislavery preachers faltered in the face of planter opposition and their own quest for respectability' before the eighteenth century had concluded.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, a broader public desire to defend slavery was voiced in several petitions presented to the Virginia General Assembly. First, thirty citizens - all hailing from King and Queen County in the Tidewater - called for manumissions to be ceased in the aftermath of the 1800 Gabriel Prosser rebellion 'except for meritorious services'. The signatories argued 'that the Law for Freeing negroes hath tended to bring upon us our disturbed & distressed situation'.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the memorialists voiced the emerging belief that increased emancipations were 'impossible with our own safety'.¹¹⁸ Inhabitants from

¹¹⁰ Z., 'For the VIRGINIA GAZETTE', in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Saturday 22 January 1803, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfn-AC&dat=18030122&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

¹¹¹ A. G. Crothers, 'Quaker Merchants and Slavery in Early National Alexandria, Virginia: The Ordeal of William Hartshorne', in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 2005), p.64.

¹¹² A. Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), pp.13-14.

¹¹³ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.132; M. Najar, "'Meddling with Emancipation": Baptists, Authority, and the Rift over Slavery in the Upper South', in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer 2005), pp.166 & 186.

¹¹⁴ Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury*, Vol. 2, pp.306-307; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.129.

¹¹⁵ Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury*, Vol. 2, p.307.

¹¹⁶ I. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1998), p.272.

¹¹⁷ Citizens: Petition, King and Queen County, 1800-12-02, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

various backgrounds supported the appeal, suggesting that a yearning to buttress slavery was held amongst people from all classes of slaveholding society. For example, Thomas Jones is listed on the 1810 King and Queen County census returns as possessing just four slaves. By contrast, Thomas Collins oversaw a larger household comprising twenty-one bondspersons.¹¹⁹ A similar plea was composed by senior figures from Petersburg in 1805. In their application to state legislators, memorialists from the Piedmont town warned of the dangers posed by a growing free black population. Therefore, they recommended that Assembly members either suspend or fully repeal 'the operation of the laws authorising the emancipation of slaves'.¹²⁰

These developments meant that the two decades after 1789 were years in which slavery solidified in Virginia. Indeed, the quantity of slaves in some areas almost doubled. Simultaneously, the amount of people owning slaves increased so that more than fifty percent of landholders in many counties were listed as slaveholders in the 1810 census. Slave units also increased in size. Richard Dunn has demonstrated that forty-three percent of slaves in Prince George, Amelia, York and Richmond Counties lived on plantations containing over twenty bondsmen in 1782. By 1810, over half the slaves in these four counties were inhabiting such plantations.¹²¹ With these circumstances in mind, emancipationist historians may be right to query whether Jefferson can be blamed for failing to eradicate slavery in his native state.¹²²

'an odious degradation [sic] of human nature': Resistance to Slavery¹²³

However, the existence of pro-slavery thought does not fully excuse Jefferson's refusal to challenge slavery during his time as a national statesman. Many Virginians attacked the system more vigorously than Jefferson after 1789. The Quaker Robert Pleasants undoubtedly remained a greater campaigner against slavery. Pleasants spared no-one his ire. In 1791, he wrote to James Madison criticising the statesman's inactivity on the topic.

¹¹⁹ 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-GTY> : accessed 2 January 2018), Thomas Jones, King and Queen, Virginia, United States; citing p. 168, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 69, FHL microfilm 181,429 details Jones; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-GNF> : accessed 2 January 2018), Thomas Collins, King and Queen, Virginia, United States; citing p. 159, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 69, FHL microfilm 181,429 has information on Collins; Jones and Collins' signatures appears in Citizens: Petition, King and Queen County, 1800-12-02, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹²⁰ Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, & Commonality: Petition, Petersburg (City), 1805-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹²¹ R. S. Dunn, 'Black Society in the Chesapeake, 1776-1810', in I. Berlin & R. Hoffman (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.69.

¹²² Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.7.

¹²³ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.198.

In the letter, Pleasants called for Madison 'to espouse the cause of the injured, the ignorant, and helpless, and become instrumental in promoting the glorious time spoken of by the prophet when "Righteous shall cover the Earth, as the water cover the sea"'.¹²⁴ Patrick Henry also provoked Pleasants' wrath. Writing in July 1792, the Quaker recorded his unhappiness at Henry for being 'so backward in promoting some General plan for a gradual abolition of slavery'.¹²⁵

Pleasants regularly published his distaste for the institution. In 1790, he wrote to the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* in response to a series of pro-slavery articles printed by the newspaper. Pleasants derided those who criticised abolitionists for denying 'the self evident truth combined in divers publications and declarations ... which declare all mankind by nature equally entitled to freedom'.¹²⁶ Three years later he evoked Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* fear of a vengeful God in a dispatch to the *Richmond & Manchester Advertiser*. Writing under the pseudonym 'A Citizen of the World', Pleasants stressed that Jefferson had highlighted the dangers of a large slave population 'with great propriety' in *Notes*.¹²⁷ Pleasants forwarded the Saint Domingue rebellion as an example of the consequences should planters not 'suffer themselves to reflect on the nature of slavery'. Accordingly, he postulated that 'it would be highly proper, and well becoming the legislature of a free and enlightened people, to devise some other mode for a gradual ... abolition, of an evil of such magnitude'.¹²⁸

The level of his activism meant that Pleasants was elected the first head of the Virginia Abolition Society (VAS) in 1791. The constitution of the VAS - which met twice every year - affirmed the group's conviction that God had 'created mankind of every nation, language and colour, equally free; and that slavery in all its forms, in all its degrees, is an outrageous violation, and an odious degradation of human nature'.¹²⁹ Shortly after their formation, the VAS called for Congress to abolish the inter-state slave trade and thus 'alleviate as much as possible the horror & cruelties generally practised in the prosecution of the trade'.¹³⁰ The VAS addressed another uncompromising dispatch to the Virginia

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.185.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.204.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.167.

¹²⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.218; A Citizen of the World, 'To the Public', in *The Virginia Gazette and Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, Monday 25 November 1793, p.1. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfd-AC&dat=17931125&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

¹²⁸ A Citizen of the World, 'To the Public', in *The Virginia Gazette and Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, Monday 25 November 1793, p.1.

¹²⁹ Virginia Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, constitution, Thursday 8 July 1790, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Ms9:4V8198:1, p.1.

¹³⁰ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.186.

General Assembly in 1795 which affirmed that slavery was 'not only a moral but political Evil'.¹³¹

A large proportion of VAS members were Quakers. The Society of Friends maintained their vehement opposition to slavery throughout the Jeffersonian era. Indeed, Quakers from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania combined in 1790 to request that the American House of Representatives act against slavery. The petitioners argued that the system should be abolished nationwide as it was in 'the true temporal interest of Nations and external wellbeing of Individuals'.¹³² Virginia's Quaker community penned a further petition in 1802 which asked legislators to devise a way in which slaves' 'misery may be suppressed, without infringing the rights of Individuals, or in any degree affecting the public tranquillity'.¹³³ In particular, the memorialists attacked America's internal slave trade by appealing for laws to be passed curtailing 'the inhuman traffic carried on by purchasing numbers of those unfortunate Persons, and carrying them out of the limits of this state; often to places, where the rigors of Slavery are multiplied'.¹³⁴

Individuals from Virginia's Baptist community also challenged slavery more vehemently than Jefferson. Affiliates of the Kethought Association of Virginia certainly concluded in 1796 that the institution could not be sanctioned 'by scripture and the true principles of a republican government'.¹³⁵ Moreover, the Baptist preacher John Leland publicly denounced slavery. Chronicling his experiences in Old Dominion after leaving for New England in 1790, Leland alleged that 'the whole scene of slavery is pregnant with enormous evils. On the master's side, pride, haughtiness, domination, cruelty, deceit and indolence; and on the side of the slave, ignorance, servility, fraud, perfidy and despair'.¹³⁶ Similarly, Virginian-born Baptist David Barrow remained an outspoken opponent of the system. In 1798, Barrow - who had moved to Kentucky seven years earlier - penned a letter to his former parishioners in which he asserted 'that liberty ... is the unalienable privilege of all complexions, shapes, and sizes of men'.¹³⁷

Presbyterian minister David Rice followed a similar path. Rice, who was born in Hanover County but relocated to Kentucky in the 1780s, denigrated the institution in his

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.198.

¹³² H. Justice, *Life and Ancestry of Warner Mifflin - Friend - Philanthropist - Patriot* (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1905), p.172. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012454865>.

¹³³ Religious Society of Friends: Petition, 1802-12-17, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.x.

¹³⁶ Leland, 'The Virginia Chronicle', in Leland & Greene (eds.), *The Writings of the Elder John Leland*, p.96.

¹³⁷ C. R. Allen Jr. (ed.), 'David Barrow's Circular Letter of 1798', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 1963), p.447.

Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy (1792).¹³⁸ In the sermon, Rice asserted: 'As creatures of God we are, with respect to liberty, all equal. If one has a right to live among his fellow creatures, and enjoy his freedom, so has another'. Thus, he believed that 'Holding men in slavery is the national vice of Virginia'.¹³⁹ Given these examples, it is unsurprising that members of Dissenting sects represented nearly forty percent of emancipators in areas of Virginia in the late eighteenth century.¹⁴⁰

One didn't have to be an Evangelical Christian, though, to rebuke slavery. Thus, Virginian lawyer George Tucker published his disappointment 'that some truths, which their self-evidence and importance have rendered familiar to the mind, are, on this very account, often disregarded' in 1801.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Tucker described slavery as 'an evil ... that deforms one of the fairest portions of the globe' in a passage of his *Letter to a Member of the Virginia General Assembly*.¹⁴² Another prominent member of the judiciary, George Wythe, challenged the foundations of slavery in high-profile hearings. Most famously, Wythe approved the emancipation of a female slave and her three sons after overseeing the landmark court case of *Wrights v. Hudgins* shortly before his death in 1806.¹⁴³ Wythe composed a strong indictment of slavery to justify his decision. In fact, he asserted that the system was against natural law as defined by the Virginian constitution, which he adjudged had demonstrated that masters needed to show that labourers requesting their freedom should be denied the opportunity, rather than the slave prove they should be released.¹⁴⁴

Moreover, many lower-profile Virginians displayed a firmer opposition to slavery than Jefferson. For instance, Richard Drummond Bayly - a merchant from Richmond - criticised motions discussed by Virginian lawmakers to prohibit further emancipations. Writing in 1805, Bayly described attempts to ban future manumissions as 'a most cruel Law, which neither the safety nor the policy of the state will warrant'.¹⁴⁵ Bayly even suggested that the concept was contrary to Virginia's Bill of Rights and asserted that tightening manumission laws would 'bring forth all the horrors of domestic insurrections'

¹³⁸ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.194.

¹³⁹ D. Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy: Proved by a Speech Delivered in the Convention, Held at Danville, Kentucky* (Philadelphia: M. Gurney, 1792), pp.4 & 24. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009261500>.

¹⁴⁰ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.59.

¹⁴¹ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁴³ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.106.

¹⁴⁴ W. W. Hening & W. Munford (eds.), *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia: With Select Cases Relating Chiefly to Points of Practice, Decided by the Superior Court of Chancery for the Richmond District*, Vol. 1: 1806 - 1807 (Philadelphia: Smith and Maxwell, 1808), p.134. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009709872>; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.106.

¹⁴⁵ R. Drummond Bayly, 'Letter', Richmond, 6 January 1805, Cropper, John (1755-1821), papers, 1779-1820, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1C8835a, p.5.

because 'Freedom is the ardent wish of all mankind'.¹⁴⁶ A comparable position was affirmed by William Garnett in an 1805 letter to Thomas Ruffin. In the correspondence, Garnett - who served as a Virginian Congressman - announced 'the great aversion which I have to the manner of cultivating our lands in Virginia by slaves'. This disapproval led him to pursue a different career because he realized 'that I am violating the natural rights of a being who is as much entitled to the enjoyment of liberty as myself'.¹⁴⁷

One of the most intriguing anti-slavery tracts of Jefferson's Presidency was penned by a correspondent purporting to be 'A Slave'. In the 1807 letter, which was addressed to Jefferson, 'A Slave' chastised the system for 'belying a neighbouring nation' and 'enslaving [sic] the citizens of another & reducing them below the character of the bruits'.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the author averred that if Americans were not prepared to challenge the institution, they should 'giv[e] up all pretentions to liberty & freedom, & acknowledge [sic] herself at once, a joint heir with Jno Bull'.¹⁴⁹

Numerous Virginians from all tiers of society were still influenced by the anti-slavery ideals espoused by Jefferson. Unlike Jefferson, however, they transferred these thoughts into actions. The 1782 manumission act continued to have a positive effect on Virginia's African-Americans, with the quantity of free blacks in the state multiplying tenfold between 1782 and 1800, largely because of private liberations. As with the Revolutionary era, state bodies occasionally bequeathed freedom to slaves. For instance, an Arlington County jury ruled in favour of Amie in 1803 when she applied to be liberated after being bought into the state illegally from Maryland.¹⁵⁰

George Washington was perhaps the most famous planter to provide for the emancipation of his slaves. Washington frequently considered acting against the system in the years before his death in 1799. For instance, he reported investigating schemes 'to liberate a certain species of property which I possess, very repugantly to my own feelings' in a 1794 letter to his personal secretary, Tobias Lear.¹⁵¹ In the dispatch, Washington detailed a system he had devised to rent out part of his Mount Vernon plantation to

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹⁴⁷ W. Garnett, 'From William Garnett', 12 July 1805, in J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Ruffin: Collected and Edited by J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton, Ph.D.*, Vol. 1. (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1918), p.80.

¹⁴⁸ Baker (ed.), "'A Slave" Writes Thomas Jefferson', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.142.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.145.

¹⁵⁰ Amie: Freedom Suit, Arlington County, 1803, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1 & 4.

¹⁵¹ G. Washington, 'To Tobias Lear', Philadelphia, 6 May 1794, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 33: July 1, 1793 - October 9, 1794 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.358; J. J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (London: Faber, 2005), p.257; Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.29.

'expert English farmers' to obtain the money needed to emancipate his labourers.¹⁵² Once his Presidency had concluded in 1797, Washington resolved to liberate the 123 bondsmen under his ownership and help their transition to freedom. Accordingly, his will required that the labourers be granted funds from the Mount Vernon estate 'so long as there are subjects requiring it'.¹⁵³

The largest act of manumission was, though, undertaken by Robert Carter of Westmoreland County. In 1791, Carter constructed a 'Deed of Gift' which outlined a plan to discharge his 509 bondsmen. In the manuscript, the planter highlighted the extent of his possessions by naming all his slaves under the age of forty-five. These workers were held on eighteen sites throughout Virginia.¹⁵⁴ Carter wrote that he had 'for some time past been convinced that to retain them in Slavery is contrary to the true principles of Religion & justice, & that therefore it was my duty to manumit them'.¹⁵⁵ Carter originally proposed to release fifteen labourers on 1 January every year until all his slaves had received their freedom. Despite being careful 'to discover that mode of manumission from Slavery which can be effected consonant to law & with the least possible disadvantage to my fellow Citizens', Carter hastened the emancipations so that his task had been completed just over twenty years after he composed the Deed of Gift.¹⁵⁶

Virginians with far fewer possessions than Carter and Washington acted decisively against the system. For example, John Poindexter Junior and David Crenshaw of Louisa County released fourteen and fifteen slaves respectively in 1794.¹⁵⁷ Six years later, Thomas Flourney's will was enacted, ensuring the release of fourteen slaves following his death.¹⁵⁸ Regular manumissions occurred in Accomack County in 1806, as rumours that the 1782 laws were facing repeal circulated. Thus, Jesse Armes freed seven bondsmen and John Ker

¹⁵² Washington, 'To Tobias Lear', in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 33, p.358; J. T. Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (London: Collins, 1976), pp.388-389. See p.388 for the quote; Ferling, *The First of Men*, p.479.

¹⁵³ Goenthals, *Presidential Leadership and African Americans*, p.32; although 316 slaves were recorded at Mount Vernon in a 1799 census, Washington only directly owned 123 labourers. See S. Hellman & M. McCoy, 'Soil Tilled by Free Men: The Formation of a Free Black Community in Fairfax County, Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 125, No. 1 (2017), pp.40-42 for more information.

¹⁵⁴ Carter's slaves are listed in R. Carter, 'Robert Carter III's Deed of Gift', 1 August 1791, *Encyclopaedia Virginia: A Publication of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Robert_Carter_III_s_Deed_of_Gift_August_1_1791, pp.232-236.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.236.

¹⁵⁶ Carter, 'Robert Carter III's Deed of Gift', *Encyclopaedia Virginia*, p.236; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.144; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.38.

¹⁵⁷ Roger: Deed of Manumission, Louisa County, 1794, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Sam: Deed of Manumission, Louisa County, 1794, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁵⁸ Abraham: Deed of Emancipation, Chesterfield County, 1800, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

was 'induced thereto from a belief of the evils of Slavery' to release more than twenty labourers.¹⁵⁹

Manumission deeds demonstrate that anti-slavery thought was still an important factor for some liberators. Many testaments contained the same phrase, generally used by Christian emancipators: 'I ... being fully persuaded freedom is the natural right of all mankind & that it is my Duty to do unto others as I would Desire to be done by in the like Situation ... emancipate & Set free the said' slave.¹⁶⁰ Religious sentiments also appeared in the deed composed by Bridgett James of Accomack County. James believed 'that the Slavery of our fellow Creatures is Repugnant to, & a Violation of our blessed Christian Religion'.¹⁶¹

Denunciations of slavery that referenced key tenets of Revolutionary ideology continued to appear. For instance, Charles Clark of Alexandria County manumitted Congo on 1 August 1794 after declaring 'that all men are by nature equally free and from a dear conviction of the injustice and criminality of depriving my fellow creatures of their natural right & liberty'.¹⁶² Furthermore, a Chesterfield County planter announced in 1803 that he was releasing Janey 'from motives of humanity and a Love of Liberty, which is so dear to the human Race', while Nathaniel Lee from Petersburg combined revolutionary rhetoric and Christian sentiments when he committed to liberating America because he believed 'that God Created All Men equally Free'.¹⁶³

Others issued personal condemnations of the institution. For instance, Bartlett Williams freed ten slaves in 1794 after stating his 'abhorrence of the cruelties too frequently exercised towards slaves in this country'. Williams announced that he was 'Doubtfull of the propriety of the right by which they are held as property'.¹⁶⁴ In 1803, additionally, Mary Robinson stressed that she was liberating her slaves following her death because 'I cannot satisfy my conscience to have my negro slaves separated from each

¹⁵⁹ Isaac: Deed of Manumission, Accomack County, 1806, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Job: Deed of Emancipation, Accomack County, 1806, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶⁰ Milley: Deed of Emancipation, Henrico County, 1797, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Dick: Deed of Emancipation, Isle of Wight County, 1796, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; James: Deed of Emancipation, Henrico County, 1806, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶¹ Nim, Liddia: Deed of Manumission, Accomack County, 1789, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶² D. S. Provine (ed.), *Alexandria County, Virginia: Free Negro Registers, 1797-1861* (Westminster, Va.: Heritage Books, 2012), p.3.

¹⁶³ Janey: Deed of Emancipation, Chesterfield County, 1803, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; America: Deed of Emancipation, Petersburg, 1794, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁶⁴ Lost Records Localities Digital Collection, New Kent County, Williams, Bartlett, his slaves Aggy, Clara, her children Wilson, Jane, Nancy, Lavin, Gabe, Sam, Jerry and Jim: Deed of Manumission, 1794, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

other, and from their husbands and wives'.¹⁶⁵ Finally, Thomas Chappell of Prince George County released five slaves in 1805 because he felt 'that no law morral [sic] or devine [sic] has given me any just right to or property in the persons of any of my fellow cretors [sic]'.¹⁶⁶

Some emancipators displayed a concern for their labourers after their release. For example, Doctor Robert Brown of Richmond County freed two workers, Sally and Billy, in his will. Brown particularly liked Billy, whom he bequeathed land in Richmond and Manchester. He, too, requested 'that my executors ... provide a fit and proper education for Billy Brown and to this end that he may be sent to Scotland and maintained at School in Such manner as in the direction of my said executors'.¹⁶⁷ Other liberations provided former slaves with funds to help their transition to freedom. In 1802, Jane Hunter Charlton freed two slaves and announced her 'desire that each of these be furnished with a good larger new blanket and Nanny to receive six pounds in cash and Sally three pounds'.¹⁶⁸

Importantly, the 1782 deed continued to enable African-Americans to register their distaste for slavery. Although the free black community possessed neither the wealth or legal status to mount an attack on slavery itself, private manumissions at least allowed a small minority to obtain the liberation of loved ones. Thus, Abby Smith purchased her son 'Baldy' from Henry Randolph of Nottoway County in 1798 and emancipated him shortly after.¹⁶⁹ These instances highlight that free blacks with the means were unwilling to accept that slavery was a necessary part of Virginian society.

Slaves were also able to procure their own freedom, as James Hemings had done from Jefferson. For instance, Joseph Whitehead of Petersburg released Joe in 1801 after the labourer had paid him \$200.¹⁷⁰ Similar occurred when William Byrd Page of Alexandria County emancipated Charles Campbell, who had paid his master five shillings for his liberty.¹⁷¹ Such instances demonstrated that African-Americans viewed a restricted existence as freemen as preferable to a lifetime in slavery, despite the endeavours of

¹⁶⁵ Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.114.

¹⁶⁶ Cate, Peter: Deed of Emancipation, Lynchburg, 1805, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Chappell is identified as Thomas Chappel in the census. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-HST> : accessed 2 January 2018), Thomas Chappel, Dinwiddie, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 76, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427.

¹⁶⁷ Brown, Sally: Petition, Richmond (City), 1802-12-13, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3-4.

¹⁶⁸ J. H. Charlton, 'Will concerns the emancipation of four female African-American slaves, two of whom are described as "my mulatto children"', Robinson Family Papers, 1732-1931, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1R5685d, p.1.

¹⁶⁹ Baldy: Deed of Emancipation, Petersburg, 1799, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁷⁰ Joe: Deed of Manumission, Petersburg, 1801, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁷¹ Provine (ed.), *Alexandria County, Virginia: Free Negro Registers*, p.2.

masters to portray paternalist treatment as more beneficial to their slaves than manumission. Consequently, when they were unable to buy their freedom, many attempted to flee. The expansion of the printed press highlights the regularity with which slaves absconded in pursuit of liberty. Any search of the *Virginia Herald*, *Virginia Argus* and *Virginia Gazette* archives between 1790 and 1809 shows that nearly all newspapers contained multiple appeals for information about an escaped slave.¹⁷²

Therefore, while important caveats must be considered, the above examples of emancipators - when added to the abolitionist efforts of nonconformist Christian sects - undoubtedly show that there was room for Jefferson to challenge slavery more than he did between 1789 and 1809. They, too, highlight the perils of assuming that Jefferson reflected the views of all Virginians.

Ownership: The Limits of Paternalism

Jefferson's day-to-day dealings with his slaves further demonstrate that his opposition to slavery diminished after 1789. This is not to say that conditions for slaves at Monticello declined during the period, for Jefferson was still concerned to appear a benevolent planter. Despite spending large amounts of the period based in the American capitals of Philadelphia and, after 1800, Washington, Jefferson paid close attention to activities at Monticello, writing every week to advise overseers and relatives on his plans for the plantation. In these letters he made clear his subscription to paternalist doctrines. Thus, in a 1792 letter to his son-in-law, Thomas Mann Randolph, Jefferson claimed: 'my first wish is that the labourers may be well treated'.¹⁷³ Consequently, he continued to ensure that basic healthcare was available to his slaves. In fact, Jefferson remained one of the few planters in post-Revolutionary Virginia to have his bondsmen vaccinated against smallpox. In a letter addressed to Doctor Henry Rose in late 1801, Jefferson noted that he had 'received from Dr. Waterhouse of Boston some vaccine matter of his own taking and some from Dr. Jenner of England'.¹⁷⁴ During his Presidency, equally, Jefferson allowed one slave, Smith George, to receive treatment from a black physician when he had fallen ill with 'a constant puking, shortness of breath and swelling ... in the legs'.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² For instance, consult any copy of the *Virginia Gazette* at 'Virginia Gazette', *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxfnd-AC&dat=17910330&b_mode=2&hl=en.

¹⁷³ Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', in Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, p.12.

¹⁷⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. Henry Rose', Washington, 23 October 1801, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.18.

¹⁷⁵ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.110.

Jefferson remained keen for physical punishment to be minimized at Monticello. Thus, he cautioned Thomas Mann Randolph against allowing overseers to administer corporal discipline in 1801 as he thought 'it would destroy their value in my estimation to degrade them in their own eyes by the whip'.¹⁷⁶ Jefferson also tried to avoid splitting slave families through sale. In 1807, he claimed: 'nobody feels more strongly than I do the desire to make all practicable sacrifices to keep man & wife together who have imprudently married out of their respective families'.¹⁷⁷

The testimony provided by two of Jefferson's slaves - Madison Hemings and Isaac Granger - demonstrates that the statesman preferred to use leniency rather than force to extract work from his labourers. In fact, Hemings asserted that Jefferson 'was uniformly kind to all' his workers.¹⁷⁸ Granger, meanwhile, confirmed that Jefferson offered slaves rewards and incentives to motivate them. Granger - who spent his adolescence working in Monticello's nailery - spoke of how Jefferson 'Give them that wukked [*sic*] the best a suit of red or blue; encouraged them mightily'.¹⁷⁹ Granger's account was buttressed by a French guest, who noted that Jefferson 'animates' his slaves 'by rewards and distinctions'.¹⁸⁰

As these recollections highlight, much of Jefferson's domestic emphasis was on increasing the profitability of Monticello and ensuring maximum output from his workers. This tendency was particularly evident following his resignation as Secretary of State in 1793, when he returned to Monticello and overhauled plantation life in an endeavour to intensify productivity. To accomplish this, Jefferson briefly followed the example of many Piedmont planters by abandoning sole tobacco cultivation in favour of 'a seven-step crop rotation plan'. He, too, borrowed money to facilitate the building of nail and textile factories.¹⁸¹

Additional cracks in Jefferson's conduct have been exposed by recent scholarly appraisals. First, Jefferson could be accused of embracing 'the pleasures of being a master' when resident at Monticello. For example, he frequently 'rode out' amongst his slaves to

¹⁷⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', 23 January 1801, in B. B. Oberg (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 32: *1 June 1800 - 16 February 1801* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.499-500.

¹⁷⁷ T. Jefferson, 'To Randolph Lewis', 23 April 1807, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.26.

¹⁷⁸ M. Hemings, 'Madison Hemings's Memoir', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.257.

¹⁷⁹ I. Jefferson, 'Memoirs of a Monticello Slave', in J. A. Bear Jr. (ed.), *Jefferson at Monticello: Recollections of a Monticello Slave and a Monticello Overseer* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), p.23.

¹⁸⁰ Duc De La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797; With an Authentic Account of Lower Canada*, Vol. 3 - 2nd ed. (London: R. Phillips, 1800), p.158.

¹⁸¹ Library of Congress, '1790 to 1799', *Library of Congress: Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/the-thomas-jefferson-papers-timeline-1743-to-1827/1790-to-1799/>; Dierksheide, "The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race", in *Early American Studies*, p.185.

watch them working in his fields.¹⁸² Jefferson paid equally close attention to the performance of young workers in his nailery. In one 1794 entry to his *Farm Book*, Jefferson painstakingly calculated the amount of iron his labourers ‘wasted’ when making nails.¹⁸³ He also worked his elderly bondsmen hard. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt certainly recorded that Jefferson had ensured that both ‘young and old negresses spin for the clothing of the rest’.¹⁸⁴

Furthermore, Jefferson bought and sold workers throughout the epoch. He even traded slaves as a punishment for disobedience. In 1790, Jefferson approved the sale of three bondsmen who had been convicted by a Bedford County court for assaulting their overseer.¹⁸⁵ Likewise, two years later he queried whether Caesar, who was ‘notorious for his rogueries’, could be traded at a ‘private sale in the neighborhood’.¹⁸⁶ While President, moreover, Jefferson instructed managers at Monticello to sell a young bondsman who had attacked a fellow worker ‘in any other quarter so distant as never more to be heard of among us’ so that ‘it would to the others be as if he were put out of the way by death’.¹⁸⁷ Jefferson’s desire to see the slave removed from Monticello was such that he advised his plantation manager to ‘regard price but little in comparison with so distant an exile of him as to cut him off completely [*sic*] from ever again being heard of’. Jefferson hoped that pursuing this course would ‘make an example of him in terrorem [*sic*] to others’.¹⁸⁸

Additionally, Jefferson regularly traded slaves to pay off his debts. For example, he agreed to sell ‘Dinah & her family’ in 1792 in order ‘to accomplish the debt of mr Wayles to Farrell & Jones’.¹⁸⁹ Overall, Jefferson sold eighty-three labourers between 1790 and 1793. He, too, bequeathed ‘twenty-five “negroes little and big”’ to his daughter, Martha, in 1790 following her marriage to Thomas Mann Randolph.¹⁹⁰ Despite enduring intermittent financial hardship, Jefferson continued hiring bondsmen. Indeed, Lucinda Stanton has uncovered that he rented as many as sixteen labourers every year between 1795 and 1809.

¹⁸² Levy, *The First Emancipator*, pp.62-63.

¹⁸³ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.62; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.92 describes the importance of the nailery to Jefferson.

¹⁸⁴ Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels through the United States*, Vol. 3, p.158.

¹⁸⁵ Schwabach, ‘Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves’, in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.19.

¹⁸⁶ T. Jefferson, ‘To Thomas Mann Randolph’, Philadelphia, 12 October 1792, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), pp.14-15.

¹⁸⁷ T. Jefferson, ‘To Thomas Mann Randolph’, Washington, 8 June 1803, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.19.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ T. Jefferson, ‘To Randolph Jefferson’, Monticello, 25 September 1792, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.14.

¹⁹⁰ Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.102; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, pp.89-90 contains information on the number of slaves sold by Jefferson.

This would have caused considerable disruption to the workers concerned, some of whom came from plantations as far afield 'as Caroline and Spotsylvania counties'.¹⁹¹

In mitigation, these transactions were sometimes beneficial to the slaves involved. In 1805, for example, Jefferson sold Brown to an Albemarle County planter who was seeking to reunite the bondsman with his family.¹⁹² Equally, he reached a deal that allowed Randolph Lewis to buy the wife of one of his slaves, Moses, for £150 in 1807.¹⁹³ Even in these instances, though, Jefferson bartered to secure the best deal, eventually receiving \$500 for Brown.¹⁹⁴ In short, Jefferson always had an eye on his accounts, even when acting to assuage the concerns of his slaves.

This ruthless approach was noticeable in Jefferson's refusal to dispense with overseers who had gained a reputation for cruelty. Thus, Gabriel Lilly was employed at Monticello between 1801 and 1805 because the President felt he could not hire another 'man who fulfills my purposes better'. This was despite receiving reports that Lilly had beaten James Hemings three times in one day when the bondsman was so ill that he could not 'raise his hand to his Head'.¹⁹⁵ Two other overseers were equally brutal. First, William Page was described as a 'terror' by Jefferson's neighbours, while William McGehee was so abhorred by slaves on previous plantations that he was required to arm himself 'for fear of an attack from the negroes'.¹⁹⁶

Finally, Jefferson continued to hunt runaway slaves. In July 1806, the President informed Joseph Daugherty that he had sent an agent named Mr Perry to pursue 'a young mulatto man, called Joe, 26. years of age, who ran away from here the night of the 29th. inst. without the least word of difference with any body'.¹⁹⁷ The emergence of a disciplinarian side was noted in the recollections of the Comte de Volney, a French philosopher who Jefferson entertained as a guest to Monticello in the late 1790s. Volney

¹⁹¹ L. Stanton, 'Jefferson's People: Slavery at Monticello', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.93.

¹⁹² T. Jefferson, 'To John Jordan', Washington, 21 December 1805, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.21.

¹⁹³ T. Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1807', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.27.

¹⁹⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To John Jordan', Washington, 8 February 1806, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.22; although Virginia adopted the American dollar in 1793, the pound continued to be used intermittently in transactions throughout the early nineteenth century.

¹⁹⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', Washington, 5 June 1805, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.153; L. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.159 holds the latter quote.

¹⁹⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To James Madison', Monticello, 16 August 1810, in J. Jefferson Looney (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series, Vol. 3: 12 August 1810 - 17 June 1811* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p.36; Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.118.

¹⁹⁷ T. Jefferson, 'To Joseph Daugherty', Monticello, 31 July 1806, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.22.

claimed that 'Jefferson carried "*un fouet*," a small whip, which he shook at the obviously indolent'.¹⁹⁸

Jefferson's conduct and opinions on ownership followed broader patterns in Virginia, where planters endeavoured to create an image of compassion towards their slaves. Visitors to America commented on the relative tolerance afforded to slaves in Old Dominion. For instance, English Unitarian Harry Toulmin admitted that the treatment of Virginia's bondsmen was 'much more gentle than that of the West India slaves'.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, Toulmin claimed 'that a large proportion of the slaves' in Frederick and Berkeley Counties were 'better off than the poor of England'.²⁰⁰ Virginian perceptions of slaveholding practices generally matched those voiced by Toulmin. In 1801, George Tucker averred that some of the insurrectionary 'spirit' of the slaves implicated in Gabriel Prosser's rebellion could be attributed to 'the melioration of his condition'.²⁰¹ Comparably, James Monroe expressed his shock that slaves had revolted against their masters, for he felt 'their treatment has been more favorable since the revolution'.²⁰² The anti-slavery Baptist John Leland also postulated that slaveholding in Virginia was milder than elsewhere. In his 'Virginia Chronicle', Leland claimed that slaves' 'usage is much better here than in the West Indies'.²⁰³ Still, he highlighted that although Virginia's laws safeguarded slaves' 'lives and limbs', they did not 'protect their skin and flesh'.²⁰⁴

These statements highlighted the entrenchment of the paternalist ideology that enabled masters to reconcile their slaveholding. It is one of the tragic ironies of Virginian slavery that the treatment of many labourers became less vicious as the likelihood of their manumission declined, with paternalism rapidly replacing abolitionism as the preferred doctrine of those who were sceptical of the merits of involuntary servitude.²⁰⁵ William Garnett spoke for many uncomfortable slaveholders when he labelled himself 'utterly

¹⁹⁸ Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.288.

¹⁹⁹ Tinling & Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793*, p.26.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.57.

²⁰¹ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.9.

²⁰² J. Monroe, 'To the Speakers of the General Assembly', Richmond, 5 December 1800, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of his Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 3: 1796 - 1802 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p.240; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.99.

²⁰³ Leland, 'The Virginia Chronicle', in Leland & Greene (eds.), *The Writings of the Elder John Leland*, p.95.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.102; J. Oakes, "'Whom Have I Oppressed?'" The Pursuit of Happiness and the Happy Slave', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p.235; P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.284.

incompetent to the task of manageing' his slaves, for he 'never attempt[ed] to punish or to have one punished'.²⁰⁶

More damagingly, paternalism aided those who were seeking to justify their ownership of slaves. As well as reducing the risk of insurrection, masters calculated that they could weaken one of the main criticisms levelled at the institution by giving the impression that remaining in a state of benign slavery was more beneficial to African-Americans than a marginalised existence as freemen. In this respect, proponents could claim, slavery became a necessary evil for both whites and their slaves. Accordingly, various owners followed Jefferson's example by providing healthcare for ailing slaves. For example, Edward Hundley of Hanover Town requested the help of his local doctor - Thomas Chrystie - in 1807 when one of his slaves, Billy, reported having a 'small fever' and 'cof [sic]'.²⁰⁷ Hundley admitted to finding Billy's ailment a 'strange situation' and requested Chrystie 'ride up and inform me what you think of him, and likewise ... prescribe, some Medicine, for him, if he should need it'.²⁰⁸ Similarly, Joseph Jones of Dinwiddie County had his slave, Jemmy, 'bled' after the labourer had 'so injured his head & right shoulder & all his right side that he has no feeling in it', while John Baylor of Caroline County paid \$3 to have a doctor treat Nelly in 1802.²⁰⁹

Some masters shared Jefferson's aversion to separating families by sale. An advertisement in the *Virginia Herald* invited readers to attend an auction in Caroline County in March 1793. However, the announcement stipulated: 'We would wish to dispose of them [the slaves] in families, as it will be disagreeable to separate them'.²¹⁰ In April 1803, likewise, John Hopkins notified *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser* readers of his intention to sell 'That well known plantation in the upper end of Hanover, called Bulfield, Now containing sixteen hundred and seventy five acres, more or less'. Included in this package were 'between 70 and 80 valuable Labourers, of whom 14 are men and boys, and none very old'. However, Hopkins was adamant that 'These will be sold in families, for on

²⁰⁶ Garnett, 'From William Garnett', in De Roulhac Hamilton (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Ruffin*, Vol. 1, p.80.

²⁰⁷ E. Hundley, 'Letter, 1807, written to Doctor Thomas Chrystie of Hanover Town, Hanover County, Va., by Edward Hundley concerning the medical care for an African American slave, Billy', Chrystie, Thomas (1753?-1812), papers, 1784-1811, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C4695b, p.1.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ J. Jones, 'Letter, 1808, of Joseph Jones to Jane (Atkinson) Jones, "Cedar Grove," Dinwiddie County, Va., concerning an accident to and the medical care of Jeremy, an African-American slave', Jones family papers, 1769-1846, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1J735e, p.1; 'Account, 1799-1803, with John Baylor, of "Newmarket," Caroline County, Va., concerning Dr. Taliaferro's practice of medicine and Nelly, an African-American slave', Caroline County, 1802, Baylor family papers, 1737-1865, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B3445a, p.1.

²¹⁰ *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Thursday 28 March 1793, p.4. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17930328&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

no account will I separate them'.²¹¹ Nathaniel Burwell went even further when he attempted to sell 'Between Forty & Fifty Negroes' in January 1802. Burwell demanded that 'they will be sold altogether or in families, though the former will be preferred'.²¹²

Nevertheless, any clemency amongst planters was not extended to runaways. Newspapers remained a popular place for masters to appeal for the recovery of absconders. The *Virginia Gazette's* pages were occasionally populated by Jefferson's Albemarle County neighbours. For instance, in November 1792, Achilles Rogers advertised for the return of James, 'a short well made NEGRO MAN, about 24 or 25 years of age ... of a black complexion, talks tolerably sensible'.²¹³ Furthermore, John Carr requested information on the whereabouts of 'A negro man named George' in November 1795. Carr reported that George 'is a shoemaker by trade, and can spin very well on the flax wheel'.²¹⁴

Slaves were also frequently traded throughout the period. In fact, the Unitarian preacher Harry Toulmin reported to English readers that there was 'no difficulty in procuring slaves' in Frederick County in 1793.²¹⁵ Toulmin's testimony detailed individual instances of slave hiring. Accordingly, he noted that Mrs. Stokes' 'mother has two Negroes, coopers, whom she hires out by the year at £25 currency, which is equal to £16 15s. sterling'.²¹⁶ Equally, the diaries of Peter Carr demonstrate that Jefferson's Albemarle County neighbour hired a slave from David Higginbotham in June 1801. In the remaining six months of the year he spent over \$1,200 purchasing four more labourers.²¹⁷ Planters often supplemented profits by trading bondsmen. For example, William Bolling of Goochland County accrued more than \$4,000 from the sale of slaves in 1806, while Jesse Nalle of Culpeper County bought Lilley from Joel Youel of Madison County for \$250 in 1809.²¹⁸ Large

²¹¹ J. Hopkins, 'Valuable Property for Sale', Richmond, in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 20 April 1803, p.4. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=9tJtKg94vZsC&dat=18030420&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

²¹² N. Burwell, 'For Sale', King William County, in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Tuesday 19 January 1802, p.1. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfnD-AC&dat=18020119&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

²¹³ 'Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser (Davis)', Richmond, 14 November 1792, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=v1792.xml&adId=v1792110060>.

²¹⁴ 'Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg and Falmouth Advertiser (Green)', Fredericksburg, 17 November 1795, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=v1795.xml&adId=v1795110038>.

²¹⁵ Tinling & Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793*, p.48.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.20.

²¹⁷ P. Carr, 'Bill of sale, 1801, of Brown, Rives & Co., by D. Higginbotham to Peter Carr for the sale of John, an African American slave', Carr, Peter, 1770-1815. Papers 1800-1815, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C2308b, p.1; P. Carr, 'Bill of sale, 1801, of Reuben Burnley to Peter Carr for the sale of David, Corbin, and Leroy, African American slaves', Carr, Peter, 1770-1815. Papers 1800-1815, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C2308b, p.1; P. Carr, 'Bill of sale, 1801, of Mary Burch, administratrix of Samuel Burch, deceased, to Peter Carr for the purchase of Martin, an African American slave', Carr, Peter, 1770-1815. Papers 1800-1815, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C2308b, p.1.

²¹⁸ 'Deed of sale, 1809, Joel Youel, of Madison County, Va., to Jesse Nalle, of Culpeper and Orange counties, Va., for the purchase of [Lilley], an African-American slave', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.,

numbers of slaves could be involved in transactions. Indeed, Frances Eppes of Cumberland County held an auction in which 100 of his slaves were placed for sale in January 1791.²¹⁹ Similarly, Skinner Wallop of Accomack County sold eighteen slaves to 'James Henry agent for the Heirs of James Rule' in 1793. In return, he received just over £372.²²⁰

Slave sales were often used to repay debts, highlighting the continued importance of bondsmen as 'property' for their owners. For example, William Hill relinquished all his labourers and horses in 1799 'in consideration of securing to the said Christopher Tompkins the payment of a considerable sum or sums of money that is due & owing to the said John W. Semple'.²²¹ In 1804, moreover, William Nock of Accomack County sold Ader and her three children to Richard R. Savage 'in consideration of a Debt due' for £57.02.²²² As with Jefferson, some deals were beneficial to the slaves concerned. In 1808, an Accomack County planter recorded selling Mary Cropper (aged two) for £20 to the child's father 'Joshua Stilson Black man of the afsd. Place'.²²³ Nonetheless, the fact that money needed to be transferred to re-unite Stilson with his daughter illustrates that the rights of slaves were a lower priority than plantation profit margins.

Moreover, many ordinary masters followed Jefferson's drive for a more diversified plantation economy by employing slaves in industrial trades. Appeals for information about runaways outlined the skillsets that Virginia's slaves had mastered. An 1803 note in the *Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer* - penned by Robert Boggess of Fairfax County - labelled Stephen, aged 28, 'a remarkable good hand in a brickyard'.²²⁴ Personal correspondence detailed this trend too. In 1807, John Hill of Hanover Town refused to hire out a slave to a neighbouring plantation as he believed the \$12 fee offered by Doctor Thomas Chrystie was too low for a man who was 'a verry good carpenter, & a negro of excellent disposition'.²²⁵

photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1; Bolling, William (1777-1849), slave register, 1752-1890, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss5:5B6387:1, pp.86-87.

²¹⁹ L. Wilkinson (Sheriff of New Kent County), in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Richmond, Wednesday 12 January 1791, No. 232, p.1. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfnD-AC&dat=17910112&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

²²⁰ Lander: Bill of Sale, Accomack County, 1793, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²¹ 'Deed of sale, 1799, of William Hill to Christopher Tompkins, John W[alker] Semple, Isaac Robertson, and Edward Hill concerning African-American slaves and horses', King and Queen County, Hill, William, indenture, 1799, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2H5565a1, p.1.

²²² Ader (F): Bill of Sale, Accomack County, 1804, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²³ Stutson, Mary Cropper (F,2): Bill of Sale, Accomack County, 1808, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²⁴ 'Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer', 22-03-1803, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.18.

²²⁵ J. Hill, 'Letter, 1807, written to Doctor Thomas Chrystie of Hanover Town, Hanover County, Va., by John Hill concerning an enslaved carpenter, Will', Chrystie, Thomas (1753?-1812), papers, 1784-1811, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C4695b, p.1.

Masters also attempted to motivate slaves by offering them inducements. For instance, Richard Blow requested that his overseer give 'the hands a dram' of spirit 'in the morning' to encourage good behaviour. By contrast, those deemed to have misbehaved were to 'be debared [*sic*] of their allowance'.²²⁶ A slave from Prince George County reported that his master - Spencer Ball - also incentivised work. 'Old Dick' informed an English tutor, John Davis, that Ball had 'allowed me to build a log-house, and take in a patch of land, where I raise corn and water *Melions* [*sic*]. I keep chickens and ducks, turkeys and geese, and his lady always gives me the price of the *Alexander* market for my stock'.²²⁷ Davis supported the aging bondsman's account by reporting that 'Dick's log-hut was not unpleasantly situated. He had built it near a spring of clear water, and defended it from the sun by an awning of boughs'.²²⁸ As we saw in chapter two, such measures ultimately benefitted masters as much as their slaves. Davis' recording certainly suggests that Ball could rely on Old Dick's support in return for giving him greater independence.

Overall, George Washington's conduct in the last decade of the nineteenth century reflected Jefferson's to a greater degree than it had in the Revolutionary era. First, Washington catered for slaves when they fell ill. In October 1792, he instructed Anthony Whiting - the acting manager of his Mount Vernon estate - that 'it is foremost in my thoughts, to desire you will be particularly attentive to my Negroes in their sickness'.²²⁹ A fortnight later, Washington advised that he did not mind his overseers administering 'sweeten'd Teas, broths, and ... sometimes a little Wine ... to nourish and restore the patient'.²³⁰ Washington was praised by contemporaries for the way he looked after his workers. Thus, a Polish visitor to Mount Vernon, Julien Niemcewicz, acknowledged: 'Washington treats his slaves far more humanely than do his fellow citizens of Virginia. Most of these gentlemen give to their Blacks only bread, water and blows'.²³¹ Washington, too, shared Jefferson's aversion to splitting slave families and offered incentives to

²²⁶ R. Blow, 'Letter', 21 January 1806, Blow Family Papers, 1653-1905, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B6235a, p.1.

²²⁷ J. Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p.388; see appendix 1.6, p.332 for more information about Davis.

²²⁸ Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America*, p.388.

²²⁹ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Mount Vernon, 14 October 1792, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: *March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.184.

²³⁰ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Mount Vernon, 28 October 1792, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: *March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.197.

²³¹ J. U. Niemcewicz, 'Acute Observations: From Domestic Pursuits to Concern for the Nation', in J. B. Lee (ed.), *Experiencing Mount Vernon: Eyewitness Accounts, 1784-1865* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.79; M. V. Thompson, "'They Appear to Live Comfortable Together": Private Lives of the Mount Vernon Slaves', in P. J. Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, Va.: Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2001), p.123; see appendix 1.6, p.334 for more information about Niemcewicz.

labourers whom he regarded as promising workers.²³² In the mid-1790s, Washington informed William Pearce of his intention to promote Cyrus to a role within his house, for he considered the man 'likely, young, and smart enough'. He, too, planned to have 'clothes ... made for him'.²³³

Nonetheless, many of the limitations that undermined Jefferson's claims to benevolence were evident in Washington's conduct. Washington undoubtedly used his high-profile position to attempt the recovery of his wife's personal attendant, Oney Judge, after she had absconded from the Presidential residence in Philadelphia in September 1796. Nearly fifty years later, Judge was interviewed by the Boston-based newspaper, *The Liberator*. Judge confirmed that she had escaped to avoid becoming the slave of Washington's grand-daughter, which was due to happen 'after the decease of her master and mistress'.²³⁴ While trying to negotiate the homecoming of the fugitive, Washington instructed his Secretary of the Treasury 'To seize' the escapee 'and put her on board a Vessel bound immediately to this place, or to Alexandria'.²³⁵ When Judge was located, she refused to return to Virginia. Consequently, Washington implored Joseph Whipple, who had found the absconder, to use 'such measures as are proper to put her on board a Vessel bound either to Alexandria or the Federal City' of Philadelphia.²³⁶ Judge testified to the fact that Washington had endeavoured 'to bring her and *her infant child by force*' after his initial attempts at reconciliation failed.²³⁷

James Monroe also reflected Jefferson in the running of his Ash-Lawn Highland plantation. Thus, rather than manumit his labourers, Monroe ensured that his slaves were given basic guarantees such as 'protection of family units, a minor amount of self-determination in work assignments, and the provision of medical care'.²³⁸ Similarly, John Marshall's letters imply that he - like Jefferson - wished to be perceived as an owner who cared for his slaves, despite failing to manumit them. When writing to his wife in 1797,

²³² W. M. S. Rasmussen & R. S. Tilton, *George Washington: The Man Behind the Myths* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.200; Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.282 & 284; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.222.

²³³ G. Washington, 'To William Pearce', Philadelphia, 1 May 1796, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 35: *March 30, 1796 - July 31, 1797* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.34; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, pp.71 & 227 describes this trend. The first quote appears on p.71.

²³⁴ 'Washington's Runaway Slave', in *The Liberator*, No. 762, 22 August 1845, p.1. Retrieved from *Encyclopaedia Virginia: A Publication of Virginia Foundation for the Humanities*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/media_player?mets_filename=evr11869mets.xml.

²³⁵ G. Washington, 'To the Secretary of the Treasury (Private)', 1 September 1796, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 35: *March 30, 1796 - July 31, 1797* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.202; Wienczek, *An Imperfect God*, p.324.

²³⁶ G. Washington, 'To Joseph Whipple', Philadelphia, 28 November 1796, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 35: *March 30, 1796 - July 31, 1797* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.298.

²³⁷ 'Washington's Runaway Slave', in *The Liberator*, 22 August 1845, p.1.

²³⁸ J. Boehm, 'James Monroe', *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/james-monroe>.

Marshall certainly complained: 'Even sending away Dick wounds me because it looks like parting with the last of the family'.²³⁹

Furthermore, James Madison used incentives to manage his labourers. In a letter which summarised the Virginian paternalist position, Madison requested that his overseers 'treat the Negroes with all the humanity and kindness consistent with their necessary subordination and work'.²⁴⁰ Madison occasionally intervened in plantation affairs to guarantee that his slaves were well catered for. For example, he ordered supervisors to ensure that bondsmen at Montpelier were 'supplied with meal' in 1790.²⁴¹ This apparent concern did not stop Madison trading slaves. Indeed, he hired one of Benjamin Grayson Orr's labourers - Plato - for five years in July 1801. That October, Madison also obtained the services of an African-American belonging to Francis H. Rozer.²⁴² Other leading statesmen were engaged in the internal slave trade. An advertisement for a runaway named Davey appeared in the *Virginia Gazette and Extraordinary* on 30 March 1791. The owner of the slave, Matthew Sampson, noted that he had previously 'purchased' Davey 'of [sic] the Hon. Carter Braxton', who had been a Virginian signatory of the Declaration of Independence.²⁴³

'you know our masters are very bad to us': Disciplinary Masters and Violent Overseers²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, there are numerous examples that show life for Jefferson's slaves differed from that experienced by some Virginian labourers. These incidents demonstrate that it is erroneous to view slaveholding culture through Jefferson's example alone. Visitors to Old Dominion certainly recorded that Jefferson's slaves had better living conditions than

²³⁹ J. Marshall, 'To Mary W. Marshall', Alexandria, 24 June 1797, in W. C. Stinchcombe & C. T. Cullen (eds.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 3: *Correspondence and Papers, January 1796 - December 1798* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p.92.

²⁴⁰ J. Madison, 'Instructions for the Montpelier Overseer and Laborers', 8 November 1790, in C. F. Hobson, R. A. Rutland, W. M. E. Rachal & J. K. Sisson (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 13: *20 January 1790 - 31 March 1791* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), pp.302-303 contains the quote; S. J. Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher: James Madison, Republicanism, and Slavery* (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2008), p.108; A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.201; R. Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.374.

²⁴¹ Madison, 'Instructions for the Montpelier Overseer and Laborers', in Hobson et al. (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 13, pp.302-303.

²⁴² J. Madison, 'Agreement with Benjamin Grayson Orr', 27 July 1801, in R. J. Brugger, R. A. Rutland, R. R. Crout, J. K. Sisson & D. Dowdy (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, Vol. 1: *4 March - 31 July 1801* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), p.482; F. H. Rozer, 'From Francis H. Rozer', 25 October 1801, in M. A. Hackett, J. C. A. Stagg, J. K. Cross & S. H. Perdue (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison: Secretary of State Series*, Vol. 2: *1 August 1801 - 28 February 1802* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.203.

²⁴³ S. Matthews, 'Runaway', in *The Virginia Gazette and Extraordinary*, Richmond, Wednesday 30 March 1791, No. 243, p.2. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfnD-AC&dat=17910330&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

²⁴⁴ Thilman, Paul: Public Claim, Hanover County, 1802-08-27, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

bondsmen on other plantations. Thus, following a visit to Virginia in 1796, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt asserted that workers at Monticello were 'nourished, clothed, and treated as well as white servants could be'.²⁴⁵ Moreover, a guest from Washington commented in 1809 that the standard of slave dwellings provided by Jefferson was 'much better than I have seen on any other plantation'.²⁴⁶ While these are hardly grounds to praise Jefferson, such statements highlight that conditions for many labourers remained extremely poor.

Negative depictions of slaveholding practices further question whether paternalist ideals had made planters more humane than previous generations. For example, the Unitarian preacher Harry Toulmin noted that 'both young and old' slaves in Norfolk County 'are barefooted, and their clothes, though generally decent, are very scanty'.²⁴⁷ Nor were all Virginian observers convinced by planters' claims to benevolence. The Presbyterian minister David Rice detailed how 'The master may, and often does, inflict upon him all the severity of punishment the human body is capable of bearing; and the law supports him in it'.²⁴⁸

Incidents of violence suggest that Toulmin and Rice's appraisals reflected an inconvenient truth. Indeed, Gabriel Prosser's rebellion was inspired by the slave's objection to the strict treatment meted out by his master, Thomas Prosser.²⁴⁹ Advertisements for runaways often highlighted the cruel conduct levelled at African-Americans. Many appeals reported that absconders had been 'branded' by their owners following perceived misdemeanours. Achilles Rogers of Albemarle County certainly admitted that James 'had a brand on his cheek with the letter R when he went away'.²⁵⁰ Similarly, David Anderson of Petersburg noted how Archie, twenty-five, had 'been branded on both cheeks some years ago by his former master'.²⁵¹ Meanwhile, Wade Mosby recorded that Davy had been 'branded on one of his jaws by his former master ... with the letter M' because of his propensity to abscond.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels through the United States*, Vol. 3, p.157.

²⁴⁶ M. Bayard, 'Visit to Monticello and Montpelier', Monticello, 1 August 1809, in G. Hunt (ed.), *The First Forty Years of Washington Society: Portrayed by the Family Letters of Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith (Margaret Bayard) from the Collection of her Grandson J. Henry Smith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p.68. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001263225>.

²⁴⁷ Tinling & Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793*, p.26.

²⁴⁸ Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*, p.8.

²⁴⁹ Ammon, *James Monroe*, p.186.

²⁵⁰ 'Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser (Davis)', Richmond, 14 November 1792, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1792.xml&adId=v1792110060>.

²⁵¹ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 29-12-1807, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.93-94.

²⁵² W. Mosby, 'Runaway', in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Richmond, Wednesday 14 March 1792, p.4. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxfnd-AC&dat=17920314&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

Whippings were regularly recorded in runaway literature. In 1799, for instance, Thomas Massie of Albemarle County advertised for the return of Ned, a thirty-year-old labourer who 'shews [sic] the marks of the whip'.²⁵³ In 1801, another plea in the *Norfolk Herald* outlined that Dick had 'been lately stealing meat, for which he was whipped, and his back is pretty well marked'.²⁵⁴ Four years later, a request in the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* from Thomas West described how 'Abner' still had 'some old scars from a whip which he received seventeen years ago for running away'.²⁵⁵ Likewise, Fielding Ficklin of Culpeper County admitted in the *Richmond Enquirer* that Reuben had 'many scars' on his back 'from flogging he has received which he justly merited'.²⁵⁶ Particular cruelty was inflicted on Toney of Buckingham County. Toney's owner, John Stevens, appealed in the *Virginia Argus* for the return of the thirty-year-old, who had 'scars on his back [not for good behavior] and one very noted scar on his breast as large as a man's finger and as long'. Further, Stevens admitted that Toney 'has been branded on both jaws'.²⁵⁷

Family papers highlighted additional instances of abuse being meted out by overseers. For instance, Virginian widow Lucy Thornton wrote in 1799 of her distress at the 'insolent' behaviour of a white supervisor who had 'frightened me almost out of my senses once by beating one of the negroes in the most cruel manner'. Thornton initially feared that the assault 'might be attended with fatal consequences as the wounds were on his head and the blood gushed out of his eye'.²⁵⁸ In another case, Solomon Betton - an overseer employed by the Spotsylvania County legislator John Mercer - admitted to whipping a slave named Valentine. On the same day that Betton had disciplined Valentine, another bondsman - Davy - fled the plantation to seek Mercer's assistance.²⁵⁹ Despite conceding that Mercer should decide 'what is proper to be done' with the runaways, Betton suggested 'that an offence of this kind, shall be punished with many stripes'.²⁶⁰ Masters sometimes supported strict overseers. Elkenah Talley of Hanover County

²⁵³ 'Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser (Davis)', Richmond, 17 July 1799, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1799.xml&adId=v1799070053>.

²⁵⁴ 'Norfolk Herald (Willett and O'Connor)', Norfolk, 25 April 1801, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vg1801.xml&adId=v1801040048>.

²⁵⁵ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 14-08-1805, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.55.

²⁵⁶ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 13-06-1807, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.92.

²⁵⁷ J. Stevens, 'Twenty Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Argus*, Wednesday 5 January 1803, p.1 (slide 5 of the below link). Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=dL6bBWys_hoC&dat=18021124&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

²⁵⁸ L. Thornton, 'To Miss Mary Robinson', Limebrook, 15 November 1799, Thornton, Lucy (Battaile) (1767-1840), papers, 1798-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2T3959b, p.1.

²⁵⁹ S. Betton, 'Letter', Marlborough, 6 September 1791, Mercer Family Papers, 1656-1859, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1M5345a, p.1.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

undoubtedly informed his supervisor Benjamin Brand that 'nothing would give me greater satisfaction than for you or any other person in town to give' his slave Nead 'a pretty severe correction every time he is caught in town of a Sunday' in a letter composed on 10 September 1809.²⁶¹

Slave testimonies detailed further examples of cruelty. In 1807, Thomas Jefferson received a letter that outlined the brutality female slaves were subjected to by their masters. In the dispatch, the anonymous author, writing under the pseudonym 'A Slave', noted that the health of slave women was often 'disregarded by our cruel masters, overseers, & even by our misterses' who insisted they be 'foursed [*sic*] into the fields almost naked, & ... oblidged [*sic*] to labour in the heat of the scorching sun dureing [*sic*] the whole live long day'. 'A Slave', too, alleged that 'many times ... when eight or nine months gone in pregnancy, they are beaten down & tronden [*sic*] ... under foot in a most inhuman manner'.²⁶²

Grievances at this treatment led slaves to seek retribution. Courts frequently oversaw trials of labourers who had assailed their masters. In 1790, two slaves from Nottoway County were sentenced to death for attempting to poison Peter Robertson.²⁶³ Five years later, a slave named Ned was hung for torching his owner's Dinwiddie County home, while Solomon and Beck were executed for 'having wilfully murdered their said Master'.²⁶⁴ The limited nature of court records makes discerning motives for individual cases difficult. Nonetheless, in hearings where context is provided, it becomes clear that many attacks were revenge for cruel treatment. For instance, three slaves - James, Glasgow and Tom - were found guilty in August 1802 of plotting 'to rebel & make insurrection against this Commonwealth'. One witness attested to the fact that he had overheard Tom - who was owned by Paul Thilman - saying 'you know our masters are very bad to us ... and we want to put a stop to it'.²⁶⁵ Four years later, courts in Charlotte County sentenced Fanny Goode for attempting to poison Thomas Goode. One slave, Jacob, testified that Fanny had instructed him to give Goode 'a small whitish root...and it would kill him'. She had done so because 'her master whipped Andrew her husband'.²⁶⁶ Fanny had also entrusted another

²⁶¹ E. Talley, 'Letter', 10 September 1809, Brand, Benjamin (d. 1843), papers, 1779-1833, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2B7332b, p.1.

²⁶² Baker (ed.), "'A Slave' Writes Thomas Jefferson', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.149.

²⁶³ Jones, Branch, Estate of: Public Claim, Nottoway County, 1790-10-27, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2-3.

²⁶⁴ Munford, Robert: Public Claim, Dinwiddie County, 1795-09-11, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; Elliott, Thomas: Public Claim, Pittsylvania County, 1799-12-11, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

²⁶⁵ Thilman, Paul: Public Claim, Hanover County, 1802-08-27, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

²⁶⁶ Goode Sr, Philip: Public Claim, Charlotte County, 1806-03-07, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2-3.

slave, Andrew, with the root, which 'was to be given in the water'. The defendant had asked Andrew to administer the poison 'because Thomas Goode was so bad to this deponent her husband and her Children'.²⁶⁷ The testimony of Goode's father, Philip, hints at the authoritarian treatment endured by his slaves. Philip reported that Fanny had admitted to the crime after she 'was taken in custody and whipped'.²⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Thomas Goode informed jurors that he had 'corrected' another slave, Rina, for attempting to poison his milk.²⁶⁹

Equally, courts were regularly confronted with incidents of extreme violence against slaves. In 1802, a freedom suit was successfully pursued by a slave named Dinah, who alleged that her owner, Sarah Redman, had 'with Swords and Staves made an assault upon the said pltf ... and then and there beat, wounded, and imprisoned her, and kept her in prison there for a long time'.²⁷⁰ Violence was not only administered by masters and overseers. An inquest into the death of Will Farney found that the bondsman had been assailed by Samuel Patterson, a white man who resided with the victim on Edward Farney's estate in Albemarle County.²⁷¹ The coroner reached the conclusion that Patterson had 'Felloniously, Voluntarily, and of Malice aforethought, Made an assault' on Will 'and then and there with a Certain Instrument commonly called a Cow hide' whipped the slave 'upon the Back, Breast, Belly and Right Thigh, and also upon the Navel and privates ... of which said Wounds & bruises the said Negroe Man Will ... did Die'.²⁷²

The harsh treatment of slaves was not limited to plantations. A certificate produced in Orange County in 1791 highlighted the shocking handling of an African-American interred in the local prison. The coroner described how he had found 'negro Humphrey the property of Mr. William Taylor of Orange' deceased with wounds 'in his Wrists, one of his ankles, & also his hips'.²⁷³ These injuries had been 'owing to his legs & wrist Irons being too tight'. Accordingly, the doctor concluded 'that the negro lost his Life, by that cruel treatment when in said Prison'.²⁷⁴

Cruelty took non-violent forms. Runaway advertisements confirm that many masters did not share Jefferson's concerns about splitting slave families. In June 1795, for example, Garrett Minor appealed for the return of Bob, aged twenty-one, whom he had

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Dinah: Freedom Suit, Arlington County, 1802, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4.

²⁷¹ Will: Coroner's Inquisition, Albemarle County, 1796, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp.1-2.

²⁷³ Orange County: Certificate, 1791, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

purchased from General Nelson seven years earlier.²⁷⁵ Minor suspected that Bob had returned to Hanover County, for 'his parents now belong to Francis Nelson, Esq'.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, an 1801 appeal for the return of George - a Fairfax County labourer - noted that the bondsman was married to a woman who laboured 'at one of the Ravensworth Quarters'.²⁷⁷ Similarly, P. Street of Hanover County reported that his slave, Billey, had a wife in Richmond, where the absconder had 'frequently been since his elopement' in 1807.²⁷⁸

Children were sometimes separated from their parents. In 1801, Nancy - aged nine - was purchased by Abram Leath from 'Joseph Uoinard of the town of Petersburg' for £50, while John and William Drummond of Accomack County swapped child slaves in 1807.²⁷⁹ The extent to which families were disrupted by the internal slave trade is highlighted by the experience of thirty-five-year-old Flora from Goochland County. Flora was reported as pregnant by her owner, Thomas Branch, who alleged that the slave had fled 'into the neighborhood of Capt. William Branch, in Chesterfield county, where she was raised, and where she has a husband, or to Manchester, where her father and mother both live at present, and where she once lived herself'.²⁸⁰ Perhaps the predominant view of planters was summarised in an advertisement for the sale of a young family in 1802. The man conducting the auction, James Murphy of New Market, stated his preference for selling the husband, wife and four children as one. However, should a sale not 'be advantageously made, I will sell the two oldest children separate, a boy and a girl'.²⁸¹ The same was true of Burgess Ball, who endeavoured to sell 'between *twenty-five* and *thirty* valuable SLAVES' to settle his debts. Ball confirmed his desire to trade 'in families' but indicated a willingness to negotiate should initial buyers not be found.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ 'Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser (Davis)', Richmond, 3 June 1795, *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia: Virginia Runaways, Slave Advertisements, Runaway Advertisements*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=v1795.xml&adId=v1795060105>.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ 'Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer', 25-08-1801, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.4.

²⁷⁸ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 31-05-1807, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.92.

²⁷⁹ Nancy (F, 9): Bill of Sale, Petersburg (City), 1801, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Edmund (M): Bill of Sale, 1807, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1

²⁸⁰ T. Branch, 'Fifteen Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Argus*, Wednesday 28 August 1805, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=dL6bBWYs_hoC&dat=18050828&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

²⁸¹ J. Murphy, 'For Sale', New Market, in *The Virginia Argus*, Saturday 12 June 1802, p.4 (slide 16 of the link below). Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=dL6bBWYs_hoC&dat=18020305&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

²⁸² B. Ball, 'Valuable Slaves for Sale', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Thursday 11 July 1793, p.4 (slide 8 of the link below). Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=IVu93_cgYy4C&dat=17930704&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

Nor did slaves need to be traded for their relationships to be disrupted. At any point, owners could move labourers to relatives' estates or separate farms on their own plantations. The experience of slaves belonging to Mary Pebbles of Brunswick County is instructive. In 1800, Pebbles was forced to ask lawmakers for permission to transport several labourers from her son's plantation in North Carolina because she had lost nearly all her male slaves to illness. Pebbles admitted that she had previously sent 'such of them as were then considered as supernumeraries' to work with her son in 'Carolina'.²⁸³ Some eminent Virginians had little compunction about dividing families in this manner. In fact, St. George Tucker punished house slaves deemed to be underperforming by banishing them to work in the fields on a subsidiary plantation.²⁸⁴

Despite mellowing after the Revolution, there were still ways in which George Washington was stricter than Jefferson in the 1790s. He undoubtedly issued his overseers with regular instructions to inflict corporal punishment on bondsmen. Writing in 1797, Washington advised one manager: 'if the Negroes will not do their duty by fair means, they must be compelled to do it'.²⁸⁵ In another letter, composed during his Presidency, the General praised a supervisor for punishing a female slave, claiming: 'Your treatment of Charlotte was very proper, and if She, or any other of the Servants will not do their duty by fair means, or are impertinent, correction ... must be administered'.²⁸⁶ Nor was retribution limited to slaves on his plantation. In March 1795, Washington instructed William Pearce that if Ben - a slave from a neighbouring estate - visited Mount Vernon, he was 'to give him a good whipping, and forbid his ever returning'.²⁸⁷

Moreover, Washington used the threat of sale to the West Indies to keep slaves in check. While serving as President, he wrote to an overseer, Anthony Whiting, denouncing the behaviour of 'Matildas Ben'. Washington instructed Whiting to inform the labourer that unless he ceased 'his rogueries, and other villainies by fair means and shortly; that I will ship him off ... for the West Indies, where he will have no opportunity of playing such pranks as he is at present engaged in'.²⁸⁸ Some guests to Mount Vernon witnessed

²⁸³ Pebbles, Mary: Petition, Brunswick County, 1800-12-21, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁴ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.218.

²⁸⁵ G. Washington, 'From George Washington to James Anderson, 20 February 1797', *National Archives: Founders Online*, last modified 30 March 2017, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-00317>; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.36.

²⁸⁶ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Philadelphia, 20 January 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: *March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.307; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.36 also details the incident.

²⁸⁷ G. Washington, 'To William Pearce', Philadelphia, 1 March 1795, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 34: *October 11, 1794 - March 29, 1796* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.128.

²⁸⁸ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Philadelphia, 3 March 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: *March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793* (Washington: U. S.

Washington's disciplinarian streak. The English-born farmer Robert Parkinson certainly recorded that Washington's slaves were 'so lazy by nature' that his host subjected them to 'harsh treatment'. Indeed, 'it was the sense of all his neighbours that he treated them with more severity than any other man'.²⁸⁹ Equally, Julien Niemcewicz claimed that after investigating the schedules of slaves at Mount Vernon: 'One sees ... that the condition of our peasants [in Poland] is infinitely happier'.²⁹⁰ Viewing the dwellings of Washington's bondsmen further shocked Niemcewicz. Describing slave houses, the Polish commentator asserted: 'They are more miserable than the most miserable of the cottages of our peasants'.²⁹¹

Washington is also accused of offering his labourers 'parsimonious' amounts of food and clothing.²⁹² This frugality meant that workers on one Mount Vernon field complained of going 'without a mouthful [of food] for a day, and ... sometimes two days'.²⁹³ However, Washington was unapologetic. Thus, he told Anthony Whiting: 'It is not my wish, or desire, that my Negroes should have an oz of meal more, nor less, than is sufficient to feed them plentifully'.²⁹⁴ Washington struggled to provide for his labourers in other respects. During one winter, an overseer informed him that slaves on one farm only possessed a single shirt.²⁹⁵ In 1792, equally, Washington complained of losing 'more Negroes [from illness] last winter, than I had done in 12 or 15 years'. Revealingly, his comments came less than six months after he had been rebuked by his slaves for not supplying them with blankets.²⁹⁶ These incidents do not absolve Jefferson from criticism for the wrongs he inflicted on his slaves. However, they suggest that some of the praise heaped on Washington for liberating his slaves needs to be re-evaluated.

Washington was not the only large-scale planter of the era who failed to provide satisfactorily for his labourers. Charles Carter of Charles City County - who held more than

Govt. Print, 1939), p.366; MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, pp.132-133; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.132; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.37.

²⁸⁹ R. Parkinson, *A Tour in America, in 1798, 1799, and 1800: Exhibiting Sketches of Society and Manners, and a Particular Account of the American System of Agriculture, With its Recent Improvements*, Vol. 2 (London: J. Harding & J. Murray, 1805), p.419. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008688515>; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.58.

²⁹⁰ Niemcewicz, 'Acute Observations', in Lee (ed.), *Experiencing Mount Vernon*, p.79.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.286-287. See p.286 for the quote.

²⁹³ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Philadelphia, 26 May 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: *March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.475.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.474.

²⁹⁵ Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, pp.124-125.

²⁹⁶ Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 32, p.184; in an October 1791 letter to Tobias Lear, Washington had reported that his slaves were 'teazing [sic] me' for blankets. See G. Washington, 'To Tobias Lear', Mount Vernon, 7 October 1791, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 31: *January 22, 1790 - March 9, 1792* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.385; Ferling, *The First of Men*, p.479.

100 bondsmen on his multiple estates - received a letter from an overseer at his Shirley plantation in October 1802 relaying concerns over the meagre food provisions afforded to his labourers. The correspondent - Carter Berkeley - reported that his employer's labourers were 'making depredations upon the stock of both hogs & sheep'. Berkeley believed that the slaves had concluded that Carter's 'negroes every where else have better than themselves'.²⁹⁷ The overseer supported the labourers' perspectives, informing Carter that it 'is with the utmost difficulty that the stock of Hogs here can be kept up to supply you & the overseers families on the Estate. After these draughts are made, there is but a poor pittance indeed left for the negroes'. In fact, the situation had reached the extent that Berkeley doubted 'whether it would amount to half dozen pounds a year to each mouth on the estate'.²⁹⁸

Advertisements for runaways often highlighted the inadequate clothing afforded to slaves. In January 1793, Henry Miller sought the return of thirty-five-year-old Prince. Miller conceded that Prince had been wearing 'very indifferent clothes' when he absconded.²⁹⁹ Equally, John Miller admitted that a slave had escaped wearing 'shoes [that] had nails in the feet' in 1795.³⁰⁰ Another appeal for the return of a runaway from Fairfax County in May 1801 highlighted the poor standard of clothing afforded to Charles, who had fled from Philip Richard Fendall. Fendall reported that Charles was wearing 'old shoes and socks and an old hat' at the time of his disappearance. Furthermore, Fendall admitted: 'all his working cloaths [*sic*] are much worn and patched'.³⁰¹

The example of Richard Blow of Portsmouth demonstrates how frugal some masters were. Although he agreed to purchase eight pairs of shoes for his workers following an overseers' requests, Blow stipulated that the cost of buying the items 'be deducted from their wages'.³⁰² Blow's instructions to the employee - penned in 1806 - further highlighted his disciplinarian nature. The planter requested that his correspondent 'give the negroes strict orders, at what time they are to be at their places of work every Monday morning, & not suffer them to be indulged an hour after the time your pref is,

²⁹⁷ C. Berkeley, 'Letter, 1802, of Carter Berkeley to Charles Carter of Shirley Plantation, Charles City County, relating the slaves' displeasure with the supply of meat provided for them and Colia, an African-American slave', Berkeley, Carter (1767-1839), letter, 1802, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2B4552a2, p.1.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ H. Miller, 'Ten Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Thursday 3 January 1793, p.1. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17930103&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

³⁰⁰ J. Miller, 'Ranaway from the Subscriber', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Tuesday 12 May 1795, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17950512&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

³⁰¹ 'Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer', 08-05-1801, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.2.

³⁰² R. Blow, 'Letter', 21 January 1806, Blow Family Papers, 1653-1905, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B6235a, p.1.

without a reasonable & good excuse'.³⁰³ Furthermore, Blow outlined his desire for a recently hired slave to 'be taught how to work'.³⁰⁴

Paradoxically, there were ways in which Jefferson's conduct was more restrictive than that of some planters. Although he was regularly stricter than Jefferson, George Washington receives acclaim from scholars for refusing to sell his bondsmen after 1780.³⁰⁵ Washington proclaimed his aversion to the practice of 'selling negros, as you would do cattle in the market' in a letter composed in November 1794.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, when corresponding with Robert Lewis in 1799, Washington maintained that he could not get rid of his 'overplus' of slaves because he was 'principled against this kind of traffic in the human species'.³⁰⁷

Other planters allowed their slaves more freedom than Jefferson. John Davis - an English visitor to Virginia in the late eighteenth century - acclaimed Spencer Ball of Prince George County. Davis noted that 'The work of the slaves was light, and punishment never inflicted' by their master, even when bondsmen had absconded.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, Davis - who tutored Ball's children - recorded that workers at Pohoke were permitted to visit friends on neighbouring sites every Sunday. In this respect, Ball's bondsmen were granted similar autonomy to Robert Carter's labourers at Nomini Hall. Evidently impressed, Davis concluded that he had 'never saw slavery wear so contented an aspect as on *Pohoke* plantation'.³⁰⁹

Finally, some masters afforded their slaves more luxurious clothing than Jefferson. Slaveholders occasionally stipulated that labourers be granted acceptable provisions as part of their terms of sale. For instance, James Bendall and William Chappell from Sussex County agreed to purchase 'two good suits of clothes a hat & blanket' for a newly hired slave, Hannah, in an agreement of January 1808. Should they not keep their promise, Bendall and Chappell were liable to be fined £12.³¹⁰ These incentives did not always quell a labourer's desire for liberty. Thus, Richard Hewitt bemoaned that his slave, Tom, had ran

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Lee, 'Mount Vernon Plantation', in Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, p.36.

³⁰⁶ G. Washington, 'To Alexander Spotswood', Philadelphia, 23 November 1794, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 34: *October 11, 1794 - March 29, 1796* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.47; R. Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), p.105; R. N. Smith, *Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993), p.209.

³⁰⁷ G. Washington, 'To Robert Lewis', Mount Vernon, 18 August 1799, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 37: *November 1, 1798 - December 13, 1799* (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1941), p.338; D. J. Pogue, 'The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon', in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002), p.6.

³⁰⁸ Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America*, p.366.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ 'Bond', 7 January 1808, Bendall family papers, 1749-1819, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B4325a, p.1.

away in 1803, despite possessing 'either one or two watches with him', which he had received from 'Col. Marstellers family, who were very liberal to him' during Tom's time being hired out by Hewitt.³¹¹ These differences demonstrate that it is again dangerous to view the era through a Jeffersonian prism, for slaveholding methods differed between plantations.

Anti-Black Sentiment: A Growing Force

As we have seen in the analysis of his beliefs between 1769 and 1789, Jefferson's position on slavery was heavily influenced by his views on race. This continued to be the case in the twenty years after 1789. That said, elements of Jefferson's correspondence hinted at a softening of his *Notes on the State of Virginia* posture. In August 1791, Jefferson received a copy of an almanac composed by the black astrologer Benjamin Banneker. Banneker had sent his work to refute Jefferson's belief in black inferiority. Responding to Banneker on 30 August, Jefferson praised the almanac, as he thought it 'a document to which your whole colour had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them' and added his yearning 'to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body & mind to what it ought to be'.³¹² Jefferson was so impressed with Banneker's publication that he forwarded it to a Parisian friend. In the accompanying letter to the Marquis de Condorcet, Jefferson affirmed his desire 'to see these instances of moral eminence so multiplied as to prove that the want of talents observed in them is merely the effect of their degraded condition'.³¹³

Jefferson appeared more tolerant in some of his nineteenth century correspondence. In a letter composed to a French abolitionist - Henri Grégoire - in February 1809, Jefferson retreated from his belief that African-Americans were inferior to their white peers, claiming: 'no person living wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have myself entertained and expressed on the grade of understanding allotted to them by nature'.³¹⁴ In his note to Grégoire, Jefferson explained the way he had reached his conclusions in *Notes on Virginia*, stating: 'My doubts were the

³¹¹ 'Alexandria Advertiser and Commercial Intelligencer', 06-09-1803, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.25.

³¹² T. Jefferson, 'To Benjamin Banneker', Philadelphia, 30 August 1791, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.484; M. D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.176 highlights the mellowing of Jefferson's views; for information on the letter, see W. S. Randall, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life* (New York: H. Holt, 1993), pp.302-303; Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.76; see appendix 1.6, p.331 for information about Banneker.

³¹³ T. Jefferson, 'To the Marquis de Condorcet', Philadelphia, 30 August 1791, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.485; see appendix 1.6, pp.332-333 for more information about Condorcet.

³¹⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To Henri Grégoire', Washington, 25 February 1809, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.492.

result of personal observation on the limited sphere of my own State, where the opportunities for the development of their genius were not favorable, and those of exercising it still less so'.³¹⁵ Jefferson distanced himself from his *Notes on Virginia* sentiments again in October 1809 by claiming that his comments on African-American intellect had been misrepresented. Writing to his 'confidant' Joel Barlow, Jefferson declared: 'It was impossible for doubt to have been more tenderly ... expressed than that was in the Notes of Virginia, and nothing ... is farther from my intentions, than to enlist myself as the champion of a fixed opinion, where I have only expressed a doubt'.³¹⁶

Anecdotal information suggests that Jefferson's objection to inter-racial relationships declined slightly after 1785. In the 1790s, he certainly consented to the sale of a mixed-race slave in order for her to marry a white man.³¹⁷ Jefferson also assisted Benjamin Banneker's career by helping the astrologer obtain a job 'laying out plans for Washington City'.³¹⁸ When the evidence of Jefferson's contemporaries is considered, it is possible to conclude that the level of his prejudice has been overstated. In his dispatch to Jefferson, Benjamin Banneker stated that he was contacting the Secretary of State because he believed him 'measurably friendly and well disposed' to African-Americans, despite feeling that Jefferson's assertions in *Notes on Virginia* were 'pitiable'.³¹⁹ Of course, Banneker was appealing to Jefferson's ego in the letter. However, it is noteworthy that George Wythe did not think that his former protégé discriminated against blacks, for he left provision in his will for Jefferson to raise and educate his favoured former slave Michael Brown.³²⁰

Nevertheless, there is plentiful evidence that Jefferson's racial perspectives did not alter radically during his public career. He certainly remained sceptical about whether slaves should be educated. Although he conceded that it would be 'more desirable' for those who were to receive their liberty to be afforded 'instruction' in a 1796 letter to Robert Pleasants, Jefferson refused to back the plan being extended to all slaves. Indeed, he concluded that 'Ignorance and despotism seem made for each other'.³²¹ The fact that

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Joel Barlow', Monticello, 8 October 1809, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 9: 1807 - 1815 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), p.262; Barlow's status as a 'confidant' is alluded to in Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.142.

³¹⁷ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.57.

³¹⁸ Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.423.

³¹⁹ B. Banneker, 'From Benjamin Banneker', Maryland, 19 August 1791, in C. T. Cullen (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 22: 6 August 1791 - 31 December 1791 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp.49-50; Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, p.76 contains the first quote; J. C. Miller, 'Slavery', in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), pp.426-427; A. Gordon-Reed, 'Engaging Jefferson: Blacks and the Founding Father', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), p.173.

³²⁰ Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.59.

³²¹ Jefferson, 'To Robert Pleasants', 27 August 1796, in Oberg (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 29, p.178.

Jefferson maintained his prejudice became clear in statements he made about Benjamin Banneker during his second term as President. When speaking to the Englishman John Augustus Foster in 1807, Jefferson reportedly described Banneker's writing style as 'childish and trivial'.³²² These recollections tally with some of his private correspondence, in which he questioned whether Banneker had compiled his almanac. For instance, in a letter to Joel Barlow in 1809, Jefferson alleged that Banneker had been aided by a white friend, who 'never missed an opportunity of puffing him'. Jefferson felt that his suspicions were confirmed by the note he had received from Banneker in 1791, which had shown that the astrologer possessed 'a mind of very common stature'.³²³ Overall, Jefferson's assertions regarding Banneker are the perfect guide to his stance on race. While he was prepared to concede ground when conversing with correspondents who rejected his belief in black inferiority, Jefferson's affirmations when speaking to neutral observers demonstrated that his position had not altered.

Anecdotes provided by Jefferson's associates show that he exhibited some of his prejudice in private. For instance, revisionist historian Henry Wiencek utilises Isaac Granger's recollections to show that Jefferson treated his bondsmen as subordinates when interacting with them. In his memoirs, Granger described how Jefferson had 'talked wid [sic] his arms folded' when addressing his labourers. Wiencek alleges that adopting this posture was Jefferson's way 'of presenting himself to people he regarded as inferiors'.³²⁴ Purported remarks that Jefferson made about African-Americans in 1807 further buttress the revisionist case. Jefferson reputedly informed John Augustus Foster that he believed black men were 'as far inferior to the rest of mankind as the mule is to the horse'.³²⁵

Jefferson also stands accused of overseeing a Presidential administration that discriminated against blacks. He undoubtedly reversed the trading relations that John Adams' government had established with the leader of Saint Domingue's rebels - Toussaint L'Ouverture - in an endeavour to diplomatically isolate the island and mitigate the perceived danger represented by a black Republic in the Caribbean.³²⁶ Equally, critics allege that Jefferson failed to consider 'the consequences of his actions for black Virginians' when undertaking the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Similar censure has accompanied his campaign

³²² R. B. Davis (ed.), *Jeffersonian America: Notes on the United States of America, Collected in the Years 1805-6-7 and 11-12 by Sir Augustus John Foster, Bart* (San Marino, Ca.: The Huntington Library, 1954), p.149; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.423; for more information about Foster, see appendix 1.6, p.333.

³²³ Jefferson, 'To Joel Barlow', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 9, p.261.

³²⁴ Jefferson, 'Memoirs of a Monticello Slave', in Bear (ed.), *Jefferson at Monticello*, p.23; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.106.

³²⁵ Davis (ed.), *Jeffersonian America*, p.149.

³²⁶ J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf, 'Introduction', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), pp.xiv-xvii; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.104.

to end the Atlantic slave trade while simultaneously failing to attack the inter-state marketing of bondsmen.³²⁷ The combined force of these policies proved catastrophic to Virginia's slaves, with thousands of families being split when labourers were sold to plantations in territories acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.³²⁸

The issue of colonization remained closely intertwined with Jefferson's perception of race. His support for the removal of Virginia's free black population increased after the 1791 Saint Domingue rebellion. The revolt led him to fear similar insurrections occurring throughout America's slaveholding states. Jefferson elucidated his apprehension at the possibility of a Virginian racial conflict when writing to James Monroe in 1793. Voicing his unease about the Saint Domingue revolution, the Secretary of State asserted: 'It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves . . . have to wade through, & try to avert them'.³²⁹ Four years later, in a letter to St. George Tucker, Jefferson reaffirmed his concern that 'if something is not done, & soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children'. Consequently, he avowed that expatriation represented 'a matter of compromise between the passions, the prejudices, & the real difficulties which will each have their weight in' discussions over emancipation.³³⁰

Jefferson's worst fears were realised on 31 August 1800, when an attempted revolt, led by Gabriel Prosser, was foiled by state officials. Less than a month later, he received a letter from the Governor of Virginia, James Monroe, who described the aborted uprising as 'unquestionably the most serious and formidable conspiracy ... of [its] kind'. Monroe instructed Jefferson that ten leaders of the plot had been executed and asked for the Presidential candidate's advice regarding the 'twenty, perhaps 40 more ... to be tried, of whose guilt no doubt [wa]s entertained'.³³¹ Jefferson responded by asking for clemency to be shown to the rebels. As a way of being lenient whilst ensuring the security of Virginia, Jefferson called for the offenders to be deported.³³² After registering his misgivings at a settlement being founded in lands west of Virginia, Jefferson reasoned that 'The West Indies offer a more probable & practicable retreat for them' as they were 'Inhabited

³²⁷ J. Sidbury, 'Thomas Jefferson in Gabriel's Virginia', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and The New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p.205.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.206-207.

³²⁹ T. Jefferson, 'To James Monroe', 14 July 1793, in J. Catanzariti (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 26: 11 May - 31 August 1793 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.503; Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.6 details Jefferson's fears over St. Domingue.

³³⁰ Jefferson, 'To St. George Tucker', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, pp.485 & 486.

³³¹ J. Monroe, 'To Thomas Jefferson', Richmond, 15 September 1800, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 3: 1796 - 1802 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p.208.

³³² T. Jefferson, 'To the Governor of Virginia (James Monroe)', Washington, 24 November 1801, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.487-489.

already by a people of their own race & color'. Equally, he thought that 'Africa would offer a last & undoubted resort, if all others more desirable should fail us'.³³³

Virginian delegates broadly agreed with the content of Jefferson and Monroe's letters. In 1802, they requested that Jefferson reach agreement with Britain to colonize the remaining rebels to Sierra Leone.³³⁴ The new President responded favourably and asked Rufus King - America's minister to Britain - to negotiate a settlement with the English based Sierra Leone Company 'to expatriate this description of people ... to the colony of Sierre [sic] Leone'.³³⁵

Numerous examples demonstrate that Jefferson's negative perception of African-Americans was part of a deep-seated culture in Virginia. In fact, an emphasis on racial difference was not limited to Old Dominion. Discrimination was rife in most states in the formative days of the United States. For instance, the Massachusetts statesman Jeremy Belknap admitted 'that a pre-eminence is claimed by the whites' in northern states.³³⁶ Belknap was not immune from such convictions. The politician characterised free African-Americans as 'improvident & indolent' in a 1795 letter to St. George Tucker.³³⁷

Virginian regulations in the Jeffersonian period frequently targeted free African-Americans. For example, laws approved in 1792 decreed that 'No negro or mulatto shall be a witness, except in pleas of the commonwealth, against negroes or mulattoes, or in civil pleas, where negroes or mulattoes alone shall be parties'.³³⁸ Moreover, new bills re-enforced the 'harsh punishment' handed out to African-Americans who were deemed violent or abusive towards a white person. They also prevented bondsmen visiting friends and relatives on other plantations by making it 'lawful for the owner or overseer of such plantation, to give or order such slave ten lashes on his or her bare back for every such

³³³ *Ibid.*, pp.488-489.

³³⁴ Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.21.

³³⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To the U.S. Minister to Great Britain (Rufus King.)', Washington, 13 July 1802, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8: 1801 - 1806 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p.163; W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.521 discusses Jefferson's letter to Rufus King.

³³⁶ J. Belknap, 'Queries respecting Slavery in Massachusetts with answers (manuscript draft) by Jeremy Belknap', April 1795, *Massachusetts Historical Society: Collections Online*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?old=1&ft=End+of+Slavery&from=%2Fendofslavery%2Findex.php%3Fid%3D52&item_id=724, p.35.

³³⁷ Belknap, 'Queries Respecting Slavery', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.35.

³³⁸ S. Shepherd (ed.), *The Statutes at Large of Virginia: From October Session 1792, to December Session 1806, inclusive, in Three Volumes*, Vol. 1: Oct 1792 - Dec 1795 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p.123. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009732153>.

offence'. Further acts barred liberated blacks from neighbouring states moving to Virginia.³³⁹

The rights of free African-Americans were reduced again following the Gabriel Prosser rebellion. In 1802, a bill was introduced that required all manumitted blacks to 'register with the county clerks'.³⁴⁰ District officials were asked to record 'all "free negroes or mulattoes ... together with their names, sex, places of abode, and particular trades, occupation or calling"'.³⁴¹ A supplementary law of 1805 then prevented black orphans being taught 'reading, writing, or arithmetic'.³⁴² The accumulative effect of these measures 'hobbled many prospective black artisans, farmers, and entrepreneurs'.³⁴³ Overall, strict legislation ensured that 'freedom' was a legal status rather than a reality for many liberated blacks, who were forced to live 'precarious and marginal lives' fearing persecution by the law.³⁴⁴

Legislators were reacting to popular demand, which became increasingly hostile to free blacks.³⁴⁵ Addressing a correspondent from Massachusetts in 1795, Virginian lawyer St. George Tucker described his state as one in which 'the blacks were regarded as of no more importance than the brute Cattle'.³⁴⁶ There is little doubt that anti-black sentiment grew as the proportion of free African-Americans increased through manumissions and natural increase. This expansion was particularly rapid in the decade following 1790, during which the quantity of free blacks in Virginia and Maryland rose by ninety percent. A further sixty-five percent increase followed between 1800 and 1810.³⁴⁷

External events played on pre-existing racial fears. For example, the 1791 revolution in Saint Domingue increased concerns about a similar rebellion occurring on the American mainland. This caused many whites - including Jefferson - to view free blacks 'with anxiety and suspicion'.³⁴⁸ Saint Domingue's effect on the Southern psyche should not be underestimated. Indeed, David Brion Davis has likened the impact of the event to the

³³⁹ Shepherd (ed.), *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, Vol. 1, p.123; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.117; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.180.

³⁴⁰ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.120.

³⁴¹ M. L. Nicholls, 'Passing Through This Troublesome World: Free Blacks in the Early Southside', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), p.65.

³⁴² Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.120.

³⁴³ R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbris, 2013), p.82; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.275.

³⁴⁴ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.489.

³⁴⁵ Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, p.39.

³⁴⁶ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.3.

³⁴⁷ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.284.

³⁴⁸ Rothman, *Slave Country*, p.2; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.109 contains the quote.

effect of the Hiroshima bombing at the end of World War Two, because 'it demonstrated the possible fate of every slaveholding society'.³⁴⁹

The Prosser rebellion merely confirmed these entrenched views. Thus, a petition presented by citizens of Petersburg in 1805 displayed popular fears that the growing free black population in the town were encouraging servile rebellion. The memorialists argued that the liberated African-American community tried to 'corrupt the slaves' and made 'them less subservient and obedient'.³⁵⁰ Similar concerns were evident in a letter printed in *The Virginia Argus* in August 1805. The dispatch, penned by 'Salem Reg', warned that 'in a country in which the meanest white claims his liberty from his complexion, and enjoys it without controul [*sic*], it cannot be supposed that slavery ever can be encouraged with safety to those who profit from it'.³⁵¹ The level of fear engendered by the free black population was highlighted again in 1809 when inhabitants from Cumberland County accused slaves and free blacks of committing arson 'for the purpose of gratifying private revenge'.³⁵² Evidence to indict potential perpetrators was sparse. Nonetheless, the forty petitioners requested a law be passed requiring owners to banish suspected slaves from the state 'where strong corroborating circumstances' could be found.³⁵³

Visitor accounts detailed the negative perception of African-Americans and the strong anti-black laws of the state. For instance, Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville recorded: 'It has been generally thought, and even written by some authors of note, that the Blacks are inferior to the Whites in mental capacity', while English visitor Harry Toulmin expressed his sadness that laws in Norfolk prevented a black companion who had passed away 'being buried among white people'.³⁵⁴

African-Americans acknowledged the discrimination directed towards them. The hardships endured by free blacks were vividly recounted in a petition delivered to the Virginia Assembly by African-Americans from Norfolk County in July 1809. The memorialists described 'the ill convenience we labour under, first as respects the act of the Genl. Assembly respecting free negroes & mulattoes. Secondly, respecting evidence to prove our

³⁴⁹ D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.158.

³⁵⁰ Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, & Commonality: Petition, Petersburg (City), 1805-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; M. L. Nicholls, 'Strangers Setting Among Us: The Sources and Challenge of the Urban Free Black Population of Early Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (2000), p.173.

³⁵¹ 'Salem Reg', in *The Virginia Argus*, Wednesday 21 August 1805, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=dL6bBWYs_hoC&dat=18050821&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

³⁵² Inhabitants: Petition, Cumberland County, 1809-12-14, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ De Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America*, p.285; Tinling & Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793*, p.21.

accounts against white people'.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, Benjamin Banneker bemoaned the broadly held conviction that people of African descent were 'rather as brutish than human, and scarcely capable of mental endowments' when writing to Thomas Jefferson in 1791.³⁵⁶ Banneker's comments demonstrated the popularity of 'biological racism' which - as exemplified in *Notes on the State of Virginia* - depicted African-Americans 'as inherently inferior human beings'.³⁵⁷ This trend was referenced again in a letter addressed to Jefferson in 1807. The correspondent, writing under the pseudonym 'A Slave', lamented how white Virginians perceived their bondsmen as 'only a black beast of the Manilla class, with a flat nose, thick lips, woolly head, ivory teeth; and with a face somewhat resembling the human ... but clearly not a human being'.³⁵⁸

Virginian observers noticed the broad acceptance of arguments stressing black inferiority. When writing to Robert Carter in 1792, Robert Pleasants criticised Virginians for being 'habituated to look upon the blacks as an inferior species of mankind'.³⁵⁹ Similarly, St. George Tucker spoke of 'the deep-rooted prejudices in the minds of the Whites agt the blacks', which included 'the general Opinion of their mental inferiority, and an aversion to their corporeal distinctions from us, both which considerations militate against a general - - incorporation of them with us'.³⁶⁰ Tucker even conceded that he maintained parallel perceptions. In a passage comparable to Jefferson's analysis of blacks in *Notes on Virginia*, the lawyer averred that there were facets in which 'accident, or perhaps nature, may have given us [white men] some advantage'.³⁶¹ Moreover, he argued that, once liberated, African-Americans 'would soon become idle, profligate, and miserable', as a consequence of 'their still savage state, and debased condition'.³⁶² Accordingly, Tucker's manumission proposal aimed 'not to encourage' the former slaves' 'future residence among us', for he believed that permitting the two races to intermingle would 'eventually depreciate the whole national character'.³⁶³

Tucker's private correspondence further demonstrated an aversion to African-Americans. Writing to Jeremy Belknap in 1795, the lawyer asserted: 'experience ... has

³⁵⁵ Free People of Color: Petition, Norfolk County, 1809-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁵⁶ Banneker, 'From Benjamin Banneker', in Cullen (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 22, p.49; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.423.

³⁵⁷ Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.572.

³⁵⁸ Baker (ed.), "'A Slave" Writes Thomas Jefferson', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.141.

³⁵⁹ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.189.

³⁶⁰ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, pp.4-5.

³⁶¹ Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, p.420; M. K. Curtis, 'St. George Tucker and the Legacy of Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), p.1164.

³⁶² Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, pp.434 & 438.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.439 & 442.

shewn [sic] that emancipated blacks rarely are industrious'.³⁶⁴ Tucker also propounded the stereotype that free blacks were more likely to commit crimes than other groups. Ignoring the harsh laws that African-Americans were subject to, the barrister claimed: 'if I may judge from my own Experience in Courts which I have attended, the proportion of free black criminals, to whites, is nearly as one to three, though the proportion of free blacks to whites, is not more than one for thirty six'.³⁶⁵

Furthermore, Tucker published guidance for fellow judges on how to review freedom suits based on the caste of the slave requesting their liberation. The code - released in 1806 - 'defined a stricter color line meant starkly to demarcate white freedom from black slavery'.³⁶⁶ Tucker's conclusion to the hearing was comparable to Jefferson's discussion of race in *Notes on Virginia*. The lawyer noted that 'Nature has stamp [sic] upon the African and his descendants two characteristic marks, besides the difference of complexion, which often remain visible long after the characteristic distinction of color either disappears or becomes doubtful; a flat nose and woolly head of hair'.³⁶⁷

Amongst Virginian statesmen, James Madison echoed aspects of Jefferson's view of African-Americans. Madison's lack of faith in blacks manifested in his fear that, if emancipated, former slaves would form a 'permanent underclass' in Virginia.³⁶⁸ Madison's opinion of liberated African-Americans was especially low. When answering a set of queries concerning the status of emancipated bondsmen in 1792, Madison asserted that 'Free blacks can scarcely be said to have yet any established character as hirelings. It is not known that any superiority over slaves is marked by higher wages'.³⁶⁹ James Monroe also shared Jefferson's belief that African-Americans should not be permitted to coexist on the same footing as whites. The Prosser rebellion hardened his stance. In the aftermath of the revolt, Monroe - while addressing speakers at Virginia's General Assembly - described black men as 'persons ... dangerous to the peace of society'.³⁷⁰ Moreover, Monroe occasionally demeaned the intelligence of individual blacks at his Ash-Lawn Highland plantation. In 1802, he labelled Ned 'almost an idiot, little capable of acting for himself'.³⁷¹

³⁶⁴ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, pp.6-7.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁶⁶ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, pp.109-110. Page 110 contains the quote.

³⁶⁷ Hening & Munford (eds.), *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia*, Vol. 1, p.139. See pp.137-140 for the context of the judgement; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.151.

³⁶⁸ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.68.

³⁶⁹ J. Madison, 'To Noah Webster', 17 July 1792, in R. A. Rutland, T. A. Mason, R. J. Brugger, J. K. Sisson & F. J. Teute (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14: 6 April 1791 - 16 March 1793 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.342.

³⁷⁰ Monroe, 'To the Speakers of the General Assembly', in Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe*, Vol. 3, p.321.

³⁷¹ J. Monroe, 'To John Cowper', Richmond, 25 May 1802, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 3: 1796 - 1802 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p.351.

George Washington was another elite figure who made derogatory affirmations about slaves. For instance, he refused to purchase a new plough for his workers in 1791, having been 'fully convinced ... that all machines used in husbandry that are of a complicated nature, would be ... impossible to be introduced into common use where they are to be worked by ignorant and clumsy hands, which must be the case in every part of this country where the ground is tilled by negroes'.³⁷² Three years later, Washington criticised his carpenters for being 'so idle a set of Rascals ... that to make even a chicken coob, would employ all of them a week'.³⁷³ Moreover, Washington alleged that African-Americans were prone to stealing. In December 1792, he claimed that his slaves kept dogs as pets 'to aid them in their night robberies'.³⁷⁴

Visitor recollections suggest that Washington maintained Jefferson's doubts about the capacity of slaves to look after themselves upon receiving their freedom. The English comedian John Bernard certainly claimed that in conversations the pair had in 1798, Washington had disclosed his fear that 'Till the mind of the slave has been educated to perceive what are the obligations of a state of freedom, and not confound a man's with a brute's, the gift would insure its abuse'.³⁷⁵ With these reservations in mind, Washington questioned whether 'the mixing of whites and blacks together is advisable; especially where the former, are entirely unacquainted with the latter' in 1793.³⁷⁶

Prejudiced avowals were echoed by Richard Parkinson, an Englishman who had moved to Virginia after the American Revolution. Parkinson asserted that his labourers were 'so lazy by nature, that they would do little or nothing ... if they had no master. I think them as unfit to conduct themselves as a child'.³⁷⁷ Moreover, many who opposed slavery demonstrated little faith in the ability of blacks. For example, George Tucker labelled African-Americans 'Ignorant' in his 1801 *Letter to a Member of the Virginia Assembly*.³⁷⁸ Tucker also forwarded proposals that discriminated against African-Americans in a bid to rid Virginia of slavery. Thus, he called for 'a heavier tax on all females above the age of

³⁷² G. Washington, 'To Charles Vancouver', 5 November 1791, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 31: January 22, 1790 - March 9, 1792 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.410; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.119; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.52 describes Washington's frequent criticism of his slaves.

³⁷³ G. Washington, 'To William Pearce', Philadelphia, 22 February 1794, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 33: July 1, 1793 - October 9, 1794 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.275.

³⁷⁴ G. Washington, 'To Anthony Whiting', Philadelphia, 16 December 1792, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 32: March 10, 1792 - June 30, 1793 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1939), p.264; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.34.

³⁷⁵ Bernard, *Retrospections of America*, p.91; Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.73.

³⁷⁶ G. Washington, 'To Arthur Young', Philadelphia, 12 December 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 33: July 1, 1793 - October 9, 1794 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.181.

³⁷⁷ Parkinson, *A Tour in America*, Vol. 2, p.419; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.65.

³⁷⁸ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.11.

puberty; and a bounty on the exportation of every female of any age' to encourage the outward migration of blacks from Virginia. The author did so despite conceding that the treatment of the women concerned was 'dishonorable'.³⁷⁹ Similarly, the Richmond merchant Richard Drummond Bayly spoke unfavourably about African-Americans in 1805. In a letter to John Cropper, Bayly confided: 'I am for opening every outlet to such a destructive species of population and for barring up every avenue by which it may return'.³⁸⁰

Religious observers voiced elements of the popular prejudice that African-Americans were subjected to. Fears of inter-racial relationships were mentioned in a 1792 anti-slavery sermon delivered by the Presbyterian pastor David Rice. Rice contended that a common argument for maintaining slavery was 'That should we set our slaves free, it would lay a foundation for intermarriages, and an unnatural mixture of blood'.³⁸¹ Rice's response to this accusation revealed the negative preconceptions that even permeated the minds of those who opposed slavery. The minister derided people who defended the institution on the basis that it prevented inter-racial relationships for advancing 'the fear that we should disgrace ourselves, as a reason why we should do injustice to others'. Although refuting pro-slavery claims, Rice's assertion that forming intimate relations with African-Americans was to 'disgrace ourselves' shows how deep-rooted the fear of racial amalgamation was.³⁸² Other Christians continued to find biblical justifications for black subservience. For instance, in his 1795 commonplace book, John Page asserted that the differences 'between Europeans ... & Africans' could 'be attributed to the Punishment of Ham as to the blacks "a servant of servants shall be he unto his Brothers" said his Father'.³⁸³

Overall, race became a divisive subject amongst members of religious sects. In the early nineteenth century, the Baptists disregarded their previous egalitarian stance. Thus, Baptist meeting records in Virginia started including a list of 'persons of color' that was kept distinct from their register of white worshippers.³⁸⁴ That Baptists now saw skin colour as a more important barrier than enslaved status is reflected by the fact that 'little or no distinction [was] made between the black members who were slaves and those who were free' on the list.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.18 & 19.

³⁸⁰ R. Drummond Bayly, 'Letter', Richmond, 6 January 1805, Cropper, John (1755-1821), papers, 1779-1820, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1C8835a, p.4.

³⁸¹ Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*, p.16.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Page, John, *Commonplace Book, 1795-1796*, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss5:5P1433:1, p.35.

³⁸⁴ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.160; Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.132.

³⁸⁵ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.160.

Two letters that appeared in the *Virginia Independent Chronicle* in 1790 demonstrated the depth of popular prejudice. In the first piece, an anonymous author asserted that African-Americans were ‘an inferior species of mankind’.³⁸⁶ Another correspondent rejected the notion that liberated slaves should be afforded ‘the privileges [*sic*] of Citizens’ and recommended that a colony be created in Africa for the repatriation of free blacks.³⁸⁷ Parallel sentiments were voiced by Ferdinando Fairfax in his *Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States* (1790). Fairfax was particularly concerned about the possibility of inter-racial relationships being formed should Virginia’s free black population be permitted to grow. He contended: ‘There is something very repugnant to the general feelings, even in the thought of their being allowed that free intercourse, and the privilege of intermarriage with the white inhabitants’.³⁸⁸ To buttress his point, Fairfax queried: ‘where is the man of all those who have liberated their slaves, who would marry a son or a daughter to one of them?’³⁸⁹

Distaste for inter-racial relationships was common. Indeed, forming sexual relationships with African-Americans proved immediate grounds for affronted partners to seek divorce. Benjamin Butt Junior of Norfolk County certainly requested a divorce from Lydia Bright in 1803 after she had given birth to a child which ‘to his inexpressible Grief and astonishment proved to be a mulatto’ fathered by a ‘slave named Robin belonging to the Estate of Charles Stewart’.³⁹⁰ Equally, Charlotte Ball sought permission to divorce her husband, William, who she alleged had beaten her and been involved in numerous ‘debaucheries’, including adultery. One witness to the claim, Thomas Jenkins, testified that Ball ‘had attempted an improper connection’ with ‘a black servant girl’ on his estate. In another incident, Jenkins had ‘found him behind an out house in company with a negroe girl’.³⁹¹

Legislative petitions continued to highlight popular prejudice. In 1790, an anti-emancipation petition presented by Charles Logan and Samuel Pleasants labelled free blacks ‘Idle, Vagrant, and unsettled’. Accordingly, the pair averred that ‘the only benefit that the emancipated slave fixes to freedom is an extirpation from Labour’.³⁹² Another petition of December 1805, which was signed by the mayor of Petersburg, was strongly

³⁸⁶ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.165 outlines the content of these letters.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.166.

³⁸⁸ Fairfax, ‘Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States’, in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine*, p.285.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ Butt, Benjamin, Jr.: Petition, Norfolk County, 1803-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁹¹ Ball, Charlotte: Petition, Culpeper County, 1806-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.5 details Jenkins’ testimony. Page 2 contains Charlotte’s case.

³⁹² Logon, Charles & Pleasants, Samuel: Petition, Henrico County, 1790-11-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2-3.

critical of African-Americans, who were thought to be 'beneath the character and dignity of free white men'.³⁹³ Moreover, the petitioners argued that 'fraud, idleness, treachery and every species of vice' was the 'predominant character' of the liberated blacks in the town. Elderly African-Americans, meanwhile, were characterised as 'wretched and miserable'.³⁹⁴ Citizens from Norfolk outlined the negative perceptions that many entertained about their growing free black population in 1806. The 270 memorialists described how their population had recently been increased by 'new inhabitants daily and hourly from every part of the United States, from the West-Indies, and from Europe'. These arrivals from the Caribbean included 'a formidable accession from the island of St. Domingo', who the petitioners asserted 'filled' the town with all the 'materials of riot, insurrection and ruin'.³⁹⁵

Given the widespread distrust of African-Americans, it is unsurprising that colonization gained popularity. Support for repatriation grew as Virginians became anxious about the prospect of black rebellion. These worries were elucidated in a letter that appeared in the *Virginia Herald* in November 1795. The author, writing under the pseudonym 'Caution', recalled how an acquaintance from Carolina had expressed concerns about 'the alarming consequences which might probably ensue from the indulgences that are granted to slaves, in their nightly cabals, revelings [*sic*], and associations, in different parts of Virginia'.³⁹⁶ The fact that some farmers were actively encouraging such gatherings worsened the situation, for 'Caution' felt the slaves who attended them were 'appointing their officers, and in every respect getting qualified for something more important, should opportunity offer'. Thus, 'Caution' postulated that it was 'the business of every master, to prevent his negroes attending such meetings as much as possible; and the indispensable duty of magistrates to suppress and punish such dangerous and detestable practices'.³⁹⁷

Planter statements in the late eighteenth century support the view that a rising free black population increased backing for repatriation. For example, one farmer in Brunswick County voiced his opposition to liberated African-Americans remaining in Virginia, declaring: 'The first thing to be done is to rid ourselves of those that are free. The immediate effect would be to make our slaves contented'.³⁹⁸ Similarly, George Tucker claimed in 1801: 'These, our hewers of wood and drawers of water, possess the physical

³⁹³ Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, & Commonality: Petition, Petersburg (City), 1805-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

³⁹⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Norfolk (City), 1806-12-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁹⁶ Caution, 'Letter', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg & Falmouth Advertiser*, Tuesday 3 November 1795, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17951103&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.567.

power of doing us mischief; and are invited to it by motives which self-love dictates, which reason justifies'.³⁹⁹

Anxiety increased noticeably after Gabriel Prosser's thwarted uprising. Within a month of the plot, alarms had occurred in Norfolk and Petersburg.⁴⁰⁰ Rumours of forthcoming insurrections swirled constantly. In fact, eighteen months after Gabriel's scheme was uncovered, more than 320 Virginians signed a petition demanding 'that a Guard may be stationed in the Town of Petersburg' in response to concerns 'That a Disposition to Insurrection and Revolt is very prevalent'.⁴⁰¹ Newspapers detailed scares in other states. Charles Grice reported to the *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser* in June 1802 'that the people in' North Carolina had become 'much alarmed at the conduct of the negroes; that nightly patrols [*sic*] of horses and foot are regularly kept, and that numbers of the deluded wretches are in confinement'.⁴⁰² Intermittent alarms occurred in the following years. In 1808, three slaves from Caroline County were convicted of 'assembling together with others unknown to us using seditious speeches & tending to raise insurrection and rebellion'.⁴⁰³ A petition delivered by the Mayor of Petersburg, William Prentis, on behalf of his constituents demonstrates that such fears became more widespread as time elapsed. The 1805 appeal claimed that the town's slave and free black populations possessed 'a formidable means of doing much mischief'. To resolve 'This evil', the Mayor called for lawmakers to 'gradually ... diminish the number of slaves, annually by purchase, in the proportion of two females to one male, and disposing of them in other states; or in other Countries, as indentured servants'.⁴⁰⁴

Virginia's legislators passed several laws that acknowledged these anxieties. In 1793, a bill was introduced requiring that slaves illegally imported from Africa be deported. The act reversed the 1778 slave trade bill, which had liberated those smuggled into the state from abroad.⁴⁰⁵ A further law of 1793 banned 'the migration of free negroes and mulattoes into this commonwealth' in an endeavour to control the size of Virginia's

³⁹⁹ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.7.

⁴⁰⁰ Fears Similar Plot in Petersburg, 1800-09-06, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁰¹ Citizens: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1802, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁰² C. Grice, 'More About the Negroes', in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 2 June 1802, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=3u3nxgfd-AC&dat=18020602&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁴⁰³ Arch, Lewey, and Daniel: Commonwealth Cause, Caroline County, 1808, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 contains the quote. See pp.3, 5 & 7 for the verdicts on all three slaves.

⁴⁰⁴ Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, & Commonality: Petition, Petersburg (City), 1805-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

⁴⁰⁵ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.116.

African-American population, while legislation in 1806 required liberated slaves to leave Virginia within a year of receiving their freedom.⁴⁰⁶

Perhaps the most important law was passed on 15 January 1801. Thomas Jefferson's correspondence with James Monroe in the aftermath of the Prosser rebellion was crucial in securing the change. The bill - titled 'An act to empower the governor to transport slaves condemned, when it shall be deemed expedient' - authorised the Governor of Virginia 'to contract and agree with any person or persons for the sale and purchase of all those slaves who now are or hereafter may be under sentence of death, for conspiracy, insurrection, or other crimes'. These slaves would then be eligible for transportation.⁴⁰⁷ The act spared numerous slaves from execution. First, Sawney of Warwick County was reprieved by James Monroe in October 1801 after being found guilty of murdering Ralph Gray.⁴⁰⁸ Monroe used the bill a year later when he informed a correspondent, John Cowper, that one labourer implicated in the Prosser uprising represented a case where 'it may be proper to mitigate his punishment by transportation'. Monroe proposed this solution because the individual in question was 'mild and peaceable'.⁴⁰⁹ Something similar happened to Lewis of Richmond in 1803 and James of Albemarle County in 1807.⁴¹⁰

Colonization gained greater support amongst Virginian statesmen. Anecdotal evidence demonstrates that George Mason started supporting the idea of removing free African-Americans from Virginia before his death in 1792. Equally, Patrick Henry voiced his apprehension at the thought of former slaves being permitted to remain in Virginia. Henry argued that if a general emancipation occurred: 'Our country will be peopled. The question is, shall it be with Europeans or Africans'.⁴¹¹ James Madison also continued backing colonization proposals. He undoubtedly advocated repatriation when corresponding with the Quaker abolitionist Robert Pleasants in 1791. In his letter to Pleasants, Madison suggested that there were 'arguments of great force for such a regulation'.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.xvi & 117.

⁴⁰⁷ S. Shepherd (ed.), *The Statutes at Large of Virginia: From October Session 1792, to December Session 1806, inclusive, in Three Volumes, Vol. 2: January 1796 - January 1803* (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p.279. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009732153>.

⁴⁰⁸ Dunn, John: Public Claim, Warwick County, 1802-01-06, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3 & 5.

⁴⁰⁹ Monroe, 'To John Cowper', in Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe*, Vol. 3, p.351.

⁴¹⁰ Mims, Jane: Public Claim, Richmond, 1803-11-30, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; Baker, Martin: Public Claim, Albemarle County, 1807-11-05, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4.

⁴¹¹ P. Henry, 'Practice in the General Court. - 1766-1773', in W. W. Henry (ed.), *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches*, Vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), pp.115-116; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.8; for Mason's example, see Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.114.

⁴¹² Madison, 'To Robert Pleasants', in Rutland et al. (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14, p.92; Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher*, p.108.

In some respects, St. George Tucker's *Dissertation on Slavery* echoed Jefferson's perspectives on colonization. For instance, Tucker proposed that manumitted blacks be settled in newly acquired territories to the west of America until the prejudices of Virginia's white population had dissipated. Tucker reasoned that this course was necessary because emancipated slaves 'would become hordes of vagabonds, robbers and murderers'.⁴¹³ The lawyer's objection to free blacks remaining in Virginia illustrates how important Jefferson's comments in *Notes on Virginia* were in informing popular opinion, for the lawyer quoted his peer's musings on the subject in his footnotes.⁴¹⁴

Tucker's unease about Virginia's free black community was stated in his correspondence. In a letter to Jeremy Belknap, Tucker claimed that endeavours to incorporate former slaves with their white contemporaries were doomed to 'be frustrated by prejudices too deeply rooted to be eradicated'.⁴¹⁵ Further, the lawyer believed that the size of Virginia's black population meant that 'such prejudices' would 'generate a civil war, & end in the extermination of one party or the other, especially as nature herself has fixed the Characters by which those parties would be discriminated, so long as either existed'.⁴¹⁶

Some Virginians went further than Tucker and composed their own expatriation schemes. A colonization plan was forwarded by the Jefferson County planter Ferdinando Fairfax in 1790. Fairfax's proposal argued that public opinion was 'very repugnant' to the idea of free blacks living in Virginia.⁴¹⁷ Fairfax felt that 'these prejudices, sentiments, or whatever they may be called, would be found ... to be insurmountable'.⁴¹⁸ Thus, the slaveholder asserted 'That a colony should be settled, under the auspices and protection of congress, by the negroes now within the united states, and be composed of those who already, as well as those who ... may become liberated by the voluntary consent of their owners'.⁴¹⁹ Echoing the emerging belief amongst advocates of the solution, Fairfax added 'That the seat of this colony should be in Africa'.⁴²⁰

Equally, Virginian lawyer George Tucker stated that the 'grand desideratum' of abolition 'can be effected only by emancipation, or transportation' in 1801.⁴²¹ Tucker investigated numerous possible destinations for Virginia's free blacks. In contrast to Fairfax,

⁴¹³ Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, pp.437-438; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.53; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.106.

⁴¹⁴ Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, p.438.

⁴¹⁵ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.6.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Fairfax, 'Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States', in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine*, p.285; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.107.

⁴¹⁸ Fairfax, 'Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States', in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine*, p.285.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.286.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.14.

the lawyer decided that Africa did not represent a viable option after estimating that the cost of deporting autonomous African-Americans there 'would be a million of dollars'.⁴²² Tucker also discounted the West Indies because he thought that 'the sympathy and humanity of individual slaveholders would never suffer them to be torn from those tender attachments which now soften the miseries of servitude, to suffer still greater in a foreign land'.⁴²³ Having rejected these two regions, Tucker was left to hope that 'they can be colonized in some part of the American continent'. The lawyer suggested that the Virginian legislature either purchase Spanish territory in Louisiana or Native American lands in west Georgia.⁴²⁴ By doing so, Tucker's plan addressed many facets of colonization that Jefferson had covered in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

'one blood, are all Nations of Men': Arguments Against Black Inferiority⁴²⁵

Nonetheless, repatriation was not universally acclaimed. Some Virginians rejected the notions that underpinned colonization's popularity. Thus, John Minor - a legislator from Spotsylvania County - stressed his opposition to the 1806 law that made it mandatory for freed slaves to leave Virginia within a year of their emancipation. Minor objected to the bill as he thought 'that free blacks did *not* tend to ally with slaves and that it was not in their interest to foment race war'.⁴²⁶ Nor was repatriation popular amongst abolitionists. Robert Pleasants certainly argued that expatriation proposals were 'repugnant both to common justice & good policy'.⁴²⁷ Furthermore, Pleasants suggested in a letter to St. George Tucker in 1797 that expatriation schemes heightened the prejudice shown towards African-Americans.⁴²⁸

George Washington's statements never hinted at any support for colonization. Indeed, Washington's actions when emancipating his slaves suggest that he believed African-Americans could live freely in Virginian society.⁴²⁹ His will even guarded against 'the sale or transportation out of the said Commonwealth of any Slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence, whatsoever'.⁴³⁰ To ensure that his wishes were fulfilled, Washington

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.202.

⁴²⁶ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.125.

⁴²⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.237.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.274.

⁴³⁰ G. Washington, *Last Will and Testament of George Washington, of Mount Vernon* (Washington: Single Works, 1911), p.3; Rasmussen & Tilton, *George Washington*, p.203; G. Washington, 'Letters of George Washington Bearing on the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Oct., 1917), p.420; Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, p.158; A. Iaccarino, 'A Closer Look: The

instructed the executors of his decree to follow his instructions 'religiously ... without evasion, neglect or delay'.⁴³¹

Similarly, Robert Carter demonstrated that he believed black men could live in the same society as their former masters by providing his liberated workers with funds to ensure they remained in Virginia.⁴³² Carter's request enabled generations of African-Americans to grow up freely in Virginia. In 1825, Mary Brutus registered as a free black in Frederick County. Virginian records confirm that Brutus 'was free born being a child of a woman emancipated by Robert Carter dcd'.⁴³³ Parallel testimony was presented on behalf of Cordelia Weldon.⁴³⁴ Planters in the Nomini region were angered by this development. In 1806, Joshua Fletcher of Fauquier County noted that his slaves, Tom and Phyllis, 'mix with Carter's freed negroes, as they were acquainted with them' when advertising for the return of the couple.⁴³⁵

Moreover, St. George Tucker did not wholly advocate the removal of blacks from Virginia. The barrister even spoke of 'The impracticability, and perhaps, the dangerous policy of an attempt to colonize them, within the limits of the United States - or elsewhere' in private correspondence written at the time of his *Dissertation's* publication.⁴³⁶ Tucker raised two objections to Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* scheme. First, the barrister stressed the economic cost of removing Virginia's slave population, claiming that Jefferson 'could not have weighed the difficulties and expence [sic] of an attempt to colonize 300,000, persons' when making his assertions in *Notes*.⁴³⁷ Tucker voiced further concerns over the 'hardships' and 'destructions' that African-Americans risked being 'exposed to' in another country. Consequently, he feared that 'If humanity plead for their Emancipation, it pleads more strongly against Colonization'.⁴³⁸

It would be equally wrong to affirm that all of Virginia's leaders fully ascribed to the negative view of African-Americans recorded by Jefferson. George Washington's stance on race continued to be milder. The General certainly never asserted that African-Americans were naturally inferior.⁴³⁹ Washington also kept faith in blacks' ability to oversee areas of

Founding Fathers and Slavery', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Founding Fathers: The Essential Guide to the Men Who Made America* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2007), p.69.

⁴³¹ Smith, *Patriarch*, p.346; Ellis, *His Excellency*, p.263.

⁴³² Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.xvii.

⁴³³ Brutus, Mary (F, 18), 1825: Free Negro Register, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴³⁴ Weldon, Cordelia (F, 32), 1825: Free Negro Register, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴³⁵ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 20-04-1806, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.67.

⁴³⁶ Tucker, 'Letter from St. George Tucker to Jeremy Belknap', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, p.5.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

⁴³⁹ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.274.

Mount Vernon. He was particularly happy with the performance of Davy, who looked after his Muddy Hole field. Writing to the acting manager of his plantation - William Pearce - in 1793, Washington claimed that Davy undertook 'his business as well as the white Overseers'.⁴⁴⁰

Some belief in the intellectual capacity of his labourers was demonstrated when Washington included provisions in his will for all Mount Vernon's bondsmen below the age of twenty-five 'to be taught to read and write' prior to their emancipation. By requesting this, Washington became the only member of Virginia's Founding Fathers to formally approve the education of his workers.⁴⁴¹ Two descriptions of runaways in the late 1790s show that some members of Washington's slave community had been tutored prior to their master's death.⁴⁴² When Christopher, a house servant at Mount Vernon, attempted to abscond in 1799 it was noted that he was literate. The same was true of Caesar, who could 'read, if not write' according to an advertisement in the same year.⁴⁴³ Literacy was occasionally noted in appeals for those who fled their owners. For instance, Catesby Jones of Northumberland County reported that Jacob 'can read and write' in September 1795.⁴⁴⁴ Conversely, there is little evidence to suggest that Jefferson ever schooled his slaves. Indeed, Israel Jefferson implied that his owner opposed African-Americans being taught to write, as it might 'enable them to forge papers'.⁴⁴⁵

James Monroe defended the rights of black men in his public life. While serving as Governor of Virginia, Monroe ensured that insurrectionists in his state received the 'legal representation' they were entitled to by Virginian law.⁴⁴⁶ Further, St. George Tucker postulated that African-Americans enjoyed physical superiority over whites in his *Dissertation on Slavery*. Consequently, he appealed for Virginians to 'admit the evidence of moral truth, and learn to regard them as our fellow men, and equals'.⁴⁴⁷ George Tucker, too, believed that African-Americans possessed the capacity to learn from whites. To

⁴⁴⁰ G. Washington, 'To William Pearce', Philadelphia, 18 December 1793, in J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, Vol. 33: July 1, 1793 - October 9, 1794 (Washington: U. S. Govt. Print, 1940), p.194.

⁴⁴¹ Washington, *Last Will and Testament of George Washington*, p.3; Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.298; Wienczek, *An Imperfect God*, pp.5 & 355; Flexner, *Washington*, p.393; Ferling, *The First of Men*, p.503.

⁴⁴² Thompson, "'They Appear to Live Comfortable Together'", in Schwarz (ed.), *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, pp.89-91.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.91.

⁴⁴⁴ C. Jones, '100 Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Friday 18 September 1795, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17950918&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

⁴⁴⁵ Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness'", in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, pp.167-168. See p.168 for the quote.

⁴⁴⁶ Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, p.561.

⁴⁴⁷ Tucker, 'On the State of Slavery in Virginia', in Wilson (ed.), *A View of the Constitution of the United States*, p.420; D. R. Egerton, 'Race and Slavery in the Era of Jefferson', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.79.

buttress his case, Tucker contended that Gabriel Prosser's slave rebellion showed that 'the advancement of knowledge among the negroes of this country ... is so striking, as to be obvious to a man of the most ordinary observation'.⁴⁴⁸ Accordingly, while he believed that 'the blacks' were 'far behind' their white peers, Tucker felt this disparity would diminish because African-Americans had the capacity 'to advance much faster'.⁴⁴⁹

Some of Jefferson's aides disagreed with his perspectives. William Short - who later served as Jefferson's private secretary - 'turned *Notes on the State of Virginia* around' in a letter penned to Jefferson in 1798.⁴⁵⁰ Short averred that he saw signs of 'the perfectibility of the black race' in the report he forwarded to Jefferson.⁴⁵¹ In fact, he advanced his conviction 'that our posterity at least will see improved, populous & extensive nations of the black color formed into powerful societies who will par in every respect with whites under the same circumstances'.⁴⁵² Short even rejected the view that African-Americans should not form intimate relationships with whites. Thus, he suggested that freedom for blacks would be a positive step, as he believed that the 'gradual mixture' of the two races would mean 'all our Southern inhabitants should advance to the middle ground between their present color & the black'.⁴⁵³

Jefferson's attitude towards African-Americans was also different to that of his mentor at William and Mary College, George Wythe. In his 1803 will, Wythe bequeathed property to some of his former slaves. Thus, the judge asked William Duval - whom he had appointed executor of his testament - to use 'the houses and ground in Richmond ... and my stock in the funds, in trust, with the rents of one and interest of the other, to support my freed woman Lydia Brodnax, and freed man Benjamin, and freed boy Michael Brown'.⁴⁵⁴ Equally important were Wythe's legal findings in the *Hudgins v. Wrights* case of 1806. In his judgement of the suit, Wythe made a case for racial equality when he asserted 'that freedom is the birth-right of every human being'.⁴⁵⁵ Liberation documents occasionally contained statements that highlighted comparable beliefs. Particularly interesting was the assertion of the Accomack County planter Thomas Bagwell, who provided for the release of his bondsman Leon after 'considering that God of one Blood

⁴⁴⁸ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, pp.5-6.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴⁵⁰ Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.243.

⁴⁵¹ W. Short, 'William Short to Thomas Jefferson', Paris, 27 February 1798, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress: Series 1: General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib008976/>, p.4.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁴⁵³ Short, 'William Short to Thomas Jefferson', *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress*, p.6; Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.245.

⁴⁵⁴ Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.108.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.112.

made all nations of men and that it is his will that the black people should be free as well as the white people in society'.⁴⁵⁶

Robert Pleasants continued deriding the belief that blacks were less intellectually capable than whites. In a letter written to Ann Scott on 6 July 1792, Pleasants affirmed that 'altho some of them are distinguished by black skins it is said (and I believe) that one blood, are all Nations of Men'.⁴⁵⁷ The Quaker was comparably unequivocal in a dispatch penned to St. George Tucker in 1797. In the correspondence, Pleasants asserted: 'I am of a very different opinion too from those who suppose the people of Africa are an inferior species of mankind'.⁴⁵⁸ Consequently, he labelled Tucker's plan to deprive African-Americans of the right to bear arms and marry white citizens 'repugnant both to common justice & good policy'.⁴⁵⁹

Pleasants also campaigned for African-Americans to be educated. In March 1796, he wrote to Thomas Jefferson requesting support for his proposal for 'the Instruction of Black Children'. Pleasants argued that education was 'a duty we owe to that much degraded part of our fellow Creatures' because it would be 'to the spiritual and temporal advantage of that unhappy race, as well as to the community at large in filling them for freedom'.⁴⁶⁰ True to his word, the Friend had a school constructed inside the grounds of his Henrico County estate. Local Quakers ensured that African-Americans received teaching for more than two decades following Pleasants' death in 1801.⁴⁶¹ The Virginia Abolition Society followed their President's example. In a 1791 letter to the Virginia Assembly, signatories from the VAS asserted 'that "God ... hath made of one blood all nations of men ... to dwell on the face of the Earth"'.⁴⁶²

Moreover, the Presbyterian pastor David Rice rejected notions that African-Americans were naturally inferior to whites. In his *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*, Rice affirmed that slaves were 'a rational creature reduced by the power of legislation to the state of a brute, and thereby deprived of every privilege of humanity'.⁴⁶³ The Baptist David Barrow preached a similar sermon in 1805. In the speech, Barrow derided the pro-slavery argument that 'the slaves' color "seems ... to have happened in

⁴⁵⁶ Savage, Leon: Deed of Manumission, Accomack County, 1806, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁵⁷ Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.202.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.237.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.233.

⁴⁶¹ W. F. Hardin, "'This Unpleasant Business": Slavery, Law, and the Pleasants Family in Post-Revolutionary Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 125, No. 3 (2017), p.230.

⁴⁶² Pleasants, *Letterbook*, p.199.

⁴⁶³ Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy*, p.4.

consequence of some very heinous crime, which the grand Patriarch of the African nation, had committed”⁴⁶⁴.

Additionally, James Madison was more prepared to recognise the intelligence of individual African-Americans than Jefferson. The way Madison and Jefferson treated Christopher McPherson - a former slave who had become ‘a clerk in the Virginia High Court of the Chancery in 1800’ - provides an illustration of the differences between the pair.⁴⁶⁵ While Madison ‘behaved more than courteously’ towards McPherson, Jefferson was less accommodating and referred to him by his slave name, ‘Kitt’, in correspondence. This was a means of cementing McPherson’s ‘status as an inferior’.⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, Jefferson later alleged in a letter to John Adams that McPherson had been ‘crazy, foggy, his head always in the clouds, and rhapsodising what neither himself nor any one else could understand’.⁴⁶⁷

McPherson’s popularity in Virginia demonstrates that prejudice was not always an insurmountable obstacle for free African-Americans. Before assuming his position in the High Court, McPherson had been appointed manager of a shop in Richmond. Taking this role meant that he ‘supervised eight or ten whites’.⁴⁶⁸ McPherson was so well regarded in Richmond that numerous petitions were signed to ensure that he could reside in Virginia despite the state’s anti-black laws. These documents included statements that praised McPherson for being ‘a quiet, peaceable, and well disposed citizen of these United States’.⁴⁶⁹

McPherson’s was not an isolated example. Throughout Virginia, free African-Americans obtained respect for their effort in various roles. Lists of autonomous African-Americans (compiled as part of laws enacted after the Prosser rebellion) demonstrate that free blacks in Southampton County worked in numerous occupations, including farmers, labourers, spinners, sawyers, seamstresses, shoemakers, wheel-wrights, dancing masters and carpenters in 1803. In these occupations they became key members of their communities.⁴⁷⁰ Greater opportunities tended to be available in urban areas, where the

⁴⁶⁴ J. B. Allen, ‘Were Southern White Critics of Slavery Racist? Kentucky and the Upper South, 1791 - 1824’, in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May 1978), p.174.

⁴⁶⁵ E. Berkeley Jr., ‘Prophet Without Honor: Christopher McPherson, Free Person of Color’, in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (Apr., 1969), p.180; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.636.

⁴⁶⁶ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.636; Madison’s treatment of McPherson is detailed in Berkeley Jr., ‘Prophet Without Honor’, in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.184; the letter can be found in T. Jefferson, ‘Thomas Jefferson to James Madison’, 4 April 1800, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress: Series: 1: General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mjm.25_0589_0590/?sp=1.

⁴⁶⁷ T. Jefferson, ‘Jefferson to Adams’, Monticello, 20 April 1812, in L. J. Cappon (ed.), *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.298.

⁴⁶⁸ Barfield, *America’s Forgotten Caste*, p.83.

⁴⁶⁹ McPherson, Christopher: Petition, Richmond (City), 1810-12-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 of ‘Certificate of Sundry Inhabitants of Fluvana County. Re: McPherson’s service as clerk for David Ross’.

⁴⁷⁰ 1803 A List of free Negroes & Mulattoes in the County of Southampton & Parish of St Lukes, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-4; Barfield, *America’s Forgotten Caste*, p.59; J. Sidbury,

number of free blacks rose dramatically. For instance, the quantity of free blacks in Norfolk increased from sixty-one in 1790 to 352 in 1800. Something similar occurred in Richmond, where the autonomous black demographic enlarged from 265 to 600 in the same period. Meanwhile, Petersburg possessed the largest African-American population in Virginia by 1810.⁴⁷¹

White Virginians, in turn, backed valued African-Americans in legal matters. This assistance assumed several forms. Some citizens buttressed slaves' claims to freedom. In 1792, J. Parker of Isle of Wight County signed an affidavit on behalf of Saul, formerly the property of Colonel Thomas Matthews. Parker requested that Saul be granted his liberty for his bravery during the Revolutionary War. He attested that Saul had 'faithfully' informed him of information he had garnered from British battalions and 'joind [*sic*] the troops of this state under my command'.⁴⁷² During his time serving in the conflict, Saul was said to have 'acted in such a manner as to merit my particular approbation, & ... was more serviceable than if he had been white'. Overall, Parker declared that Saul's 'services were as more gracious & more so than could be expected from a slave and I may venture to say that he who has done so much in the cause of freedom deserves to share a part of it'.⁴⁷³

A comparable appeal was made on behalf of Sam in 1798. Sam had been assailed by two white men while delivering letters between Frederick and Gloucester County courthouses in November 1797. Despite the viciousness of the assault, Sam refused to surrender the mail and was eventually aided by passers-by. Consequently, the petitioners requested that lawmakers liberate the bondsman. The desire of the twenty-two memorialists to see Sam rewarded was such that they offered to pay 'his owner the value of the said slave by voluntary contributions'.⁴⁷⁴

Equally, twenty citizens from Amelia County appealed for three slaves to be emancipated and permitted to remain in Virginia in 1809. The slaves had been the wife and children of Frank, a free African-American, whose 'industry and propriety of conduct had enabled him to raise a sufficient sum of money to purchase his' family members before he had passed away.⁴⁷⁵ To buttress their case, the signatories testified that the applicants

Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.177-178.

⁴⁷¹ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.286; P. J. Schwarz, "'A Sense of Their Own Power": Self-Determination in Recent Writings on Black Virginians', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul., 1989), p.295.

⁴⁷² Isle of Wight County: Affidavit, Isle of Wight County, 1792, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁴⁷⁴ Lorimer, Hannah, Thacker & Fauntleroy, Thomas & Others: Petition, Middlesex County, 1798-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

⁴⁷⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Amelia County, 1809-12-16, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

represented 'fair and honest characters' who were 'peaceable and respectable'.⁴⁷⁶ In another incident, petitioners from Caroline County - including four justices of the peace - demanded that the Virginian General Assembly pardon Scipio for his involvement in the Gabriel Prosser uprising. Scipio, a nineteen-year-old slave, was sentenced to be hung for his part in the plot. However, the signatories reasoned that he should be shown 'mercy' because he appeared 'to be a very ignorant Lad'.⁴⁷⁷

Finally, inhabitants from Petersburg supported two free black men in their endeavours to receive compensation from the Virginian legislature. The men had sustained injuries while rescuing tobacco from a fire at Robert Bolling's warehouse in 1799. The forty-four signatories testified that the injured men had been 'extremely active in endeavouring to extinguish the fire which consumed Robt Bollings [sic] Warehouse in this Town in August last and that a very considerable quantity of Tobacco in Hogsheads & in bulk was saved by the Exertions of the Petitioners & their associates'.⁴⁷⁸

In addition to offering legal backing, some helped slaves in day-to-day matters. In 1796, Julius Burbridge Dandridge - an overseer from Richmond - wrote to his manager, William Branch Giles, requesting that the planter not sell Amos, who had previously been hired out to a Major Watts.⁴⁷⁹ Dandridge assured Giles that he was making the appeal because Amos had 'applied to me with much anxiety, to write to you in his behalf to prevent such an event from taking place'.⁴⁸⁰ Further evidence from runaway advertisements confirms that poor whites continued to assist African-Americans in absconding from their plantations. For instance, Catesby Jones alleged that Jacob had escaped 'with a certain Irish woman much pitted with the small pox, who left her husband (Patrick Lykin) a few weeks ago, with a certain Irish ditcher called Daniel Fennaughty' in August 1794.⁴⁸¹ When Jacob fled again the following year, Jones noted that the slave had 'a mulatto son' with an Irish woman, who was identified as Betty Larkey.⁴⁸² Interracial ties were also alluded to when John Thornton Senior demanded the return of another Jacob in April 1803. Thornton reported that his slave had fled 'with a white woman by the name of

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁴⁷⁷ John Hoomes et al. to Governor James Monroe, Caroline County, 1800-11-08, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁷⁸ Graves, Richmond & DeCoderee, Izral: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1799-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

⁴⁷⁹ J. B. Dandridge, 'Letter, 1796, of Julius Burbridge Dandridge, Richmond, [Va.], to William B[ranch] Giles, Philadelphia, [Pa.]', Dandridge, Julia Burbidge (1770?-1828), letter, 1796, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2D19978a1, p.1.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ C. Jones, 'Fifteen Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Thursday 21 August 1794, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lvu93_cgYy4C&dat=17940821&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

⁴⁸² Jones, '100 Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser*, Friday 18 September 1795, p.3.

Sally Davis, with whom he was intimate for some time before their departure'. Accordingly, he thought it 'probable she may aid him in imposing on the public with his pass, or may claim him as her slave'.⁴⁸³

Romantic attachment was not always necessary for whites to help slaves flee plantation life. In 1794, Michael Wallace of King George County asserted that twenty-two-year-old Gerrard 'went off in company with some ill disposed white person'.⁴⁸⁴ Moreover, when appealing for the return of Joe in February 1804, Alexander Brown of Prince William County suggested that his slave was 'well known to travellers' in the Dumfries area and warned that 'Those secreting or assisting said runaway' would 'be prosecuted to the utmost severity of the law'.⁴⁸⁵ Accusations of collusion were evident in another request of 1805. The bondsman - named Jack - was believed to have fled to Chesterfield County, 'where his wife's friends live'. Intriguingly, Jack's owner claimed that 'The keeper of the toll bridge or the ferryman will have frequent opportunities of stopping him when on visits to his wife, who is free'.⁴⁸⁶

Popular backing occasionally emboldened free African-Americans to request for Virginia's repressive laws to be altered. In 1809, four free blacks from Norfolk County asked the Governor of Virginia, John Tyler, to amend legislation barring African-Americans from testifying against whites in court cases. The petitioners argued that 'men, wanton & malignant in their disposition' were going unpunished for anti-black crimes because of the state's discriminatory laws.⁴⁸⁷ Tyler seemingly agreed with the contents of the appeal, for he forwarded it to the Virginian Legislature after deeming 'it not improper to lay the same before the General Assembly'.⁴⁸⁸ The fact that at least two of the men who presented the appeal were recorded as heads of households in the 1810 census serves as a final demonstration that it was possible for free African-Americans to enjoy a degree of autonomy in nineteenth century Virginia, despite the considerable barriers erected by white society.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸³ J. Thornton Snr., 'Runaway', in *The Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, Saturday 9 April 1803, p.4. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=9tJtKg94vZsC&dat=18030409&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

⁴⁸⁴ M. Wallace, King George County, '100 Dollars Reward', in *The Virginia Herald*, Thursday 21 April 1794, p.3. Retrieved from *Google News*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=lVu93_cgYy4C&dat=17940918&printsec=frontpage&hl=en.

⁴⁸⁵ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 06-02-1804, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.30.

⁴⁸⁶ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 01-08-1805, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.59.

⁴⁸⁷ Free People of Color: Petition, Norfolk County, 1809-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁴⁸⁹ Matthew Wallace lived in a house with three other African-Americans in the 1810 census. He was the registered homeowner. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZWQ> : accessed 20 October 2017), Matthew Wallace, Norfolk, Norfolk

Conclusion: Jefferson's Decline Continues

So where does this analysis leave our understanding of Thomas Jefferson's place in the early national era? First, Jefferson's commitment to the anti-slavery cause underwent a clear decline during his twenty years as a national statesman. In 1789, with his denunciation of the institution in *Notes on Virginia* fresh in the memory, Jefferson stood ahead - if not quite at the pinnacle - of the public curve on slavery. By the conclusion of his Presidency, however, he had all but given up on seeing his abolition plan enacted. He was also refusing to support endeavours to challenge the peculiar institution.⁴⁹⁰ At Monticello, meanwhile, Jefferson relentlessly sought to maximize profits from slave labour at a time when true opponents of slavery were seeking to end their association with the system. Jefferson's advocates argue that he remained a relatively lenient owner, who was keen to ensure that workers were afforded comparably decent clothing, lodgings and treatment when ill.⁴⁹¹ Nonetheless, his desire to continue trading bondsmen disrupted plantation communities, while his failure to part with violent overseers showed that the welfare of his slaves came below his desire to ensure profits.⁴⁹² Equally, despite his stance on race showing signs of mellowing when speaking with pro-black observers in the early 1790s, Jefferson was generally as prejudiced towards African-Americans as he had been when writing *Notes on the State of Virginia* in the early 1780s. This meant that he consistently stated that emancipated slaves needed to be removed from Virginia.

The above analysis demonstrates that Jefferson was not alone in his beliefs and conduct. His position on slavery certainly moved closer to elite Virginian views than it had previously been. Most of Jefferson's fellow statesmen retreated from attacking slavery, with leaders like James Madison and James Monroe refusing to back anti-slavery activities.⁴⁹³ Furthermore, Virginian lawmakers retracted their previous commitment to private emancipations by passing the 1806 act, which effectively sealed the fate of future slaves in the state. This change in stance reflected public opinion, which turned increasingly

Borough, Virginia, United States; citing p. 113, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427; Bailey was also a homeowner. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZWQ> : accessed 20 October 2017), William Bailey, Norfolk, Norfolk Borough, Virginia, United States, citing p.94, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427.

⁴⁹⁰ Jefferson, 'To Dr. George Logan', 11 May 1805, in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 8, p.352.

⁴⁹¹ Jefferson, 'To Thomas Mann Randolph', in Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, p.12; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.288; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.110 criticises this tendency.

⁴⁹² Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.9.

⁴⁹³ McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.187; Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance', in *The Historian*, p.577.

against abolition. The twin revolts in Saint Domingue and Richmond had a particularly damaging impact on both Jefferson and the wider public's perception of the anti-slavery movement.⁴⁹⁴ In this respect, it is one of the saddest paradoxes in a life riddled with contradictions that Jefferson became more protective of Virginian traditions during his time on the national stage than he had been prior to 1789. He also became more conservative at the exact moment that anti-slavery forces required him to be more radical.

Additionally, the rebellions in Saint Domingue and Richmond increased popular prejudice towards African-Americans. Although few statesmen publicly echoed Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* claims about blacks, it is true that none of Virginia's leaders publicly contradicted the belief that African-Americans were inherently inferior to their white counterparts. Such sentiments were increasingly held amongst ordinary Virginians. In fact, one of the more damaging aspects for Jefferson's reputation is that his *Notes on Virginia* assertions about African-Americans were evoked with more regularity in the era than his rebuke of slavery. Anti-emancipation petitions delivered in 1800 and 1805 undoubtedly demonstrated that many Virginians were unwilling to countenance a biracial state.⁴⁹⁵ This hostility was evidenced in the colonization proposals advocated by Ferdinando Fairfax and George Tucker, which shared much in common with the one Jefferson penned in *Notes on Virginia*. Repatriation even obtained assent from the Virginia General Assembly following the 1800 Gabriel Prosser rebellion.⁴⁹⁶

Finally, Jefferson's conduct as an owner shared much in common with his contemporaries. He and many of his fellow slaveholders certainly ensured that bondsmen were afforded improved living conditions and provided with healthcare when unwell. However, this treatment was largely self-serving and only afforded to slaves who met their master's perception of good behaviour. Moreover, it was more than matched by the continuous pursuits of runaways and frequent selling of bondsmen for personal gain.⁴⁹⁷ This appearance of benevolence had the negative effect of enabling Virginians to secure the future of slavery from abolitionist attacks.

Nonetheless, to claim that Jefferson fully represented the kaleidoscope of Virginian beliefs would be to distort our view of Virginian society at the turn of the nineteenth century. Seeing Jefferson as an accurate indicator of the era ultimately undermines the role

⁴⁹⁴ F. Furstenburg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2006), pp.80-81.

⁴⁹⁵ Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, & Commonality: Petition, Petersburg (City), 1805-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Citizens: Petition, King and Queen County, 1800-12-02, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁹⁶ E. Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), p.9.

⁴⁹⁷ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.102.

that public opinion - and events beyond his control - played in changing elite policy on slavery. The above discussions show that Jefferson and his fellow leaders were led to a tacit acquiescence in the system, in part, by the pro-slavery stance assumed by Virginians from all tiers of society. There is little doubt that Jefferson never came close to supporting slavery, as a spate of planters - such as Francis Corbin - did in the 1790s and early 1800s.⁴⁹⁸ Nor did he endorse the numerous appeals for an end to Virginia's liberal manumission laws. Furthermore, the hostility directed at Jefferson for previously voicing statements opposing slavery is demonstrative of the strength of the institution in Virginia in the early 1800s. If abolition was unlikely in the decade immediately after the American Revolution, it was impossible by 1800 due to changes in the public mood. Moreover, Jefferson clearly did not mete out the cruel punishments that some planters inflicted upon their slaves. Indeed, in several respects he remained more lenient than many of his contemporaries, with his clothing allocations far outweighing George Washington's and his refusal to separate slaves from their families comparing favourably with several masters.

While these findings explain Jefferson's apathetic approach during his time on the national stage, they do not excuse it. Jefferson singularly failed to match the commitment of Evangelical Christians like David Barrow and Robert Pleasants, who campaigned for the eradication of slavery even when it became apparent that the fervour of the American Revolution had dissipated. The example of James Wood, who combined his position as Governor of Virginia with a leading role in the Virginia Abolition Society, shows that anti-slavery beliefs were not incompatible with holding public office.⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, by only emancipating two slaves - both of whom were members of the Hemings family who paid for their release - Jefferson was unable to emulate other large-scale planters, such as George Washington and Robert Carter.⁵⁰⁰ More seriously, his inaction contrasts with the deeds of many smaller slaveholders, who acted on the egalitarian spirit of the Declaration of Independence by manumitting their labourers.

Regarding race, Jefferson compares equally unfavourably. Those who freed their slaves prior to 1806 undoubtedly demonstrated an element of faith that Virginia could become a biracial society. Moreover, many from various backgrounds supported African-Americans in legal affairs and in their pursuit of freedom when absconding from their owners. After 1806, furthermore, thousands of citizens registered their disapproval for colonization by requesting that free blacks be permitted to stay in Virginia as autonomous

⁴⁹⁸ Corbin, 'A Plain Planter Begg Leave to Ask His Fellow Citizens a Few Questions', 1790, South-eastern Broadside. Library of Virginia Manuscripts & Special Collections Broadside Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

⁴⁹⁹ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, p.252.

⁵⁰⁰ Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes'", in *Journal of American Studies*, pp.427-428.

inhabitants. By contrast, Jefferson maintained that blacks could not succeed in free society due to their inherent differences.⁵⁰¹ Finally, leading names of the era, such as George Washington and James Madison, remained less prejudiced than Jefferson.

Jefferson, then, was not an accurate gauge of the range of opinions and conduct that Virginian society comprised at this point. When we recognise this fact, it is easier to understand how his position on slavery was moved by developments in Virginian perceptions. We also can better ascertain the extent to which he shaped - and diverged from - broader society in relation to race and colonization. Having discerned this, the final chapter situates Jefferson's views into the context of Virginia following his retirement.

⁵⁰¹ Davis (ed.), *Jeffersonian America*, p.149; Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, p.82; Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords*, pp.177-178 describes the importance of white support for African-American petitions.

Chapter Four: 1809-1832 - Retirement in Virginia

On 4 March 1809, eight years after being inaugurated as American President, Thomas Jefferson handed over the reins to his fellow Virginian, James Madison. Upon leaving office, Jefferson immediately returned to his home in Albemarle County, where he lived out the remaining seventeen years of his life. The two decades following his retirement proved eventful for Jefferson, Virginia and America. On a local level, Jefferson played a foremost role in the creation of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and regularly entertained guests at Monticello. However, national events still captured his interest. He wrote frequent letters to his two successors as President - James Madison and James Monroe - and renewed a longstanding acquaintance with the Massachusetts statesman John Adams. The controversy surrounding Missouri's admission to the American Union in 1819-1820 evoked a particularly anguished response from Jefferson. He was not alone. The debate concerning whether slavery should be permitted to extend into the western territory - purchased by the Jefferson administration in 1803 - encouraged a wider discourse on the future of the system in America. Surprisingly, given their state's historic role as a mediator between the North and the Deep South, Virginian representatives were more extreme in their opposition to the Federal Government banning slavery in new states than any other set of envoys.¹ Old Dominion's politicians objected so passionately because they reasoned that such an act might set a precedent whereby national legislators could intervene in Virginian law.

These concerns reflected wider anxieties about Virginia's role in American politics. Although the President in 1819 - James Monroe - was a Virginian, the balance of political power was undoubtedly tilting towards northern states. A symbolic shift took place when Massachusetts' John Quincy Adams was elected President in 1825. Moreover, the continuing cotton boom in South Carolina, Georgia and the Louisiana territory meant that Virginia's previously undisputed economic and political power in the South was diminishing.² Virginian planters also worried that conversations surrounding liberty triggered by the Missouri Crisis might agitate their slaves and so attempted to stifle debate on the institution.³ Nonetheless, the issue was discussed to a limited degree when

¹ [Anon] (ed.), 'Missouri Compromise', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Jul., 1901), p.6; T. Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 2015), p.124.

² R. S. Dunn, *A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life and Labor in Jamaica and Virginia* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp.5-6; W. J. Cooper Jr., T. E. Terrill & C. Childers, *The American South: A History*, Vol. 1: *From Settlement to Reconstruction* - 5th ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p.306.

³ D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.197.

Virginia's leaders met to revise the state's constitution in 1829. Tensions over the institution only heightened when a slave rebellion in Southampton County killed more than fifty Virginians in 1831.⁴ Consequently, officials met again in 1832 to discuss the future of slavery. The debates stirred strong emotions across social classes and culminated in lawmakers narrowly voting in favour of maintaining the institution. Following the conference, Thomas Roderick Dew published a review of the proceedings which articulated the pro-slavery case that became common amongst Antebellum defenders of the system.⁵

This chapter places Thomas Jefferson's perspectives on slavery, ownership, race and colonization into the context of Virginian society in the era following his retirement from public service in 1809. Ways in which Jeffersonian ideals influenced - and were affected by - popular discourse are also highlighted. In achieving these ambitions, the analysis further challenges the belief that Jefferson's views were indicative of broader perceptions in his native state. The investigation starts by detailing key changes in Virginian society in the epoch. The topics of slavery, ownership, race and colonization are then evaluated in separate sections, before the chapter's findings are outlined in a brief conclusion. Situating Jefferson into the context of Virginia in the years after his Presidency is particularly important, for events between 1809 and 1832 are recognised to have made Virginia's secession from the American Union and, by extension, the American Civil War almost inevitable.⁶ Further, Jefferson is often regarded as an accurate gauge of Virginian opinion on one of the defining issues of the era, the Missouri Crisis.⁷

The following discussion buttresses some previous historiography. Most Virginians were certainly in broad agreement with Jefferson's perception of the Missouri controversy. Yet the evaluation demonstrates that it is unhelpful to see many aspects of the period through a Jeffersonian prism. For example, his stance on slavery was moderate in an era where battle-lines were increasingly drawn between pro- and anti-slavery activists. Equally, Jefferson's refusal to join colonization societies meant that he failed to back repatriation to the same extent as contemporaries like James Madison, James Monroe and John Marshall. By contrast, the 'Jeffersonian solution' continued to be refuted by people from all

⁴ E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p.215.

⁵ T. R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832* (Richmond: T. W. White, 1832), passim.

⁶ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, pp.105, 136 & 211; J. Oakes, "'Whom Have I Oppressed?'" The Pursuit of Happiness and the Happy Slave', in J. Horn, J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p.232; M. D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.164.

⁷ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.7; Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, pp.122 & 129.

backgrounds in early nineteenth-century Virginia.⁸ His position on race, meanwhile, was as extreme as it had been in earlier eras.

Three events punctuated Virginian history during Jefferson's retirement. First, the state was a target for enemy raids when national conflict erupted with Britain in 1812. Repeating events of the Revolutionary War, a significant number of Old Dominion's slaves fled their owners to seek freedom fighting alongside British forces.⁹ Once peace was secured, internal divisions threatened American unity. Especially important was the sectional discord that erupted over the admission of Maine and Missouri to the Union. Discussions over the terms of Missouri's accession commenced in February 1819 and proceeded amicably until James Tallmadge - a representative from New York - proposed an amendment that barred slavery from the state.¹⁰ Delegates from Virginia and other slaveholding regions were incensed by the clause and threatened to block Maine becoming a state until Missouri's request had been approved. After months of negotiations, a compromise was reached whereby slavery would be permitted in Missouri but banned from all future states admitted to the area north and west of the 36° 30' line.¹¹

While arguments over Missouri were raging, America suffered its first major economic downturn. Virginia was particularly affected by the recession. In 1819, exports of tobacco - still the former colonies' staple crop - plummeted by fifty-six percent. The slump placed major planters - including Jefferson and James Madison - into heavy debt, a fact that made the manumission of their labourers even harder.¹² Tensions in Virginian politics also escalated. Particularly key was the growing schism between eastern and western areas of the state. Western regions had become more populous during the previous half-century, as poorer families moved from the Tidewater and the Piedmont to the scantily inhabited region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. This demographic change buoyed western counties to appeal for greater representation in the Virginian Legislature. Strains became visible during meetings to revise the state's constitution in 1829, which were attended by luminaries from the early national era, such as James Madison, James Monroe and John

⁸ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.178.

⁹ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.2.

¹⁰ [Anon] (ed.), 'Missouri Compromise', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.5; N. Wood, 'John Randolph of Roanoke and the Politics of Slavery in the Early Republic', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 120, No. 2 (Summer 2012), p.125.

¹¹ Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, p.124.

¹² Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.407.

Marshall.¹³ Sectional ruptures were reopened by the 1832 slavery debates, which took place in the wake of Nat Turner's slave revolt in Southampton County.¹⁴ For instance, Philip A. Bolling of Buckingham County noted how Tidewater and Piedmont-based Virginians had 'said the west had no interest in [discussing slavery], and should take no part in it; but should stand aloof and silently witness the progress of an evil which is bringing ruin upon this commonwealth'.¹⁵ The disputes witnessed heated arguments from advocates of slavery and - largely western-based - opponents of the system, with Thomas Jefferson's example being used to buttress the perspectives of both camps. Eventually, it was deemed that the system should remain untouched. The decision - in hindsight - made the outbreak of Civil War less than three decades later increasingly inevitable.¹⁶

Jefferson and Slavery: A Symbolic Decline?

For most of his retirement, Thomas Jefferson led an active life which was only interrupted by intermittent bouts of rheumatism. However, he found himself increasingly housebound by a series of ailments in 1826. On 4 July - exactly fifty years after authoring the American Declaration of Independence - Jefferson passed away at Monticello.¹⁷ Given his lifelong dilemma over the issue, it was fitting that Jefferson was surrounded by his slaves until the very end. He left more than two hundred bondsmen upon his passing, with only five labourers - four members of the Hemings family and his personal valet Joseph Fossett - being released in his will. Most of the remaining slaves were sold at an auction a year later, with many families being separated because of the proceedings.¹⁸

Jefferson's failure to privately act against slavery did not stop him outlining his distaste for the system on numerous occasions. First, in 1815 he received a letter from David Barrow, the Virginian-born Baptist who had moved to Kentucky after releasing his

¹³ S. Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention of 1829-30: To which are now subjoined, the new Constitution of Virginia, and the Votes of the People* (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd & Co. for Ritchie & Cook, 1830), p.iii. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100837536>; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.74.

¹⁴ B. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.275.

¹⁵ P. A. Bolling, *The Speeches of Philip A. Bolling, (Of Buckingham) in the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Policy of the State in Relation to her Colored Population: Delivered on the 11th and 25th of January, 1832* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.9. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/speechesofphilip00boll>.

¹⁶ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.105; E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.xvi.

¹⁷ W. G. Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution: Thomas Jefferson and Gabriel's Uprising', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 2003), p.2.

¹⁸ Merkel, 'To See Oneself as a Target of a Justified Revolution', in *American Nineteenth Century History*, p.2; L. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness': Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves", in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.147.

labourers three decades earlier. In the correspondence, Barrow asked Jefferson for 'some Hints, that your Knowledge, Feelings & Observations on the Subjects of Slavery & emancipation may dictate, which may be helpful to us in our present Struggles'.¹⁹ Jefferson responded by advocating his *Notes on the State of Virginia* abolition strategy, asserting: 'the only practicable plan I could ever devise is stated under the 14th quare [sic] of the Notes on Virginia, and strengthened by the energies of conscience'.²⁰

Jefferson maintained his aversion to slavery during the Missouri Crisis. In April 1820, he wrote to John Holmes, a leading statesman from Maine. In the dispatch, Jefferson claimed: 'I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any *practicable* way'.²¹ Furthermore, he labelled slavery 'a canker' that eroded the 'morals of the people' and 'destroyed' their work ethic a year later.²² Equally, in his 1821 *Autobiography*, which was not published until after his death, Jefferson declared: 'Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free'.²³ He also cautioned his fellow Virginians that they were encouraging servile insurrection if they did not act against the institution, contending: 'It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably and in such slow degree as that the evil will wear off insensibly'. Just as he had done in *Notes on Virginia* nearly four decades earlier, Jefferson warned that 'If on the contrary it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up'.²⁴

Jefferson still corresponded with anti-slavery activists in his later years. In 1825, he wrote to the Scottish abolitionist Frances Wright that 'every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried, which may do something toward the ultimate object' of abolition.²⁵ Moreover, in his final statement concerning the topic - composed to the Ohio Senator James Heaton in May 1826 - Jefferson reiterated his abhorrence for the institution,

¹⁹ D. Barrow, 'David Barrow to Thomas Jefferson', 20 March 1815, *National Archives: Founders Online*, last modified 28 December 2016, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-08-02-0287>.

²⁰ T. Jefferson, 'Thomas Jefferson to David Barrow', Monticello, 1 May 1815, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress: Series: 1: General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj1.048_0088_0088/?st=text.

²¹ T. Jefferson, 'To John Holmes', Monticello, 22 April 1820, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.496; see appendix 1.6, p.333 for more information on Holmes.

²² A. Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.145.

²³ T. Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790. *With the Declaration of Independence*', 6 January 1821, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.44.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Miss Fanny Wright', Monticello, 7 August 1825, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10: 1816 - 1826 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), p.344; C. Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race": Jefferson and the "Amelioration" of Slavery, ca. 1770-1826', in *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p.169; see appendix 1.6, p.335 for more information about Wright.

proclaiming that his 'sentiments have been forty years before the public'. Furthermore, he declared that 'living or dying', abolition 'will ever be in my most fervent prayer'.²⁶

Despite these rhetorical flourishes, largely penned to appease those who opposed slavery, Jefferson's stance on the system remained enigmatic. These contradictions were apparent in a letter he sent to Edward Coles - a fellow Albemarle County slaveholder - in 1814. Coles - who was serving as James Madison's Private Secretary - wrote to Jefferson asking for assistance in promoting the anti-slavery cause in Virginia and outlined his plans to move to Illinois in order to release his slaves.²⁷ In his reply, Jefferson admitted that Coles' desire to see a state-wide abolition did 'honor to both the head and heart'. Additionally, he thought that 'justice' was calling for Virginia's bondsmen to receive their liberty, declaring: 'it is a moral reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain, and should have produced not a single effort ... to relieve them & ourselves from our present condition of moral & political reprobation'.²⁸ In a passage comparable to those penned in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson asserted that slavery was hindering present and future generations of Virginians. Consequently, he bemoaned that having been 'Nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition ... of those unfortunate beings ... few minds have yet doubted ... they were as legitimate subjects of property as ... horses and cattle'.²⁹ This popular aversion to abolition meant that Jefferson cautioned Coles against releasing his slaves. Instead, he evoked paternalist language to advise Coles to ensure that his bondsmen were well treated, arguing: 'My opinion has ever been that, until more can be done for them, we should endeavor ... to feed and clothe them well, [and] protect them from all ill usage'.³⁰ Furthermore, Jefferson rebutted Coles' invitation to become involved in the anti-slavery movement, arguing that he was too old to aid the cause.³¹

Jefferson's 'loss of optimism' in emancipation gathered pace thereafter. For instance, he lamented the 'disposition in the rising generation' to view slavery as a necessity in 1817.³² Jefferson even conceded 'that the "revolution in public opinion"' he believed was necessary to permit an emancipation would not be affected 'in a day, or

²⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To James Heaton', Monticello, 20 May 1826, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.498; W. M. Whitehill (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Letter of 20 May 1826 to James Heaton on the Abolition of Slavery* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Garden Library, 1967), p.5 discusses Heaton.

²⁷ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.155.

²⁸ T. Jefferson, 'To Edward Coles', Monticello, 25 August 1814, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.492-493.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.493.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.493-494.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.494.

³² Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, pp.37 & 145 contains the first quote; T. Jefferson, 'To Dr. Thomas Humphreys', Monticello, 8 February 1817, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.496.

perhaps in an age' in his final piece addressing the issue.³³ This declining faith was demonstrated in subtle changes Jefferson made to his emancipation plan. In *Notes on Virginia*, he had appealed for legislators to instigate the process of state-wide manumissions after 1800. By 1824, however, the scheme had been tweaked to ensure that emancipation only commenced with 'the after-born, leaving them, on due compensation, with their mothers ... until a proper age for deportation'.³⁴

Despite frequently proclaiming his opposition to slavery, Jefferson did nothing to challenge the institution during his retirement. If anything, the decline of his anti-slavery stance became increasingly apparent after 1809. The aging statesman wrote numerous letters that showed he was content to espouse paternalist doctrines rather than become an emancipator. Some of these compositions verged on positive good defences of slaveholding. First, when corresponding with Clement Caine on 16 September 1811, Jefferson boasted that Virginian planters had guaranteed their slaves were 'as comfortable and more secure than the laboring man in most parts of the world'.³⁵ Writing to an English friend and economist - Thomas Cooper - in 1814, moreover, Jefferson affirmed that the job of a planter was to 'ameliorate' the condition of his labourers, rather than pursue their emancipation.³⁶ Likewise, in a dispatch composed to William Short in 1823, Jefferson declared that slavery was 'becoming less offensive' as a consequence of 'the great improvement in the condition and civilization of that race'.³⁷

Most importantly, Jefferson supported slaveholding interests when he campaigned for slavery to be permitted in Missouri. He claimed to advocate 'diffusion' - the idea that slavery could be weakened by spreading across America - because he believed that enabling the system to disperse into new states would reduce the prospect of an African-American insurrection occurring in Virginia.³⁸ While corresponding with John Adams, consequently, Jefferson suggested that Virginia's slaves would 'be presented with freedom and a dagger' if Congress barred Missouri from being admitted to the American Union as a

³³ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.138; Jefferson, 'To James Heaton', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.498.

³⁴ T. Jefferson, 'A Plan of Emancipation: To Jared Sparks', Monticello, 4 February 1824, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp.1484-1485; A. Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2010), p.23.

³⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Clement Caine', Monticello, 16 September 1811, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 9: 1807 - 1815 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), p.329.

³⁶ T. Jefferson, 'Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Cooper', Monticello, 10 September 1814, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress: Series 1: General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://memory.loc.gov/master/mss/mtj/mtj1/047/0700/0791.jpg>.

³⁷ T. Jefferson, 'Thomas Jefferson to William Short', Monticello, 8 September 1823, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress: Series: 1: General Correspondence. 1651-1827*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://memory.loc.gov/master/mss/mtj/mtj1/053/1100/1168.jpg>; Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race'", in *Early American Studies*, p.196.

³⁸ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, pp.106-107.

slaveholding state.³⁹ In another letter to Albert Gallatin, who had served as Secretary of the Treasury throughout his Presidency, Jefferson buttressed these arguments by asserting that the 'happiness' of slaves 'would be increased' by diffusion.⁴⁰

Many of Jefferson's fears were rehashed in a famous letter composed to John Holmes at the height of the controversy. In the dispatch, Jefferson argued that allowing Congress to dictate whether slavery was permitted in Missouri would set a dangerous precedent which might enable future Governments to abolish the system throughout America.⁴¹ Such an occurrence was unpalatable for Jefferson, who thought that the safety of white citizens would be compromised by the insurrectionary spirit of their former slaves. Thus, the retired statesman declared that his fellow planters held 'the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go'.⁴² Ideological theories were a key factor in determining Jefferson's stance over Missouri. Throughout his public career, Jefferson maintained that individual states should be allowed to design their own constitutions, rather than be instructed on their laws by the national government.⁴³ This fear of a centralised state meant that he backed diffusion at the expense of America's enslaved population.

When assessing whether Jefferson could have done more to challenge slavery in his retirement, it is pivotal to see how other Virginians approached the institution. For instance, if his stance was in advance of general perceptions, it may be argued that Jefferson could have done little to help the anti-slavery cause. By contrast, failing to match the ideals of other emancipationists would demonstrate that Jefferson's position did not evolve following his Presidency. Broadly reflecting wider tendencies, meanwhile, could explain his reticence to attack slavery by highlighting the limitations in both his and Virginia's position.

Accordingly, it is noteworthy that many Virginians agreed with Jefferson's stance on the Missouri crisis. His faith in the concept of 'diffusion' was certainly widely adhered to.

³⁹ T. Jefferson, 'Jefferson to Adams', Monticello, 22 January 1821, in L. J. Cappon (ed.), *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.570.

⁴⁰ T. Jefferson, 'To Albert Gallatin', 26 December 1820, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp.1447-50; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.107; see appendix 1.6, p.333 for a biography of Gallatin.

⁴¹ T. Jefferson, 'To John Holmes', Monticello, 22 April 1820, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.497; Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, p.124.

⁴² Jefferson, 'To John Holmes', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.497.

⁴³ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.169.

The idea that slavery would be weakened by spreading into western territories was first formulated in the late 1790s, with early support for the notion appearing in St. George Tucker's *Dissertation on Slavery*.⁴⁴ By 1819, backing for the idea was such that all Virginia's congressmen voted against restrictions being placed on slavery's expansion into Missouri.⁴⁵ Writing to Marquis de Lafayette, James Madison echoed Jefferson's perceptions when he claimed that permitting the spread of slavery would aid African-Americans, for the 'diffusion of those in the Country tends at once to meliorate their actual condition, and to facilitate their eventual emancipation'.⁴⁶

Madison was supported by the lawyer and Congressman George Tucker, who informed delegates from other American states that 'the power of imposing the proposed restriction on the state of Missouri is ... inconsistent with the constitution'.⁴⁷ Virginia's Governor, James Barbour, assumed a particularly aggressive stance over Missouri. Barbour instructed Congressmen to reject the notion barring slavery from the territory, alleging that 'imposing restrictions on the people of Missouri' would 'violate the constitution'.⁴⁸ He also felt, like many Virginian delegates, that approving the expansion of slavery 'would allow the slaves to be diffused over a larger expanse, and that would decrease their density, which would in part diminish the likelihood of revolt'.⁴⁹

Barbour's correspondence demonstrates that his position was widely supported. Virginians were particularly incensed by the terms of the Missouri compromise, which prevented slavery expanding further westwards after 1820.⁵⁰ Henry St. George Tucker - a lawyer who eventually represented Virginia in Congress - certainly wrote to Barbour in February 1820 stressing his dismay at 'A compromise which gives up the fairest and largest part of the Western Territory and leaves to us a narrow slip intersected with mountains in one direction, destroyed by Earthquakes in another, and interspersed in a third with

⁴⁴ A. Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p.23.

⁴⁵ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.174.

⁴⁶ J. Madison, 'To General La Fayette', Montpelier, 25 November 1820, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 3: 1816 - 1828 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.190; D. R. Egerton, 'Race and Slavery in the Era of Jefferson', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.76; I. Brant, *The Fourth President: A Life of James Madison* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1970), p.610; R. Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.627; S. J. Kester, *The Haunted Philosopher: James Madison, Republicanism, and Slavery* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), pp.117 & 125.

⁴⁷ G. Tucker, *Speech of Mr. Tucker, of Virginia, on the Restriction of Slavery in Missouri: Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, February 25, 1820* (Washington: [s.n.], 1820), p.4.

⁴⁸ J. Barbour, *Speech of Mr. J. Barbour, of Virginia, on the Restriction of Slavery in Missouri: Delivered in the Senate of the United States, Jan. 31, 1820* (Washington: [s.n.], 1820), p.3. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009599982>.

⁴⁹ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.64 contains the quote; Barbour, *Speech of Mr. J. Barbour, of Virginia*, p.3.

⁵⁰ See Linn Banks' letter to Barbour in [Anon] (ed.), 'Missouri Compromise', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, pp.20-22 for an example of this.

swamps and bayous'.⁵¹ Equally, Barbour received a dispatch from William F. Gordon, in which the Virginian barrister described how 'The sentiment against a compromise has settled into conviction that we must resist it' because of 'a spirit of injustice and want of faith in the Northern politician, which if yielded to would lead only to farther and more daring and vital usurpations'.⁵² Articles in Virginian newspapers were comparably critical of the settlement. For example, *The Petersburg Republican* published an extract in March 1820 that described the decision to prevent slavery expanding west of Missouri as an 'unequal compromise'. In fact, the author declared that 'we scarcely ever recollect to have tasted a bitterer cup'.⁵³

Jefferson's overall position on slavery was maintained by many leading Virginians. Elites were still prepared to privately denounce the institution when speaking with external observers. The French dignitary Marquis de Lafayette, who regularly conversed with Jefferson, James Madison and John Marshall, noted a continued opposition to slavery in Old Dominion. Writing about his experiences on a visit to the state in 1824, Lafayette postulated 'that slavery cannot subsist much longer in Virginia; for the principle is condemned by all enlightened men; and when public opinion condemns a principle, its consequences cannot long continue'.⁵⁴ Evidence buttresses Lafayette's claim. The number of anti-slavery societies in Virginia undoubtedly rose in the 1820s. In fact, there were over 100 anti-slavery groups in southern states in 1827, many of which existed in Virginia. Old Dominion had only hosted one such society three years earlier.⁵⁵

Numerous denunciations of slavery were articulated by Virginian representatives on both state and national levels. Congressman William Giles certainly described the system as 'an evil, for which no sufficient remedy has yet been found' in the aftermath of the Missouri Crisis.⁵⁶ Another delegate, John Randolph, joined Giles in privately decrying slavery. Indeed, Randolph recorded that 'From my early childhood, all my feelings and instincts were in opposition to slavery in every shape'.⁵⁷ John Marshall's later

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.19.

⁵³ 'From the Enquirer. Missouri Question - Settled!', in *The Petersburg Republican*, Volume 15, Number 1984, 10 March 1820, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=PR18200310>.

⁵⁴ A. Levasseur (ed.), *Lafayette in America, in 1824 and 1825: or, Journals of Travels in the United States*, Vol. 1 (New York: White, Gallaher & White, 1829), p.222. Retrieved from *Google Books*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=CjmGkab10nUC&pg>.

⁵⁵ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.143.

⁵⁶ W. B. Giles, 'Letter to Marquis de Lafayette', Richmond, 20 August 1829, in W. B. Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1829), p.10. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100734248>.

⁵⁷ W. W. Seaton & J. Gales (eds.), *Register of Debates in Congress, Comprising the Leading Debates and Incidents of the First Session of the Nineteenth Congress: Together with an Appendix, Containing the Most Important State Papers and Public Documents*, Vol. 2 (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1826), p.118; D. J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.91.

correspondence contained similar denunciations. Writing to Marquis de Lafayette in 1825, the lawyer averred that the abolition of black servitude 'must be dear to the heart of every philanthropist, and of every well wisher to the United States'.⁵⁸ A year later, Marshall informed Timothy Pickering of his fear that 'nothing portends more calamity & mischief to the Southern states than their slave population'.⁵⁹

James Monroe also affirmed his aversion to slavery in the closing years of his life. Thus, he labelled the system an 'evil' in 1829.⁶⁰ Accordingly, Monroe argued that Virginia should do 'all that was in her power to do, to prevent the extension of slavery, and to mitigate its evils'.⁶¹ Likewise, James Madison sustained his theoretical distaste for the system. In 1819, Madison declared slavery 'the great evil under which the nation labors', while two years later he denounced it as 'a sad blot on our free country'.⁶² Madison's anti-slavery beliefs were evident again in 1833 when he responded to a letter from Thomas Roderick Dew which had defended slavery. Madison rebuked Dew in his reply for failing to acknowledge that the institution had contributed to 'the depressed condition of Virginia'.⁶³ He was particularly keen to stress his opposition to the institution when speaking to critics of slavery. In a letter written to Frances Wright in 1825, Madison averred 'that no merit could be greater than that of devising a satisfactory remedy for it'.⁶⁴ Equally, English tourist Harriet Martineau recorded that Madison 'talked more on the subject of slavery than on any other, acknowledging without limitation or hesitation all the evils with which it has ever been charged' when she visited the aging statesman in 1835.⁶⁵

Yet, like Jefferson, all these statesmen's distaste for slavery was limited. For instance, Madison suffered from Jefferson's loss of faith in abolition. Harriet Martineau certainly noted that he 'owned himself to be almost in despair' about slavery in 1835.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ J. Marshall, 'To Lafayette', Oak Hill, 26 August 1825, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 10: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1824 - March 1827* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p.199.

⁵⁹ J. Marshall, 'To Timothy Pickering', Washington, 20 March 1826, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 10: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1824 - March 1827* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p.277.

⁶⁰ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.149.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² J. Madison, 'To Robert J. Evans, (Author of the Pieces Published Under the Name of Benjamin Rush.)', Montpelier, 15 June 1819, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 3: 1816-1828 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.138; J. Madison, 'To General La Fayette', 1821, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 3: 1816-1828 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.239; J. Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1921), p.74.

⁶³ J. Madison, 'To Thomas R. Dew', Montpelier, 23 February 1833, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 4: 1828 - 1836 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.275.

⁶⁴ J. Madison, 'James Madison to Frances Wright', 1 September 1825, *Library of Congress: James Madison Papers, 1723-1836*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mjm.21_0303_0305/?sp=1; Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.90.

⁶⁵ H. Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel. In Three Volumes*, Vol. 2 (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), p.5; see appendix 1.6, p.334 for a short biography of Martineau.

⁶⁶ Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, Vol. 2, p.4.

Part of Madison's dilemma was caused by his hostile attitude to anti-slavery campaigners. When writing to Robert Evans in 1819, Madison echoed the Jeffersonian line that slavery should not be abruptly eradicated. In fact, he thought that the dangers of an immediate emancipation were 'so obvious, that there seems to be no difference of opinion on that point'.⁶⁷ Madison's toughening position was evident when Frances Wright visited him in 1828 to discuss the emancipation proposal she had forwarded to him and Jefferson three years earlier. Following their meeting, Madison informed the Marquis de Lafayette - who had championed Wright's attempts to challenge slavery - 'that Miss Wright could expect no further endorsements from him or any other reasonable American'.⁶⁸ Madison even accused anti-slavery activists of strengthening slavery. In 1835 he told a visitor to his Orange County plantation that 'to it alone, we owe not only the lamentable arrest of onward emancipation; but, till it intruded, no Governor in Carolina extolled slavery as a happy balance of her Government, no Virginia professor vindicated its moral advantages'.⁶⁹

Similarly, John Marshall failed to publicly condemn the institution. Indeed, in a letter to Ralph Gurley, Marshall refused to endorse emancipation proposals because he had 'formed a resolution against appearing in print on any occasion'.⁷⁰ Marshall was, though, prepared to register his contempt for abolitionists. In a note of 1835, he claimed that 'the "malignant effects" of "insane fanaticism" would "defeat all practicable good by the pursuit of an unattainable object"'.⁷¹ Likewise, James Monroe opted not to speak about slavery during his Presidency and remained publicly silent throughout the Missouri controversy.⁷² Monroe even pursued policies that strengthened the system. His Government's stance towards British endeavours to abolish slavery in the Caribbean provides a suitable example. In 1824, Monroe affirmed his opposition to the general

⁶⁷ Madison, 'To Robert J. Evans', in Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, Vol. 3, p.133; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.626.

⁶⁸ K. M. Clark, 'James Madison and Slavery', *The James Madison Museum - Orange, Virginia. James Madison Information, Exhibits and Displays*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.jamesmadisonmuseum.org/slavery.html>; J. Madison, 'James Madison to Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette', 20 February 1828, *Library of Congress: James Madison Papers, 1723-1836*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mjm.22_0265_0267/?sp=3.

⁶⁹ C. Ingersoll, 'Speech of Mr. Ingersoll of Pennsylvania', 8 & 9 June 1841, in F. P. Blair & J. C. Rives (eds.), *The Congressional Globe, Containing Sketches of the Debates and Proceedings of the First Session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress*, Vol. 10: *Addition to the Appendix* (Washington: Globe Offices, 1841), p.73. Retrieved from *Google Books*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=tVE9AQAAMAAJ&pg=RA2-PA73&lpg=RA2-PA73#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁷⁰ J. Marshall, 'Colonizing Freed Slaves: To Ralph R. Gurley', Richmond, 14 December 1832, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2001), p.749.

⁷¹ J. Marshall, 'To P. S. Duponceau', Washington, 22 February 1835, in [Anon], *The African Repository and Colonial Journal: Published by Order of the Managers of the American Colonization Society*, Vol. 11: 1835 (Washington: James C. Dunn, 1835), p.188; J. E. Smith, *John Marshall: Definer of a Nation* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1996), p.489; R. K. Faulkner, *The Jurisprudence of John Marshall* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp.50-51.

⁷² H. G. Unger, *The Last Founding Father: James Monroe and a Nation's Call to Greatness* (Cambridge, Ma.: Da Capo Press, 2009), pp.305-306.

emancipation proposed by William Wilberforce, which he argued would 'throw the colonies into confusion, and ruin the people, or that which wishes to prevent it'.⁷³

Virginian Congressmen mirrored this stance. John Randolph certainly rejected calls for an immediate manumission of Virginia's slaves. One of the principal reasons that Randolph opposed a general emancipation was his belief that free blacks would rebel against their former masters. Thus, he 'feared that some measures intended to promote emancipation were unintentionally more likely to lead to racial violence and prove counterproductive'.⁷⁴ Fellow Congressman William Giles further demonstrated the limitations of Virginian leaders. In one letter addressing the issue, Giles stated that maintaining slavery was a 'matter of necessity'.⁷⁵

Jefferson's aversion to public discussions about slavery was equally commonplace. Many representatives were uneasy about the topic being openly broached in 1832. One delegate from Mecklenburg County even proposed 'That the select committee raised on the subject of slaves, free negroes, and the melancholy occurrences growing out of the tragical massacre in Southampton, be discharged from the consideration of all petitions, memorials and resolutions'.⁷⁶ Similarly, Thomas Marshall of Fauquier County attacked those who sought to debate the subject. Marshall asserted that 'He did not seek this discussion; he regretted that a syllable had been uttered on the subject of abolition', for he believed 'it ... will agitate the people'.⁷⁷

Jefferson's contention that ameliorating the condition of slaves should take priority over abolition was also frequently voiced by planters. For instance, Betty Carter Browne of Hanover County penned a letter to her son in 1816 in which she claimed that ensuring slaves were well fed, clothed and housed would guarantee 'the Lord will repay you double, indeed yr conscience will not upbraid you for defrauding the laborer of his hire'.⁷⁸ The growth of this perspective frustrated those who pressed for the eradication of slavery. Accordingly, the anti-slavery Presbyterian pastor J. D. Paxton complained that the prevailing trend amongst his Cumberland County parishioners was 'to maintain that slavery

⁷³ J. Monroe, 'To John Taylor', Washington, 20 May 1824, in W. C. Ford (ed.), 'Letters of James Monroe', in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. 42 (Oct., 1908 - May 1909), p.340.

⁷⁴ Wood, 'John Randolph of Roanoke and the Politics of Slavery', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.113.

⁷⁵ W. B. Giles, 'From the Enquirer, of January 6, 1827. Political Disquisitions. No. 1', in W. B. Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1829), p.1. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100734248>.

⁷⁶ J. A. Chandler, *The Speech of John A. Chandler, (of Norfolk County,) In the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Policy of the State with Respect to her Slave Population: Delivered January 17, 1832* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.3.

⁷⁷ T. Marshall, *The Speech of Thomas Marshall, in the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Abolition of Slavery: Delivered Friday, January 20, 1832* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.5.

⁷⁸ B. Carter Browne, 'Letter', 26 May 1816, Bassett Family Papers, 1728-1923, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B2944a, p.1.

itself was not wrong, provided the slave was not hardly dealt by while held in that condition'.⁷⁹

The Growth of Pro- and Anti-slavery Thought

Paxton's unfavourable portrayal hinted at developments in Virginian views of slavery that became increasingly perceptible as the era advanced. First, the Presbyterian abolitionist alluded to the growing belief that involuntary servitude had been sanctioned by the Bible. Indeed, he estimated that 'Perhaps nine-tenths of those who have at all referred to Scripture on this matter, have felt satisfied that there was nothing wrong in slavery'.⁸⁰ Incidents of persecution were highlighted in Paxton's sermon, with the preacher admitting in the introduction to his missive that he had left Virginia after causing 'some offence, on the subject of Slavery, to a part of the Cumberland Congregation'.⁸¹

Consequently, it is arguable that the reticence of Jefferson and his peers to challenge slavery was attributable to the widespread pro-slavery sentiment that dominated public discourse. The testimony of leading statesmen certainly highlights the maintenance of a pro-slavery thought that went far beyond Jefferson's later ambivalence on the issue. In a letter written in 1827, John Marshall lamented that many of his contemporaries 'seem to cherish the evil and to view with immovable prejudice and dislike every thing which may tend to diminish it'.⁸² Such a position, Marshall thought, suggested that 'The disposition to expel slavery from our bosoms, or even to diminish the evil, does not ... gain strength in the South'.⁸³

Publications of the era highlight the accuracy of Marshall's sentiments. John Taylor of Caroline County undoubtedly concluded that slavery was 'incapable of removal' in his 1814 agricultural journal *Arator*.⁸⁴ Thus, Taylor - who owned over 100 slaves on his Piedmont plantation - claimed that 'To whine over it, is cowardly; to aggravate it, criminal; and to forbear to alleviate it ... foolish'.⁸⁵ Taylor was especially critical of Jefferson's anti-slavery avowals in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. The planter attributed Jefferson's denunciation of the institution to 'the mental fermentations and moral bubbles generated

⁷⁹ J. D. Paxton, *Letters on Slavery: Addressed to the Cumberland Congregation, Virginia* (Lexington: Abraham T. Skillman, 1833), p.7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.v.

⁸² Smith, *John Marshall*, p.489; J. Marshall, 'Slavery and Colonization: To Marquis de Lafayette', Richmond, 2 May 1827, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2001), p.674.

⁸³ Marshall, 'Slavery and Colonization', in Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings*, p.674; Smith, *John Marshall*, p.489.

⁸⁴ J. Taylor, *Arator: Being a Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical & Political, In Sixty-One Numbers* (Georgetown: J. M. Carter, 1814), p.57.

⁸⁵ Taylor, *Arator*, p.118; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.102.

by' the American Revolution.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Taylor denied the possibility of inter-racial war occurring should slavery not be abolished, asserting 'that slaves are too far below, and too much in the power of the master, to inspire furious passions'.⁸⁷

Pro-slavery opinions appeared again in a series of articles composed for the *Richmond Enquirer* by an author writing under the pseudonym 'Caius Gracchus' in 1825 and 1826. To bolster support for slavery, Gracchus instructed his readers to 'Look to the Republics of Rome and Lacedaemon [*sic*]; in both of which, during the proudest days of their freedom, private slavery was tolerated'.⁸⁸ Many correspondents went far further in defending slaveholding than Jefferson ever did. For instance, a letter to the *Richmond Enquirer* in February 1832 criticised abolitionists for delineating 'The evils of slavery' in a manner that was 'ill-timed, at any rate, if not ... unwise, ill-judged and pernicious in the extreme'.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the report refuted the notion that 'Necessity ... imperiously dictates abolition and deportation. On the contrary, we live under an *invincible necessity* to keep them here, and to hold them in subjection'.⁹⁰

Pro-slavery rhetoric was appearing in legislative discussions by the late 1820s. The 1829 constitutional convention represented a sea-change in Virginian attitudes towards the institution, with many delegates openly rebuffing anti-slavery manoeuvres. For example, Benjamin Leigh of Chesterfield County rebuked James Monroe for suggesting that Virginia should seek the help of Congress to eradicate the system. Moreover, Leigh reprimanded critics for asserting 'that slavery is one of the causes of the decline of Virginia'.⁹¹ Officials continued in a similar vein in the 1832 legislative debates, with Thomas Marshall of Fauquier County accusing critics of slavery of acting against the wishes of their constituents. In his lengthy admonishment, Marshall claimed that any abolitionist proposal 'must be sustained by public sentiment'.⁹² Similarly, Thomas Roderick Dew postulated that anti-slavery delegates were threatening 'to overturn or convulse the fabric of society'.⁹³ A withering critique of abolitionist thought was delivered by John Thompson Brown of Petersburg. Brown declared that the cost of effecting a general emancipation and the fact

⁸⁶ Taylor, *Arator*, p.63.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.64.

⁸⁸ [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius in Reference to the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States: First Published in the Richmond Enquirer* (Georgetown, D.C: James C. Dunn, 1827), p.20. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/controversybetwe00caiu>.

⁸⁹ [Anon], *From Richmond Enquirer of 4 February 1832: 'The Letter of Appomatox to the People of Virginia: Exhibiting a Connected View of the Recent Proceedings in the House of Delegates, on the Subject of the Abolition of Slavery; and a Succinct Account of the Doctrines Broached by the Friends of Abolition, in Debate: and the Mischievous Tendency of those Proceedings and Doctrines'* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.21. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/letterofappomato00appo>.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁹¹ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.172.

⁹² Marshall, *The Speech of Thomas Marshall*, p.3.

⁹³ Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, p.8.

that Virginians 'derive our subsistence from the labour of our slaves' made any ideas promoted at the meetings unpalatable.⁹⁴ Endeavouring to undermine the anti-slavery arguments forwarded at the debates, Brown queried whether Thomas Jefferson had been an opponent of slavery. Brown claimed that Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* abolitionist proposal had been 'the day dream of the patriot and the philanthropist' and reasoned: 'Had Mr. Jefferson thought emancipation practicable, why did he never attempt its accomplishment?'⁹⁵

Delegates were not embellishing when they claimed that many of their inhabitants disapproved of anti-slavery thought. Petitions in defence of slaveholders' rights were regularly penned following Jefferson's Presidency. In 1810, more than 200 citizens from Berkeley County appealed for laws concerning black migration to Virginia to be relaxed to enable them to import bondsmen from neighbouring planters in Maryland. The memorialists alleged that the severity of previous legislation had depreciated land values on the Virginian side of the border by almost fifty percent.⁹⁶ It is noteworthy that some who signed the petition only held a small quantity of labourers. For instance, 1810 census returns demonstrate that George Robinson possessed just three slaves.⁹⁷ This buttresses the trend noted in earlier chapters for small and middle ranking Virginians to be as committed to protecting their property rights as wealthier individuals.

Time did not alter perceptions. In January 1832, forty-six citizens from Hanover County composed an angry petition in response to events at the legislative debates on slavery. The signatories alleged that abolitionist schemes mooted at the meeting had 'fill[ed] the whole community with alarm'.⁹⁸ The chief concern of those who presented the appeal was the threat a gradual manumission posed to their financial stability. Accordingly, the petitioners warned that slaveholders would not 'tamely submit to one single act that can in the slightest degree impair their title to that property'.⁹⁹ The rebuke accused emancipationists of unsettling slaves. While bondsmen had previously been 'submissive and easily controlled', they were deemed 'almost wholly unmanageable' as a consequence

⁹⁴ J. T. Brown, *The Speech of John Thompson Brown, in the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Abolition of Slavery: Delivered Wednesday, January 18, 1832* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.6. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/speechofjohnthom1832brow>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁹⁶ Inhabitants: Petition, Berkeley County, 1810-10-13, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁹⁷ Inhabitants: Petition, Berkeley County, 1810-10-13, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4; information about George Robinson is in 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH23-Y47> : accessed 20 October 2017), Geo Robinson, Berkeley, Virginia, United States; citing p. 558, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 66, FHL microfilm 181,426.

⁹⁸ Inhabitants & Freeholders: Petition, Hanover County, 1832-01-30, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

of the conversations in Richmond.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the petition evoked elements of the 'positive good' argument. The inhabitants asserted that Virginia's slave system was not an evil when compared with those in other countries, because 'our slaves are a cheerful & contented race' who were 'strongly attached to their owners'.¹⁰¹

Yet it would be wrong to believe that pro-slavery views went unchallenged. In fact, the era following Jefferson's Presidency witnessed a defining battle between opponents of slavery and those who supported the institution. Consequently, Matthew Mason has emphasised that 'Virginia experienced its strongest antislavery movement in the 1820s, when non-slaveholders centered in the state's western counties campaigned against the power of slaveholders in the state councils'.¹⁰² Tellingly, Jefferson gave little support to either group.

Dissenting denominations continued fronting the anti-slavery crusade. In 1816, the Alexandria County monthly meeting of Quakers published an edict that barred members from owning bondsmen or 'hiring slaves from those who hold them'. Equally, Friends argued for a gradual abolition shortly after the Nat Turner rebellion. Quakers pressed their case aggressively because they believed the insurrection was part of God's judgement against Virginia for maintaining the 'evil' system of slavery.¹⁰³ Other Dissenters joined the Quakers in demonstrating their hostility. In 1818, Virginia's Presbyterian General Assembly released an edict that characterised slavery 'as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature ... and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and precepts of the Gospel of Christ'.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Presbyterian pastor John Paxton described the system as 'a great evil' because 'on the one hand it deprives the slave of the proper inducements to industry, and on the other, frees the master from the needful checks to his evil passions'.¹⁰⁵ Even criticism from his peers failed to dent Paxton's enthusiasm. Responding to accusations that he had attacked the system imprudently prior to leaving his Cumberland County post in 1826, Paxton questioned whether his detractors were 'fully satisfied that they themselves are zealous enough?'¹⁰⁶ Paxton also challenged arguments

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² M. Mason, 'Necessary but Not Sufficient: Revolutionary Ideology and Antislavery Action in the Early Republic', in J. C. Hammond & M. Mason (eds.), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p.20.

¹⁰³ Society of Friends (Quakers): Petition, 1831-12-14, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-3; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.199 details earlier Quaker endeavours in Alexandria.

¹⁰⁴ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.126.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.8 & 10.

that Christianity sanctioned slavery by highlighting that ‘Many passages may be found in the Bible fully as strong in favour of monarchy and despotism, as can be found in favour of slavery’.¹⁰⁷

An element of religious opposition to slavery was demonstrated by the backing that attended the abolitionist exhortations of the Congregationalist preacher Ebenezer Burgess. The minister received praise for delivering a sermon in 1817 in which he claimed that Virginian planters ‘represent *tyrants*’ for owning slaves in contravention of the ideals espoused in the Declaration of Independence.¹⁰⁸ Burgess’ denunciation referenced Jefferson’s fear of divine intervention should planters not act against the system. In one passage, Burgess wrote: ‘Let us recollect that there is a *God*, that judges in the Earth, and holds the destiny of nations in his hands’.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, he concluded: ‘It is not absolutely *right*, to devise some remedy for this evil, but it is absolutely necessary’.¹¹⁰

Virginians from all backgrounds continued espousing anti-slavery sentiments. Indeed, the lawyer and Congressman George Tucker wrote a letter in 1815 which criticised Jefferson for not emancipating his slaves and for asserting the inferiority of African-Americans.¹¹¹ Furthermore, over 200 citizens from Frederick and Berkeley counties petitioned the Virginian legislature in 1828 asking for the 1806 anti-manumission laws to be rescinded. The signatories asserted that they had ‘long regarded’ the undermining of the 1782 emancipation bill ‘as a grievance, and as a departure from sound and liberal policy’.¹¹² Another petition was forwarded by sixty-two signatories describing themselves as ‘the subscribing females of the county of Augusta’ in 1832. The women concluded that the institution needed eradicating following Nat Turner’s insurrection, which had represented ‘a partial enactment [*sic*] of a widely projected scheme of carnage’. Therefore, they appealed for lawmakers to create an ‘efficient measure ... for its ultimate object, the extinction of slavery from among us’.¹¹³

Moreover, anti-slavery newspapers were formed following Jefferson’s retirement. In 1817, *The Genius of Liberty* was founded in Loudoun County. Frequent denunciations of the institution appeared in the bi-weekly publication, which was heavily influenced by

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁰⁸ E. Burgess, *Moral and Political Observations, Addressed to the Enlightened Citizens of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1817), p.2. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009834212>.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹¹¹ G. Tucker, ‘George Tucker Criticises Jefferson’s Views of Racial Differences’, in W. L. Rose (ed.), *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p.76; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.98.

¹¹² Inhabitants of Berkeley & Frederick: Petition, Berkeley County, 1828-01-02, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹¹³ Females of Augusta: Petition, Augusta County, 1832-01-19, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

Quaker perspectives. One early author, writing under the pseudonym 'Junius', affirmed his desire to 'draw the veil of eternal oblivion over the disgusting scene, and blot from the memory of man the name of *slavery*'.¹¹⁴ Another correspondent, using the name 'Common Sense', denigrated slavery for being a system 'which cannot be supported upon the principles of republicanism and which is a violation of ... *justice*' and 'ought to be *abolished*'.¹¹⁵

The Genius reserved special criticism for those who continued to be involved in the international slave trade, despite it being illegal in the United States. An editorial for the 28 July 1818 edition of the newspaper characterised slave traffickers as being 'Cruel as death, insatiable as the grave ... A Christian broker in the trade of blood'.¹¹⁶ A year later, another article - printed from *Niles' Independent Register* - described slave traders as '*an enemy of the human race, without any claim to society but for a gibbet*'.¹¹⁷ Similar sentiments were voiced in *The Petersburg Republican*, which appealed for the publication of '*the place of residence of every wretch that may be taken in this diabolical trade*'.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, Virginian statesmen openly condemned the institution. Denunciations were commonplace at the 1832 slavery debates. One critique was articulated by John Chandler of Norfolk County. Chandler rejected a notion preventing slavery being discussed at the meetings, for he believed that assenting to the measure 'would be a declaration to the world, that Virginia ... is possessed of an evil ... which her politicians dare not consult'.¹¹⁹ Chandler claimed that he was acting with the support of his constituents, declaring: 'I took occasion to observe, that I believed the people of Norfolk county would rejoice, could they ... see some scheme for the gradual removal of this *curse* from our land'.¹²⁰

Numerous delegates from western counties followed Chandler's lead. Philip A. Bolling of Buckingham County averred 'that slavery was *a blighting, withering curse, that robs Virginia of her wealth, honor and prosperity*', while Charles J. Faulkner of Berkeley

¹¹⁴ 'Junius, No. 1. To the People of Virginia', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 43, 4 November 1817, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=GL18171104>.

¹¹⁵ Common Sense, 'On Internal Improvement. No. 2', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 39, 13 October 1818, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=GL18181013>.

¹¹⁶ *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 29, 28 July 1818, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=GL18180728>.

¹¹⁷ 'From *Niles' Register*. Mitigation of Slavery, No. III. Proposition the Second', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 21, 8 June 1819, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=GL18190608>.

¹¹⁸ 'Slave Trade', in *The Petersburg Republican*, Volume 15, Number 2007, 2 June 1820, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virinia?a=d&d=PR18200602>.

¹¹⁹ Chandler, *The Speech of John A. Chandler*, p.3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.4.

County asserted that he was 'gratified that no gentleman has yet risen in this Hall, the advocate of slavery' because 'the slaveholding portion of this commonwealth' had been left 'barren, desolate, and scarred'.¹²¹ Faulkner even evoked Thomas Jefferson in an endeavour to persuade his fellow Virginians to act, declaring: 'In the language of the wise, prophetic Jefferson ... "YOU MUST ADOPT SOME PLAN OF EMANCIPATION, OR WORSE WILL FOLLOW"'.¹²² A comparable critique was outlined by Henry Berry of Jefferson County, who thought that slavery was 'a grinding curse upon this state'.¹²³ Consequently, the western statesman suggested that Virginia adopt a plan 'To liberate the after-born', noting that it had 'been recommended by the immortal Jefferson, whose counsels we have followed in so many things, with such signal benefits'.¹²⁴

Thomas Jefferson Randolph, representative for Albemarle County, also went further in opposing slavery than his famous grandfather. Jefferson Randolph used the debates of 1832 to forward a manumission proposal. The scheme called for Virginians to vote on whether to enact a bill whereby 'the children of all female slaves, who may be born in this state on or after the 4th day of July, 1840, shall become the property of the commonwealth, the males at the age of twenty-one, and females at the age of eighteen'.¹²⁵ Jefferson Randolph had previously led Albemarle citizens in petitioning for the gradual abolition of slavery following the Nat Turner revolt. Groups from Warwick, Buckingham, Loudoun and Augusta counties joined Randolph in appealing for the eradication of the institution.¹²⁶

In many respects, James Monroe's opposition to slavery became more aggressive than Jefferson's. For example, while Jefferson rejected federal intervention in any abolitionist proposal, Monroe was prepared to accept assistance from the national government. Indeed, at the 1829 Virginian constitutional convention, Monroe postulated that state leaders should contemplate receiving aid from the American government to help find a solution to the problems presented by the institution.¹²⁷ Monroe felt that it was the duty of all Americans to 'share in the burden of emancipation', as it would impact the entire nation.¹²⁸ John Marshall's position was broadly similar. In one letter, Marshall

¹²¹ W. Crane, *Anti-Slavery in Virginia: Extracts from Thos. Jefferson, Gen. Washington and Others Relative to the "Blighting Curse of Slavery."* (Baltimore: J. F. Weishampel & Sons, 1865), pp.7 & 8. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/antislaveryinvir00lccran>.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹²³ H. Berry, *The Speech of Henry Berry, (of Jefferson,) in the House of Delegates of Virginia, on the Abolition of Slavery* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1832), p.2. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/speechofhenryber1832berr>.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹²⁵ [Anon], *From Richmond Enquirer of 4 February 1832: 'The Letter of Appomatox to the People of Virginia'*, p.9.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹²⁷ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, pp.172-173; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.92.

¹²⁸ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.174; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.115.

lamented the 'unfortunate political prejudices' that prevented Virginians 'from asking the aid of the federal government'.¹²⁹

Monroe and Jefferson disagreed on other matters. For instance, Monroe felt public discussions about slavery should be permitted. He asserted that debates on the topic were merited, for 'I consider the question of slavery as one of the most important that can come before this body: it is certainly one which must deeply affect the Commonwealth'.¹³⁰ Nor did Jefferson's stance during the Missouri Crisis reflect Monroe's. Despite agreeing with many of the sentiments expressed by Virginians during the controversy, Monroe - in his capacity as American President - recognised the need to make concessions to northern perspectives.¹³¹ Thus, he rejected the common Virginian view that Maine should only be admitted to the American Union if Missouri acceded as a slave state. In a letter sent to James Barbour on 3 February 1820, Monroe stressed 'that the best course for our Union, and for that also of the Southern States, will be to separate the two questions at once, and to admit Maine'.¹³²

When assessing these developments, it is necessary to remember that Jefferson had passed away three years before the 1829 convention. Had he survived, it is possible that he may have felt emboldened to attack slavery one final time. Yet all the evidence from the previous forty years makes it unlikely that he would have changed his stance again. In fact, he had told Edward Coles that he was too old to become involved in the anti-slavery movement in 1814.¹³³

More damagingly for Jefferson's reputation, masters from various backgrounds continued manumitting their labourers, despite the endeavours of legislators to prevent the growth of Virginia's free African-American population. For instance, Edward Coles moved to Illinois to release ten slaves in 1819.¹³⁴ Further, Coles provided land and manual training to ensure his former workers' integration into white society.¹³⁵ Coles' anti-slavery work was not limited to private liberations. Indeed, he campaigned for a nationwide emancipation while serving as a politician in Illinois.¹³⁶ Coles endeavoured to enrol Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in his battle against slavery. Writing to Jefferson in July 1814,

¹²⁹ J. Marshall, 'To Edward C. Marshall', in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions: January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.147; Smith, *John Marshall*, p.489.

¹³⁰ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.172.

¹³¹ [Anon] (ed.), 'Missouri Compromise', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.6.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹³³ Jefferson, 'To Edward Coles', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.494.

¹³⁴ P. Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker's Plan to End Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), p.1221; H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.235; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.170.

¹³⁵ Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.58.

¹³⁶ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.170.

Coles 'beseech[ed]' his correspondent 'to exert your knowledge and influence, in devising, and getting into operation, some plan for the gradual emancipation of Slavery'.¹³⁷ Coles thought that 'This difficult task could be less exceptionably, and more successfully performed by the revered Fathers of all our political and social blessings, than by any succeeding statesmen'.¹³⁸

Others - like the Cumberland County pastor J. D. Paxton - followed Coles' lead. Paxton, who possessed 'one or two families of slaves' through marriage, resolved 'to prepare our slaves for freedom' in 1826, having been convinced that it was his 'duty to free said slaves, as soon as it could be done to their apparent advantage'.¹³⁹ A larger manumission was undertaken by the British-born planter Samuel Gist. Gist had penned a will in 1808 pertaining to the manumission of his bondsmen after his death. Gist owned 274 slaves at the time of his passing in 1815. He also requested that the annual profits from his vast estate be divided amongst his former labourers, who were to inherit an additional £50 'for the purpose of instructing the whole of the said slaves and their issue in the Christian religion . . . and upon trust to apply the residue thereof in establishing schools for the education of the children and issue of the said slaves'.¹⁴⁰

It remained common for emancipators to provide financial support to their former workers. Accordingly, Joseph Holmes' 1811 will stated: 'it is my ... desire that my negro man Lemon shall have and enjoy his freedom after my death; and, for his attention and friendship during my illness, that he shall have my sorrel horse, with a saddle and bridle, and ten dollars in cash'.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, David Anderson of Petersburg liberated Jingo and bequeathed him 'a support of three hundred dollars per annum' in 1812.¹⁴² Equally, all four slaves who had formerly belonged to John Bull Senior of Accomack County were freed in January 1815 following the death of their master. Bull, too, asked for a \$20 legacy to be granted to the four labourers.¹⁴³ Acts of emancipation continued to be undertaken after the Missouri Crisis. For instance, George Redford's slaves were freed following his death in

¹³⁷ E. Coles, 'Letter from Edward Coles to Thomas Jefferson', Washington, 31 July 1814, in J. Jefferson Looney (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, Vol. 7: 28 November 1813 - 30 September 1814 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), p.503.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.4.

¹⁴⁰ Pearkes, Martin & Mary (formerly Anderson); & Fowke, William & Elizabeth: Petition, Hanover County, 1815-12-14, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-4. The quote appears on pp.3-4.

¹⁴¹ H. T. Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, Vol. 1: *Cases from the Courts of England, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky* (Washington, D. C.: Published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), p.128.

¹⁴² Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1812-12-14, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁴³ Billy, Moses, Lunnon, & George: Petition, Accomack County, 1815-12-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Bull Snr appears in the 1810 census accounts as possessing four bondspeople. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH23-VYS> : accessed 2 January 2018), John Bull, St George, Accomack, Virginia, United States; citing p. 12, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 66, FHL microfilm 181,426.

1828. Redford's will, which had originally been produced in 1818, pertained to the liberation of more than twenty labourers and provided 'for the support of Milly a lunatick [*sic*] ten dollars per year'.¹⁴⁴

As with earlier eras, multiple factors motivated those who manumitted their slaves. Many freed individual labourers in recognition of their hard work. In 1811, the Petersburg planter Walter Stott released fifty-year-old Bridget 'for divers [*sic*] good causes'.¹⁴⁵ Likewise, Edmund Edrington of Staunton liberated his twenty-two-year-old slave, Lavinia, in 1817 and promised the future emancipation of her four children as a consequence of the bondswoman's 'meritorious services, honesty and good behavior [*sic*]'.¹⁴⁶ A particularly emotive appeal came from Mary Austen of Hanover County. In 1817, Austen requested that the Virginia General Assembly allow her to manumit fifteen-year-old Amanda once she had reached adulthood. Austen explained that she had 'formed ... a strong and ... lasting attachment' to Amanda following the death of the slaves' mother. Further, she had nursed Amanda through long-term illness and wished to see the bondswoman enjoy freedom in the state.¹⁴⁷ Others liberated labourers to reunite them with relatives. Thus, John Poindexter of Louisa County emancipated John in 1814 so that he could live with his mother, Jane, who the planter had released previously.¹⁴⁸ Regardless of their motivations, these cases show that owners remained able to undertake liberations as the nineteenth century progressed. Regrettably, Jefferson lacked the desire to do similar.

Finally, slaves continued to demonstrate their desire for liberty by purchasing their freedom and the release of loved ones. For example, William Thompson of Washington County in West Virginia released his male slave, Burke, in 1811 after receiving \$400 from the bondsman.¹⁴⁹ A year later, Robin Justice of Accomack County bought his wife and two children from Henry Parker and successfully appealed for state legislators to permit the family to remain in Virginia.¹⁵⁰ For those whose masters denied the chance of liberty, running away remained the only option. War again proved useful to absconders. Indeed, it is estimated that 3,400 slaves from Virginia's eastern seaboard fled their plantations to gain

¹⁴⁴ Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.155.

¹⁴⁵ Bridget: Deed of Emancipation, Petersburg, 1811, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁴⁶ Lavinia: Deed of Emancipation, Staunton, 1817, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁴⁷ Austin, Mary: Petition, Hanover County, 1817-12-02, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

¹⁴⁸ John: Deed of Manumission, Louisa County, 1814, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹⁴⁹ Burke: Petition, Washington County, 1815-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1 outlines the circumstances of Burke's emancipation.

¹⁵⁰ Eve: Deed of Manumission, Accomack County, 1812, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

freedom by joining British ranks in the 1812 conflict.¹⁵¹ The fact that so many slaves were prepared to risk their lives to gain liberty demonstrated that African-Americans did not agree with planters like Jefferson who defended slaveholders by claiming that labourers were treated well in comparison with the poor in Europe.

Ownership: 'A great melioration ... in the general treatment of slaves'?¹⁵²

Given his acceptance of the view that improving the condition of Virginia's slaves was more important than the abolition of slavery, Jefferson's actions as a master become particularly significant to our perception of his post-retirement character. In many respects, Jefferson's conduct remained similar to the trends outlined in previous chapters. For instance, he continued providing healthcare for ill labourers. Jefferson certainly sought aid when one hired slave, Tom Buck, became unwell in 1810. Buck had disobeyed Jefferson's orders and gone 'down the country' for a few days before returning to Monticello unwell. His condition deteriorated rapidly thereafter and 'after about 3. Weeks ... had changed so as to threaten mortification'. Consequently, Jefferson sent Buck to Charlottesville to receive three months of treatment from a renowned physician.¹⁵³ Jefferson's *Farm Book* shows that he spent over £7 on Tom during the labourer's sickness, although he was later reimbursed by Buck's owner.¹⁵⁴

Jefferson generally maintained his paternal approach to keeping order amongst his slaves. His records confirm that he still offered incentives to his workers. In August 1811, accordingly, he 'gave John Hemings 15. D. to wit the wages of one month in the year which I allow him as an encouragement'.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Wormley Hughes was appointed Jefferson's head gardener after excelling at Monticello and Burwell Colbert was promoted from the nailery to a role as Jefferson's personal attendant.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, Jefferson sought to improve the living conditions of favoured labourers. Thus, one slave - Edith - had her accommodation upgraded to the cook's room, while another - Peter Hemings - was moved to 'an entirely comfortable and decent' room as reward for good behaviour.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.271.

¹⁵² Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.124.

¹⁵³ T. Jefferson, 'To Genl. Wm. Chamberlayne', Monticello, 17 August 1810, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.30.

¹⁵⁴ T. Jefferson, 'To William Chamberlayne', Monticello, 6 January 1811, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), pp.32-33.

¹⁵⁵ T. Jefferson, 'From Account Book, 1811', in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.34.

¹⁵⁶ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.93.

¹⁵⁷ Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race'", in *Early American Studies*, p.184.

Contemporaries still reported that Jefferson was not a cruel master. One of Monticello's overseers, Edward Bacon, certainly affirmed that Jefferson 'was always very kind and indulgent to his servants' because 'He would not allow them to be at all overworked, and he would hardly ever allow one of them to be whipped'. In fact, Bacon claimed that his employer 'could not bear to have a servant whipped, no odds how much he deserved it'.¹⁵⁸ Bacon's testimony is supported by Jefferson's treatment of Phil Hubbard, who had absconded from an outlying plantation in Poplar Forest. Hubbard expected to be punished upon his return. However, Jefferson ordered his overseer - Jeremiah Goodman - to practise clemency, reasoning: 'Altho I had let them all know that their runnings away should be punished ... Phill's character is not that of a runaway. I have known him from a boy and that he has not come off to skulk from his work'.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, when Hercules fled Monticello in 1813, Jefferson instructed overseers not to whip the absconder, for it was 'his first folly in this way'.¹⁶⁰

Jefferson always maintained that he was a kind planter. This helped him to rationalise his ownership of slaves and acted as a defence when negative events happened at Monticello. Thus, despite admitting to a growing number of fatalities amongst his labourers following a cold winter, Jefferson assured his plantation manager - Joel Yancey - that his bondsmen were 'well fed, and well clothed, & I have no reason to believe that any overseer ... has over worked them' in 1819.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, Jefferson's correspondence did not always support this positive perspective. His post-Presidency writings revealed a callous interest in the value of his workforce. For instance, in the above letter to Yancey, Jefferson stated: 'I consider the labor of a breeding woman as no object, and that a child raised every 2. years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man'. Consequently, he directed Yancey 'to inculcate upon the overseers that it is not their labor, but their increase which is the first consideration with us'.¹⁶² A further dispatch composed to John Eppes the following year re-iterated this belief. In the correspondence, Jefferson wrote: 'I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man of the

¹⁵⁸ E. Bacon, 'Jefferson at Monticello: The Private Life of Thomas Jefferson', in J. A. Bear Jr. (ed.), *Jefferson at Monticello: Recollections of a Monticello Slave and a Monticello Overseer* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), p.97; Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness'", in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.158.

¹⁵⁹ T. Jefferson, 'To Jeremiah Goodman', Monticello, 6 January 1815, in J. Jefferson Looney (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, Vol. 8: *1 October 1814 - 31 August 1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p.186; Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness'", in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.158.

¹⁶⁰ T. Jefferson, 'To Jeremiah Goodman', Monticello, 26 July 1813, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.36.

¹⁶¹ T. Jefferson, 'To Joel Yancey', Monticello, 17 January 1819, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.43.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

farm. what [*sic*] she produces is an addition to the capital, while his labors disappear in mere consumption'.¹⁶³

Nor did Jefferson place the well-being of his slaves on a par with his recreational needs. In fact, his accounts during the winter of 1816-17 demonstrate that he spent almost as much money purchasing books for his library as he did on clothing his labourers ('\$480.80, as against \$525.28').¹⁶⁴ Equally, Jefferson traded bondsmen throughout the era. For instance, he borrowed a quantity of workers from General William Chamberlayne in 1810. Furthermore, he recouped just short of £2,000 for selling a female slave and her five children so they could be united with their father in 1815.¹⁶⁵ Jefferson remained keen to utilise the value of his slaves to reduce his debts. Thus, he leased a quantity of slaves in 1824 'at one and two years credit'.¹⁶⁶

Jefferson continued to ruthlessly harass runaways. In 1811, he hired Isham Chisholm to find Jame Hubbard when the slave absconded from Monticello. Jefferson was evidently keen for Hubbard to be returned. In April 1811, one of his overseers, Reuben Perry, advertised for information about Hubbard in the *Richmond Enquirer*.¹⁶⁷ The labourer was eventually located in Pendleton County nearly twelve months after he had fled. Jefferson's response revealed a crueller side to his temperament. Hubbard was taken back to the plantation in irons, before the former President 'had him severely flogged in the presence of his own companions, and committed to jail'.¹⁶⁸ As a consequence of Hubbard's frequent offending, Jefferson reached the conclusion that the bondsman 'will never again serve any man as a slave'. Accordingly, he instructed Reuben Perry that 'it will therefore unquestionably be best for you to sell him'.¹⁶⁹ This disciplinarian side appeared once more in February 1822, when he reported giving Thrimston 'a proper reprimand for his conduct, and assured him' that he would permit his overseer, John Gorman, to administer 'punishment if he should misconduct himself again'.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ T. Jefferson, 'To John W. Eppes', Monticello, 30 June 1820, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.46.

¹⁶⁴ F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.431.

¹⁶⁵ T. Jefferson, 'To Craven Peyton', Monticello, 27 November 1815, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.40; Jefferson, 'To Genl. Wm. Chamberlayne', in Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book*, pp.30-31.

¹⁶⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To Bernard Peyton', Monticello, 5 January 1824, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.47.

¹⁶⁷ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 12-04-1811, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.161.

¹⁶⁸ T. Jefferson, 'To Reuben Perry', Monticello, 16 April 1812, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.35.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ T. Jefferson, 'To John Gorman', Monticello, 8 February 1822, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.46.

Many of these events were commonplace in plantations across Old Dominion. Jefferson's view that the condition of Virginia's slaves had improved was certainly widely held. Indeed, many leading planters evoked arguments that were staples of the 'positive good' thesis. Thus, in a letter penned in March 1819, James Madison claimed that his state's bondsmen were 'better fed, better clad, better lodged, and better treated in every respect' than they had been thirty years earlier.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Congressman William Giles asserted that, although slavery was 'an evil', Virginians could console themselves with the fact that 'This condition must, upon critical examination ... be far less wretched, than it has generally been represented'.¹⁷² Giles' declarations were echoed by Thomas Marshall of Fauquier County in 1832. Marshall asserted: 'The ordinary condition of the slave is not such as to make humanity weep for his lot. Compare his condition with that of the labourer in any part of Europe, and you will find him blessed with a measure of happiness, nearly, if not altogether equal'.¹⁷³

Some anti-slavery campaigners conceded that elements of slaveholder conduct had improved since 1800. For instance, J. D. Paxton acknowledged: 'All the accounts which I have heard, and all my observation, satisfies me, that a great melioration has taken place in the general treatment of slaves'.¹⁷⁴ Visitors to Virginia discerned a comparable improvement. British author Thomas H. Palmer undoubtedly claimed in 1814 that 'The condition of the slaves has of late years been very much ameliorated in Virginia, perhaps as much so [as] is possible with such a large black population'.¹⁷⁵

Like Jefferson, James Madison generally avoided using violence at his Orange County plantation. For instance, Madison's Attorney General Benjamin Rush praised him for being 'a model of kindness to his slaves' during a visit to Montpelier in 1816.¹⁷⁶ Equally, Harriet Martineau recorded that observers had been surprised by Madison's willingness to allow his slaves to attend Church, having been convinced 'that slaves were always whipped all day long'.¹⁷⁷ The testimony of Paul Jennings, one of Madison's bondsmen, buttresses these portrayals. In his memoirs, Jennings detailed how Madison was 'one of the best' masters 'that ever lived. I never saw him in a passion, and never knew him to strike a slave

¹⁷¹ J. Madison, 'To Robert Walsh', Montpelier, 2 March 1819, in G. Hunt (ed.), *The Writings of James Madison: Comprising his Public Papers and Private Correspondence, Including Numerous Letters and Documents now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 8: 1808 - 1819 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p.247; Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.77; S. Dunn, *Dominion of Memories: Jefferson, Madison and the Decline of Virginia* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), p.50; A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.636.

¹⁷² Giles, 'Letter to Marquis de Lafayette', in Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies*, p.10.

¹⁷³ Marshall, *The Speech of Thomas Marshall*, pp.5-6.

¹⁷⁴ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.124.

¹⁷⁵ J. C. Wyllie (ed.), "'Observations Made during a Short Residence in Virginia": In a Letter from Thomas H. Palmer, May 30, 1814', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Oct., 1968), p.398.

¹⁷⁶ Brant, *The Fourth President*, p.599.

¹⁷⁷ Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, Vol. 2, p.7.

... neither would he allow an overseer to do it'. Jennings added: 'Whenever any slaves were reported to him as stealing or "cutting up" badly, he would send for them and admonish them privately, and never mortify them by doing it before others'.¹⁷⁸ Madison's will illustrated that he also maintained Jefferson's desire to keep slave families together. In the document, Madison stated that he did not want bondsmen traded without their 'consent ... except that infant children may be sold with their parent who consents for them to be sold with him or her'.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the former President - matching Jefferson's dilemma - was forced to sell sixteen slaves to a family member in 1834 in order to reduce his debts.¹⁸⁰

John Randolph's statements suggest that the Congressman entertained many of Jefferson's views regarding the treatment of slaves. Randolph certainly embraced the paternalist vision of plantation life. In one letter, he emphasized that good conduct towards a bondsman 'was to make him do a fair day's work, and to treat him with all the kindness compatible with due subordination. By that means, the master could afford to clothe and feed him well, and take care of him in sickness and old age'.¹⁸¹ Similarly, in a dispatch of November 1824, Randolph described how his 'servant Johnny' had 'been a treasure to me'.¹⁸²

James Monroe was another leading Virginian who requested that his overseers avoid violent punishment. For example, Monroe averred that his African-American bondsmen 'ought not to be treated with barbarity' in a note to Doctor Charles Everett in 1812.¹⁸³ Equally, he cautioned his brother against using 'any such improper conduct' in the punishment of a slave who had fled Ash-Lawn Highland plantation.¹⁸⁴ Monroe's behaviour was like Jefferson's in other respects. He undoubtedly ensured that slave families were not forced apart through sale. Indeed, in March 1823 he instructed an overseer that his workers 'would be sold in families' should he need to raise funds.¹⁸⁵ Slave accommodation on Monroe's Oak Hill farms was also of a comparable standard to that available at Monticello. Jefferson even acknowledged that Monroe's dwellings were 'much better built

¹⁷⁸ P. Jennings, 'A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison', in J. Mitchell (ed.), *A Coloured Man's Perspectives of James Madison with a Discussion of Slave Life: Or, Illustrations of the Peculiar Institution an Original Compilation* (Washington: Historic Publishing, 2017), p.18.

¹⁷⁹ D. R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.318.

¹⁸⁰ McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, pp.255-256; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.607.

¹⁸¹ Wood, 'John Randolph of Roanoke', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.133.

¹⁸² J. Randolph, 'Letter', 4 November 1824, Page, Gabriella (1874-1949), collector, papers, 1786-1891, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2P1424b, p.1.

¹⁸³ J. Monroe, 'To Dr. Charles Everett', Washington, 23 March 1812, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 5: 1807 - 1816 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p.202; Unger, *The Last Founding Father*, p.306.

¹⁸⁴ G. W. Gawalt, 'James Monroe, Presidential Planter', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (Apr., 1993), p.264.

¹⁸⁵ A. Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (March 1999), p.569; Gawalt, 'James Monroe, Presidential Planter', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.264.

than usual'.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Monroe 'callously sold slaves whenever he needed cash'. On one occasion he allowed Peter Carr to purchase '2 girls who are with their gd. mother', as he required money 'to pay a considerable sum to some Jews in Richmond'.¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, John Marshall afforded his workers medical help when it was required. For instance, he recorded that he had 'called in the aid of eminent physicians' to attend to a female servant who was suffering from 'a swollen inflamed and ulcerated leg' in 1831.¹⁸⁸ Eventually the affliction was cured by some ointment recommended by a local Doctor. However, as the slave was still reporting itching in the affected region, Marshall requested that the manufacturer of the cream send extra supplies.¹⁸⁹ This apparent concern for slave health did not stop Marshall selling slaves at an auction in 1834. The release of his slaves was aimed at clearing his debts, for Marshall instructed his son 'to allow creditors to bid' at the event.¹⁹⁰

As was evident in earlier eras, apparently lenient treatment was handed out as much for the benefit of the master as it was concern for the wellbeing of slaves. John Taylor's *Arator* provides a revealing insight into the mind of a wealthy Virginian planter. In a chapter concerning agriculture, Taylor outlined what he believed constituted good practice amongst owners. His recommendations broadly reflected Jefferson's. Arguing that 'Animal labor is brought to its utmost value, by being completely supplied with the necessaries and comforts required by its nature', Taylor appealed for Virginian masters to furnish their bondsmen with 'A regular supply of a winter's coat, jacket and breeches ... two oznaburg shirts, a good hat and blanket every other year, two pairs of stockings annually, a pair of shoes, a pair of summer overalls, and a great coat every third year'.¹⁹¹ From an accommodation perspective, Taylor requested that dwellings 'be of brick walls, able to withstand hard usage and remain tight ... making each a room sixteen or eighteen feet square'.¹⁹² Equally, he requested that slaves be granted a varied diet, incorporating 'salt meat, boiled into a soup with peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, cimblins or

¹⁸⁶ T. Jefferson, 'Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe', Monticello, 21 February 1823, *National Archives: Founders Online*, last modified 26 November 2017, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3348>; Gawalt, 'James Monroe, Presidential Planter', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.269.

¹⁸⁷ Gawalt, 'James Monroe, Presidential Planter', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, pp.264 & 266.

¹⁸⁸ J. Marshall, 'To William W. Gray', Richmond, 30 May 1831, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.70.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ J. Marshall, 'To James K. Marshall', Richmond, 19 May 1834, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.411.

¹⁹¹ Taylor, *Arator*, pp.122 & 123.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.122.

pumpkins' at least once every day. 'Bread alone', the Caroline planter thought, 'ought never to be considered as a sufficient diet for slaves, except as a punishment'.¹⁹³

As the examples of Jefferson, Madison and Marshall highlight, moderate treatment did not make slaves immune from being traded. Consequently, auctions were a regular event throughout the epoch. It is rare to read a newspaper of the era and not see at least one notification concerning an upcoming slave auction. Large numbers of slaves could be placed for sale at such events. In one advertisement of 1819, W. M. Moore notified readers of *The Petersburg Republican* that he was selling 'On Monday the 29th of March, at eleven o'clock ... from 25 to 30 NEGROES ... among which are many valuable house servants, seamstresses, and cooks - some of the men are carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, etc'.¹⁹⁴

With the continued decline of tobacco exports, Virginian planters increasingly relied on the internal slave market to increase revenue. This is exemplified by the fact that around 45,000 bondsmen were sold by Old Dominion's masters in the decade after 1810.¹⁹⁵ Trading occurred frequently between Virginian planters. For instance, Benjamin Brand of Richmond endeavoured to sell four of his labourers to Martin Dawson in 1819. Brand informed Dawson that he had originally obtained the slaves for '\$2535', noting that 'In purchasing these negroes I had to overbid the neighbours who were well acquainted with them'.¹⁹⁶ Brand was clearly keen to obtain money by selling his slaves, for he offered Dawson workers on outlying plantations, including one, named Peter, for \$825.¹⁹⁷ Large sums were also spent on procuring slaves. For example, Jesse Nalle of Culpeper County paid \$750 to purchase two labourers - Paris and James - in 1813. Three years later, Nalle bought Daniel for \$500 from Philip Clayton.¹⁹⁸ Equally, Thomas M. Bayly acquired four

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹⁹⁴ W. Moore, 'Sale of Negroes', in *The Petersburg Republican*, Volume 14, Number 1878, 16 March 1819, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=PR18190316>.

¹⁹⁵ 'An Advertisement for the Sale of Eleven Slaves, February 17, 1812', *Education at Library of Virginia: Shaping the Constitution*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/slavead contains numbers of slaves sold; D. R. Egerton, 'Markets Without a Market Revolution: Southern Planters and Capitalism', in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 1996), p.210; K. M. Bailor, 'John Taylor of Caroline: Continuity, Change, and Discontinuity in Virginia's Sentiments toward Slavery, 1790-1820', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Jul., 1967), p.299.

¹⁹⁶ 'Letter, 1819, of Benjamin Brand to Martin Dawson concerning the sale of African-American slaves in Richmond, Va.', Brand, Benjamin (d. 1843), papers, 1807-1833, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2B7332b, p.1.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹⁹⁸ 'Receipt, 1813, of Jesse Nalle, of Culpeper and Orange Counties, Va., for the purchase of two African-American slaves, Paris and James', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1; 'Deed of sale, 1816, of Philip Clayton of Culpeper County, to Jesse Nalle, of Culpeper and Orange Counties, Va., for the purchase of Daniel, an African-American slave', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1.

slaves, including a mother and her young daughter, for \$1,050 in 1818 to recover the debt owed to him by William Conquest Senior.¹⁹⁹

Likewise, William Bolling of Goochland County was frequently engaged in the trading of bondsmen. Indeed, Bolling hired eight slaves between the ages of 19 and 28 in 1819 and 1820, at a cost of \$5,405. Overall, he spent \$10,712 on procuring slaves between 1819 and 1823.²⁰⁰ Arthur Spencer Brockenburgh of Albemarle County was comparably active. Brockenburgh's diaries demonstrate that the planter was lent four slaves for \$280 in 1822. He rented a further fourteen bondsmen for \$900 the following year.²⁰¹

Numerous high-profile Virginians were involved in the trading of labourers. For instance, Bushrod Washington was condemned by Quakers in a report contained in *The Genius of Liberty* in August 1821. In the article, *The Genius'* editors criticised Washington for helping to transfer around 100 slaves from Loudoun County to the Deep South. In fact, they alleged that nearly half of the 'unhappy wretches were sold by Judge Washington, of Mount Vernon'.²⁰² Bushrod also hunted down runaways. On at least two occasions between 1810 and 1817, Washington appealed for the return of absconders in the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*.²⁰³ Runaway advertisements often demonstrated the negative effect that frequent trading had on slaves. In 1819, Robert Gwathmey of Richmond sought the return of Edmund (aged twenty-four), whom he had recently bought from Landon Carter. Equally, R. C. Weightman of Fairfax County requested information on the whereabouts of Alec, a slave he had purchased from Richard Bland Lee.²⁰⁴

Despite this desire to benefit from the sale of slaves, some masters - like Jefferson - endeavoured to keep families united throughout their transactions. For instance, Ferdinand Campbell Stewart of Williamsburg sent one of his bondsmen, Nace, to deliver a letter to the Westmoreland County planter John Campbell in order to enable the slave 'to see his wife'. In the dispatch, Campbell Stewart voiced his desire to hire out Nace in Westmoreland

¹⁹⁹ Joseph: Bill of Sale, 1818, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁰⁰ Bolling, William (1777-1849), slave register, 1752-1890, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss5:5B6387:1, pp.83-84.

²⁰¹ University of Virginia, Procter Day Book, 1821-1828, Accession ~RG-5/3/2. 102, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va., p.3. Retrieved from *University of Virginia Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u6607353>.

²⁰² 'Postscript', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 32, 21 August 1821, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18211002> discussed Washington's trading of slaves; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.280.

²⁰³ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 15-01-1810, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.131; 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 13-12-1811, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.158.

²⁰⁴ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 08-03-1819, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.323; 'Alexandria Gazette and Daily Advertiser', 14-04-1820, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.331.

'as I do not wish to separate him from his Family'.²⁰⁵ The master kept to his word. In 1825, Campbell Stewart recorded that he was owed \$38.50 by John Payne as payment for hiring Nace.²⁰⁶ Thomas Brown followed a similar course when selling two slaves in 1827. Brown instructed a relative to ensure that Mendith and Sam be sold 'for a fair price' should they 'express a wish to go with their wives'.²⁰⁷ A comparable advertisement for a 'family of Negroes, consisting of a woman and children' in 1818 required that the labourers 'be sold together, to a "good master" only, and not under any circumstances "to a southern trader"'.²⁰⁸

Differences in Slaveholding Conduct

Nonetheless, there are numerous examples of masters acting in ways that differed from Jefferson. Corporal discipline was undoubtedly meted out with greater regularity on other Virginian plantations. Consequently, anti-slavery observers were not always convinced by slaveholders' claims to lenity. The Baptist Reverend Ebenezer Burgess certainly argued that slaves' 'food, their cloathing [*sic*], and their lodging, are all adapted to their masters' ideas of his own pecuniary advantage'.²⁰⁹ Similarly, John Paxton lamented the 'many cases in which the condition of the slave is most hard, where the labour is severe and oppressive, the food and clothing both in kind and quantity not what it ought to be' in his letter to his former parishioners.²¹⁰

Court records outline incidents of extreme cruelty towards slaves. One case was pursued in 1814 by an African-American named George, who alleged that his Powhatan County owner, William Bentley, had 'with force and arms ... made an assault upon the said George plttf and did then and there wound and evil treat the plttf and imprisoned him and kept him in prison there for a long time'.²¹¹ In an unusual act, courts found in favour of George and declared him a free man before ordering Bentley to pay damages to his former slave.²¹² Likewise, Hannah Burk received her freedom in 1818 after Virginian lawmakers adjudged that William Richardson was guilty 'of trespass, assault and battery and false

²⁰⁵ 'Letter, [1817], of Ferdinand Campbell Stewart, of Williamsburg, Va., to John Campbell, of Westmoreland County, Va.', Campbell family papers, 1802-1879, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C1539b, p.1.

²⁰⁶ 'Accounts, 1802-1832, of Ferdinand Campbell Stewart concerning, in part, the hiring out of two African-American slaves', Campbell family papers, 1802-1879, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C1539b, p.4.

²⁰⁷ Brown, Thomas (1785-1867), letter, 1827, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2B8153a1, p.1.

²⁰⁸ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.182.

²⁰⁹ Burgess, *Moral and Political Observations*, p.5.

²¹⁰ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, pp.127-128.

²¹¹ George: Freedom Suit, Powhatan County, 1814, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²¹² *Ibid.*

imprisonment'. Richardson had previously purchased Hannah from Joseph Riddle in 1816 under the proviso that she be liberated. However, the planter refused to adhere to these terms. Four years after the decision, Hannah was recorded as a free African-American in Alexandria's county records.²¹³ These were far from isolated examples. In 1824, those presiding over *Commonwealth v. Booth* found the defendant guilty of 'the excessive, cruel and inhuman infliction of stripes on the slave Bob, while in his possession ... as a hired slave'.²¹⁴ Three years later, judges heard the case of *Commonwealth v. Turner*, in which the defendant was indicted 'for cruelly beating his own slave'.²¹⁵

Comparably disturbing occurrences were highlighted in the findings of two post-mortems undertaken on a young female slave from Chesterfield County in 1812. Initial investigations into the death of Lucy indicated that, although she 'had been severely whipped [*sic*]', this had not directly contributed to her death.²¹⁶ However, a second inquest concluded that the slave's demise had been caused by 'the abuse which the said Lucy received' from her owner, Henry Winfree.²¹⁷ Similar findings appeared in a Powhatan County investigation into the passing of Tom. The inquest detailed that 'numerous Scares [*sic*] & stripes on various parts of his body' had demonstrated that Tom had repeatedly 'been cruelly, and unmercifully whipped [*sic*]' by his master, James Satterwhite.²¹⁸ The last of these assaults was witnessed by Mary Pollock, who reported seeing Satterwhite 'inflict on the body of the said Tom as many as five blows with a cow hide'.²¹⁹ Equally, in 1823, courts in Norfolk County declared that a local slave, Nelly, had 'died in consequence of the severity of whipping inflicted on her by George Halson and others acting in pursuance of his the master's orders'.²²⁰

African-American accounts highlighted the harsh treatment that was frequently perpetrated against bondsmen. In a description published during the American Civil War, former Virginian slave Francis Fedric recalled the way a female labourer had been assaulted by her mistress when she failed to purchase the required amount of eggs for the family at market.²²¹ Fedric also detailed the severe punishment his grandmother endured for

²¹³ D. S. Provine (ed.), *Alexandria County, Virginia: Free Negro Registers, 1797-1861* (Westminster, Va.: Heritage Books, 2012), p.18.

²¹⁴ Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, pp.139-140.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.150.

²¹⁶ Lucy: Coroner's Inquisition, Chesterfield County, 1812-06-08, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1.

²¹⁸ Tom: Coroner's Inquisition, Powhatan County, 1815-01-18, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Nelly: Coroner's Inquisition, Norfolk County, 1823-08-04, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²²¹ F. Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky; or, Fifty years of Slavery in the Southern States of America by Francis Fedric, an Escaped Slave. With Preface, by the Rev. Charles Lee, M. A.* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, and Hunt, 1863), p.2. Retrieved

attending a religious meeting without her master's permission. Fedric's owner ordered that the elderly lady 'be flogged by her own son', who was serving as an overseer. Fedric's grandmother was subjected to a cruel torture, which 'was done by tying her hands before her with a rope, and then fastening the rope to a peach tree, and laying bare the back. Her own son was then made to give her forty lashes with a thong of a raw cow's-hide'.²²² Appeals for the return of runaways outlined the lasting effects of corporal punishment. In 1812, Daniel M'Carty of Chichester County reported that Sam had absconded whilst wearing 'an iron collar and a pair of spancels' as a punishment 'For the heinous [*sic*] crime of attempting to poison the family'.²²³

Furthermore, slaveholder publications inadvertently revealed the disciplinarian streak that frequently materialised when bondsmen were deemed to have misbehaved. For example, John Taylor of Caroline County instructed planters to only feed their slaves bread when members of the community were suspected of stealing. This ploy, Taylor urged, needed to be implemented until the guilty party admitted responsibility or was implicated by his fellow slaves.²²⁴ Once the suspect had been identified, masters were 'to sustain the whole punishment, which must either be corporal, or a sale to some distant place'. Such measures were designed to act as 'an object of terror' to prevent further underhand activities.²²⁵ Overall, Taylor advised 'that a stern authority, strict discipline and complete subordination, must be combined' with work related incentives 'to gain any success at all'.²²⁶

Caleb Ellis of Sussex County provides another example of how masters could discriminate against bondsmen they perceived to be subversive. In his will, Ellis requested 'that my 3 negro men JOE, JACOB and LEWIS be hired out 2 years after my deceased', following which 'It is my will & desire that they be free ... in as full and ample a manner as if they had been born free'.²²⁷ Nonetheless, Ellis refused to liberate Ben, instead requesting that he be sold to add to the value of his estate.²²⁸ Likewise, William Geddy of New Kent County directed that his blacksmith, Charles, be liberated. However, rather than emancipate Charles' family, Geddy requested that 'his wife Eliza and her increase ... be sold

from *Documenting the American South*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/fedric/fedric.html>.

²²² *Ibid.*, p.6.

²²³ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 07-02-1812, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.170.

²²⁴ Taylor, *Arator*, p.125.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ A. H. Griffith (ed.), *Pittsylvania County, Virginia: Register of Free Negroes and Related Documents* (Westminster, Ma.: Heritage Books, 2007), p.233.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.235.

and the money arising from the sales to be equally divided into three parts'.²²⁹ While the liberation assuaged Geddy's conscience, it is doubtful that it helped Charles or his family's emotional wellbeing.

Like Geddy, many masters differed from Jefferson by parting husbands from wives - and parents from children - when purchasing and selling labourers. Appeals for the return of runaways highlighted the prevalence of this trend. For instance, S. Somers reported in a February 1812 edition of the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* that two of his labourers, Hannah and Harry, had gone missing. Somers stated that the slaves' father was owned by 'Edward Washington of Fairfax County'. Their mother - Fanny - had already been freed by Somers, leaving Hannah and Harry without either parent.²³⁰ Two years later, furthermore, John Wilkinson sought to track down Humphrey (forty), who 'is supposed to be lurking about Alexandria as he has a wife living with Mr. Charles Mandkins'.²³¹ Some transactions involved children. In 1818, Littleton Townsend sold his thirteen-year-old slave Jenney for \$440 to William Smart of Accomack County.²³² Equally, Jesse Nalle purchased a fifteen-year-old girl, Cuffey, for \$300 in 1813 and a twelve-year-old boy, Chapman, for \$100 in 1817.²³³

Nalle emerges unfavourably in other aspects. Correspondence from the era demonstrates that some of his slaves were not afforded adequate clothing. Arthur Blackford of Shenandoah County certainly wrote to Nalle in 1819 asking 'permission to acuire [sic] such cloathing as we are granting our ... negroes' for Edmund, whom he had recently hired from Nalle.²³⁴ Blackford requested that the Cumberland County planter permit him to purchase new clothes, for he was 'unwilling to suffer a man in our employ to return home so badly clad as he is at present'.²³⁵

Nevertheless, Jefferson's slaves were inadequately provided for in some respects. For instance, James Monroe appears to have allocated his slaves more food than Jefferson. In 1830, Monroe granted '846 barrels of corn and 7,125 pounds of salted pork' to seventy

²²⁹ Geddy, William (d. 1816), will, 1816, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2G2672a1, p.5.

²³⁰ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 05-02-1812, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.169.

²³¹ 'Alexandria Daily Advertiser, Commercial and Political', 22-11-1814, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.217.

²³² Jenney (F, 13): Bill of Sale, 1818, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²³³ 'Deed of sale, 1817, of James Crigler, of Culpeper County, to Jesse Nalle, of Culpeper and Orange counties, Va., for the purchase of Chapman, an African-American slave', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1; 'Deed of Sale, 1813, of Elizabeth Haynes, Dennis Moseley, and Tully Moseley, of Princess Anne County, Va., to Jesse Nalle of Culpeper and Orange counties, Va., for the purchase of Cuffy, an African-American slaves', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1.

²³⁴ 'Letter, 1819, of Blackford, Arthur & Co. of Isabella Furnace, Shenandoah County, Va., to Jesse Nalle of Culpeper and Orange counties, Va., concerning winter clothing for an African-American slave, Edmund', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

workers on his plantation. Comparably, Jefferson made just '270 barrels of corn' available every year for more than eighty slaves on one of his outlying farms.²³⁶ Slaveholder records also suggest that some nineteenth-century slaves were afforded greater lenity than those residing at Monticello. Betty Carter Browne undoubtedly cautioned her son to ensure that he did 'not exact Labor to their hurt' and 'not let self interest induce you to break the golden rule of doing as you wd be done by' when she was away from the plantation.²³⁷ To guarantee that her correspondent met these objectives, Browne recommended that he furnish his slaves with a diet incorporating 'a barrel of sugar, some supply of hogshead molasses, fish & meat enough to give them a meal a day' as 'this with cyder & spirit in moderation will supply them comfortably'.²³⁸ A comparable endeavour to guarantee that workers received the best possible treatment was evident in a transaction undertaken in 1822. In the agreement, William Haxall of Petersburg announced his desire to sell 'the negroe woman Dinah' to Thomas Pegram to make sure that the bondswoman be kept 'comfortable for the remainder of her life'. The contract between Haxall and Pegram contained the provision that Pegram would pay Haxall a fine of \$100 should he fail 'to take good care of' Dinah and treat her 'kindly'.²³⁹

Equally, labourers on some Virginian plantations were afforded more freedom than Jefferson's. For instance, Jefferson avoided letting his bondsmen publicly practice Christianity. Others, however, granted labourers the right to attend Christian ceremonies. One slave who had been sentenced to death for murdering his master in 1818 even suggested that he would not have committed the crime had his owner permitted him to attend religious meetings, as his two previous masters - John Marshall of Buckingham County and John Hopkins of Frederick County - did.²⁴⁰ Some labourers were granted greater liberty to move around Virginia. On occasions this had a counter-intuitive effect. For example, William Francis of Norfolk County complained that his slave, Hamlet, had ran away after being 'sent to Norfolk on business'.²⁴¹ Such instances demonstrate that slaveholding conduct continued to differ between plantations. These distinctions highlight why it is misleading to perceive Jefferson as representative of broader tendencies.

²³⁶ Gawalt, 'James Monroe, Presidential Planter', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.267.

²³⁷ B. Carter Browne, 'Letter', 26 May 1816, Bassett Family Papers, 1728-1923, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1B2944a, p.1.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ W. Haxall, 'Agreement', Haxall family papers, 1768-1831, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1H3203d, p.1.

²⁴⁰ 'The Dying Confessions of Negroes Randall, London and Sarah', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 30, 4 August 1818, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18180804>.

²⁴¹ 'The Richmond Enquirer', 10-09-1811, in D. Meaders (ed.), *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.165.

'This black mass of ignorance': Race After Jefferson's Retirement²⁴²

Debates over racial identity remained a pivotal aspect of Virginian society in the post-Jeffersonian epoch. Subtle changes in Jefferson's attitude towards African-Americans were occasionally visible in his later correspondence. For instance, he fleetingly advocated racial integration in a letter composed to Frances Wright on 7 August 1825. Wright, an 'English social reformer' visiting America, had requested Jefferson's support for a project to create 'an interracial community' in Tennessee.²⁴³ Jefferson backed the plan, as he thought that it was 'bettering the condition of man'.²⁴⁴ Further, he hinted that his doubts about black intelligence had mellowed, asserting: 'An opinion ... hazarded by some ... that moral urgencies are not sufficient to induce him [the African-American] to labor' was incorrect, for 'It would be a solecism to suppose a race of animals created, without sufficient foresight ... to preserve their own existence'.²⁴⁵ Accordingly, rather than propose his colonization scheme to Wright, Jefferson pleaded that 'Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried' to end slavery.²⁴⁶

However, the letter to Wright represented the pinnacle of Jefferson's perspectives. In fact, his prejudice remained visible in most of his post-retirement statements. Jefferson's belief that black people should not be allowed to form intimate ties with whites was evident in his August 1814 letter to Edward Coles. Corresponding with James Madison's Private Secretary, Jefferson affirmed: 'Their amalgamation with the other color produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent'.²⁴⁷ The dispatch was also noteworthy for statements Jefferson made that denigrated the work ethic and intellectual capacity of African-Americans. Jefferson claimed that free blacks were 'pests in society' because of their 'idleness'. Consequently, he asserted that Virginia's remaining slaves could not be emancipated, for they were 'by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves'.²⁴⁸

Jefferson continued demeaning African-Americans' capabilities in later writings. In a letter of 1820, he asserted that Virginians 'appeared to be "sinking into the barbarism of

²⁴² Taylor, *Arator*, p.120.

²⁴³ J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), p.275.

²⁴⁴ Jefferson, 'To Miss Fanny Wright', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10, p.344.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* contains both quotes.

²⁴⁶ Jefferson, 'To Miss Fanny Wright', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10, p.344; Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.463.

²⁴⁷ Jefferson, 'To Edward Coles', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.495.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.494.

our Indian aborigines," if not "falling into the ranks of our own negroes" due to a lack of adequate education.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, Jefferson's *Autobiography* displayed his continued loathing for inter-racial relationships. In the unpublished memoirs, Jefferson concluded that freed blacks should not be permitted to live with whites because 'Nature, habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them'.²⁵⁰ Thus, despite averring that Virginia's slaves were destined to be emancipated, Jefferson proclaimed 'that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government'.²⁵¹

Jefferson was not alone in maintaining negative perceptions of African-Americans. Observers certainly noted the prevalence of popular prejudice in Virginia. In 1815, the lawyer and Congressman George Tucker commented that parallel opinions to Jefferson's statements on African-American inferiority in *Notes on the State of Virginia* were 'too popular here'.²⁵² Visitors to Virginia denounced the lack of compassion that whites showed towards African-Americans. For instance, one French traveller lamented that there were many 'who calmly tell us, that negroes have no feelings'.²⁵³ Indeed, the author complained that the indifference of many Virginians to the plight of their slaves originated from 'the different complexion of his skin'.²⁵⁴ Similarly, Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited Virginia in the early 1830s, recorded his disappointment at the 'depth and virulence of white prejudice throughout the United States'.²⁵⁵

African-Americans related the continuing prejudice they were subjected to. Speaking during the American Civil War, Francis Fedric recalled how a former master had told him and other young bondsmen: 'you have no souls, you are just like those cattle, when you die there is an end of you; there is nothing more for you to think about than living. White people only have souls'.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, anti-slavery activists conceded that a general emancipation could not be enacted with 'the existing prejudice against having a

²⁴⁹ T. Jefferson, 'To Joseph C. Cabell', Poplar Forest, 28 November 1820, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence and Papers, 1816 - 1826* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), p.170; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.38.

²⁵⁰ Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.41; P. M. Zali (ed.), *Jefferson on Jefferson* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), p.ix contains details about Jefferson's autobiography.

²⁵¹ Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.41; Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.9.

²⁵² Tucker, 'George Tucker Criticises Jefferson's Views of Racial Differences', in Rose (ed.), *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America*, p.76.

²⁵³ [Anon], 'Letter V. To the Same', in G. Tucker (ed.), *Letters from Virginia, Translated from the French* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jr., 1816), p.33.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.34-35. See p.34 for the quote.

²⁵⁵ McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.296 details de Tocqueville's criticisms.

²⁵⁶ Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky*, p.5.

free coloured population among us'.²⁵⁷ In fact, Dissenting preacher J. D. Paxton postulated that 'A prejudice against having free coloured persons among them, has led most slave-holding States to throw obstructions in the way of manumission'.²⁵⁸

Many high-profile figures believed that liberated African-Americans could not inhabit the same society as their former masters.²⁵⁹ Congressman John Randolph derided the idea that blacks and whites could live peacefully together, stressing: 'You will find no instance in history where two distinct races have occupied the soil except in the relation of master and slave'.²⁶⁰ At the 1829 constitutional convention, moreover, a delegate from Rockbridge County asserted that Virginians refused to treat blacks on an equal footing to whites 'because we believe that they would not make good citizens, or because we are prejudiced against their colour'.²⁶¹ Equally, Thomas Dew claimed that African-Americans were 'A race of people differing from us in colour and in habits, and vastly inferior in the scale of civilization' in 1832.²⁶² Much of this contempt originated from an abhorrence at race mixing that was similar to Jefferson's pronounced aversion. Thus, John Taylor forwarded his fear of 'a body politick, as monstrous and unnatural as a mongrel half white man and half negro' in 1814.²⁶³

Anti-black opinion was still traceable in James Madison's writings. In a letter of 1819, Madison undoubtedly claimed that 'with the habits of the slave, and without the instruction, the property, or the employments of a freeman, the manumitted blacks ... furnish arguments against the general efforts in their behalf'. In fact, Madison felt that black people faced 'a privation of that moral rank & those social participations, which give to freedom more than half its value' because of their skin colour.²⁶⁴ In 1823, furthermore, Madison denigrated Virginia's free black population for being 'Generally idle and depraved'. They, too, appeared 'to retain the bad qualities of the slaves ... without acquiring any of the good ones of the whites, from whom [they] continue separated by prejudices against their colour, and other peculiarities'.²⁶⁵ Overall, Madison felt that 'physical and lasting peculiarities' set African-Americans apart from their white

²⁵⁷ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.155.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.170.

²⁵⁹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.xiii.

²⁶⁰ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.8.

²⁶¹ Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.226.

²⁶² Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, p.5.

²⁶³ Taylor, *Arator*, p.116.

²⁶⁴ J. Madison, 'James Madison to Edward Coles', 3 September 1819, *Library of Congress: The James Madison Papers, 1723 - 1836*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://memory.loc.gov/master/mss/mjm/19/0200/0286.jpg> contains both quotes; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.626; McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.314; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.638.

²⁶⁵ J. Madison, 'To Dr. Morse', 28 March 1823, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 3: 1816 - 1828 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.315; McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.285.

contemporaries. This meant that 'the freed blacks ought to be permanently removed beyond the region occupied by ... a white population'.²⁶⁶

Similarly, John Marshall supported imposing discriminatory measures against free blacks in a bid to encourage them to leave Virginia.²⁶⁷ Marshall maintained other racial beliefs that were comparable to those voiced by Jefferson. A memorial produced for the American Colonization Society in 1831 shows that Marshall viewed Virginia's blacks with an element of contempt. In the manuscript, Marshall argued that the 2,000 African-Americans who had already left Virginia to return to Africa 'must still appear but as two thousand free blacks withdrawn from the station in which they annoyed the white freemen of our Country'.²⁶⁸ Later in the piece, he described Virginia's remaining black population as 'the pest of a land which gives him only birth' and lamented 'the entire evil of a coloured population, slave as well as free'.²⁶⁹

John Taylor's *Arator* displayed many elements of racial prejudice. In one passage, Taylor questioned whether areas of northern states wanted to be 'cities with a yearly emigration of thieves, murderers and villains of every degree, though recommended by the training of slavery, a black skin, a woolly body, and an African contour'.²⁷⁰ In a later extract, Taylor referred to African-Americans as 'this black mass of ignorance'.²⁷¹ This anti-black stance remained common amongst Virginia's judiciary. Regional courts were often guilty of failing to protect African-Americans and reached verdicts that were clearly discriminatory. In June 1824, judges hearing the case of *Aldridge v. the Commonwealth* asserted that 'the Bill of Rights ... never was contemplated ... to extend to the whole population of the State. Can it be doubted, that it not only was not intended to apply to our slave population, but that the free blacks and mulattoes were also not comprehended in it?'²⁷²

Prejudiced sentiments regularly appeared in newspapers. In 1817, an article in the *Genius of Liberty* described Africa and its inhabitants as 'Plunged in barbarism, ignorance and the most frightful superstition'.²⁷³ More damagingly, an item in a later edition of the newspaper 'satisfactorily accounted for the general inferiority of the black compared with

²⁶⁶ Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.79; Ketcham, *James Madison*, pp.552 & 625-626.

²⁶⁷ Faulkner, *The Jurisprudence of John Marshall*, p.51.

²⁶⁸ J. Marshall, 'Memorial', Richmond, 13 December 1831, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp.128-129. See p.129 for the quote.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.129-130.

²⁷⁰ Taylor, *Arator*, p.117.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.120.

²⁷² Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery*, Vol. 1, p.140.

²⁷³ 'The Four Quarters of the Globe', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 1, 11 January 1817, p.4. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18170111>.

white people' and asserted that it was 'morally impossible that they should possess any considerable degree of *dignity of character*'.²⁷⁴ A series of further dispatches printed in *The Genius*, written under the title 'Mitigation of Slavery', even outlined plans 'to irradicate [*sic*] their *color* itself in a few generations'.²⁷⁵ Surprised readers complained about the content of the piece. For instance, 'Warren' queried 'How is this adventitious mixture to be effected?' Warren's reasons for deriding the plan were illustrative of common perceptions. The correspondent claimed that the idea was misguided because 'The most enthusiastic advocate we have for the blacks, will not agree that his children shall intermarry with the proscribed race'.²⁷⁶

Popular distaste for free blacks was highlighted in numerous letters that were published in the *Richmond Enquirer* during 1825 and 1826. The author of the pieces - 'Caius Gracchus' - claimed that liberated African-Americans were 'the most inert and lazy beings in all society'.²⁷⁷ Another dispatch in the *Enquirer* highlighted many of the negative stereotypes that were attached to blacks. Indeed, the correspondent concluded that 'the love of liberty in the slave is the love of idleness - - that the only value he sets upon liberty consists in the privilege of exempting himself from labor, and that if he were free but few would labor at all'.²⁷⁸ When these comments are taken into account, it is perhaps easier to understand Jefferson's failure to change his negative perception of African-Americans in his later life.

Blacks acknowledged the continuance of race-based hostility. In 1815, Burke of Washington County - situated to the west of the Blue Ridge Mountains - appealed for governors to allow him to stay in Virginia as a free man. Burke conceded that the depth of anti-black sentiment hindered his plea. Consequently, he highlighted how local forces could heighten or reduce tensions by stating 'that however dangerous or inconvenient a population of the class to which he belongs, may be in the Eastern section of the state where that population is abundant; the same causes of apprehension do not exist in the western part of this state'.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁴ 'Mitigation of Slavery, No. IV', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 25, 29 June 1819, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18190629>.

²⁷⁵ 'Mitigation of Slavery - - No. 7', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 32, 24 August 1819, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18190824>.

²⁷⁶ Warren, 'Colonization', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 34, 7 September 1819, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18190907>.

²⁷⁷ [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius*, p.74.

²⁷⁸ W. B. Giles, 'From the Richmond Enquirer, January 20, 1827. Political Disquisitions. No. III', in W. B. Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1829), p.19. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100734248>.

²⁷⁹ Burke: Petition, Washington County, 1815-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

Such pleas rarely gained currency in a state whose laws remained deliberately restrictive. The precarious nature of free African-Americans' lives is chronicled in Virginian tax records. Under the terms of legislation passed in 1802, all blacks who failed to pay their taxes were required to be re-enslaved. Such incidents happened frequently. In 1814, sixty-three blacks in Accomack County were listed 'to be Haird out for their taxes'. A further sixty-eight were re-enslaved in Southampton County five years later and an extra fifty in 1823.²⁸⁰ Administrative errors also culminated in free blacks being incorrectly incarcerated for failing to pay taxes. In 1826, Jim Outten - who had originally been manumitted in 1805 - was purchased by Littleton Henderson of Accomack County after being accused of failing to pay local taxes. Although he was later able to prove his innocence - and reclaim his freedom - Outten's example highlights the distress that Virginia's anti-black laws often caused those who obeyed state legislation.²⁸¹

Similarly, those who had stayed in Virginia without acquiring documentation confirming their free status were subject to punitive measures. In 1820, judges in Accomack County were presented with twenty-three African-Americans who were alleged to have 'been emancipated since the year 1806 and who have remained in the country contrary to Law'. Under the terms of the 1806 manumission act, all the accused were required to leave the state after being found guilty.²⁸² The harsh nature of this punishment is magnified by the fact that liberated blacks were often unaware of these regulations. In 1810, citizens from Petersburg criticised local law enforcers for failing to inform two free black men of the requirement to obtain certification testifying to their right to stay in Virginia.²⁸³

Tensions between the two races occasionally culminated in violence. In 1821, Benjamin Bowles of Amelia County was convicted of rioting after a dispute with local free blacks got out of control. Bowles alleged that 'a set of free negroes in the County' who 'were of bad form and character, and also had associated with them a white woman also of foul character named Sally May' had indulged in 'mischievous conduct' that 'did not fail to produce serious evils'. Accordingly, Bowles had joined 'a party for the purpose of

²⁸⁰ A List of Free Negroes to be Haird [*sic*] out for their taxes for the year of 1814, Accomack County, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; List of Free Negroes Sept 1819 Order to Summon, Southampton County, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Free Negro List - Ordered for Sale for Nonpayment of Taxes - Circa 1823, Southampton County, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸¹ Outten, Jim: Freedom Suit, Accomack County, 1826, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸² Abraham: Commonwealth Cause, Accomack County, 1820, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸³ Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

chastising' the group, leading to local unrest.²⁸⁴ Although Bowles instigated the dispute, his petition to state authorities still gained more than fifty supporting signatures.²⁸⁵

Citizens' petitions provide a useful indicator of the depth of popular prejudice. Many appeals sent to the Virginian General Assembly were delivered by people who were keen to see the rights of blacks further restricted. In 1810, for example, over 180 citizens from Charlotte County called on legislators to ban 'the practice adopted by many slaveholders, of permitting their slaves to own ... and raise stocks of horses and hogs' as they believed that possessing this freedom acted 'in a great measure as a cloak for stealing their neighbours hogs'.²⁸⁶ A year later, a group from Richmond County requested that lawmakers prevent 'negro slaves, free Negroes, & mulattoes, raising + carrying dogs', for they alleged that their livestock had been targeted by local African-Americans.²⁸⁷ Intriguingly, many who signed the petitions in Charlotte and Richmond held few, if any, slaves. Of the Charlotte petitioners, Edward Eagles possessed no bondsmen in 1810, while Isaac Smith owned just one and John Reynolds two.²⁸⁸ In Richmond, meanwhile, John Wise held no slaves and Vincent Reynolds only one.²⁸⁹ Such examples demonstrate that suspicions surrounding free blacks were not limited to those in the wealthier echelons of society.

Even people who campaigned for favoured blacks to be extended rights of residence opposed the growth of Virginia's free African-American population. In 1815, petitioners from Loudon County conceded that 'many of the descendants from Africa are far too debased to be fit for freedom' while appealing on behalf of a former slave seeking

²⁸⁴ Bowles, Benjamin: Petition, Amelia County, 1821-12-11, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

²⁸⁶ Citizens: Petition, Charlotte County, 1810-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁷ Citizens: Petition, Richmond County, 1811, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁸⁸ Citizens: Petition, Charlotte County, 1810-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2 & 3; for information on Eagles, see 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH25-GSW> : accessed 20 October 2017), Edward Eagles, Charlotte, Virginia, United States; citing p. 47, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 68, FHL microfilm 181,428; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH25-GSW> : accessed 20 October 2017), Isaac Smith, Charlotte, Virginia, United States; citing p. 63, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 68, FHL microfilm 181,428 has data on Smith; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH25-GSW> : accessed 20 October 2017), John Reynolds, Charlotte, Virginia, United States; citing p. 63, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 68, FHL microfilm 181,428 contains information about Reynolds.

²⁸⁹ Citizens: Petition, Richmond County, 1811, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2; John Wise's census record can be found at 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH28-F93> : accessed 21 October 2017), John Wise, Richmond, Virginia, United States; citing p. 341, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 70, FHL microfilm 181,430; Vincent Reynolds is recorded as Vincent Raynolds in the 1810 census. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH28-F93> : accessed 21 October 2017), Vincent Raynolds, Richmond, Virginia, United States; citing p. 337, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 70, FHL microfilm 181,430.

to ensure the future of herself and her children in the state.²⁹⁰ Comparable claims were made by citizens from Amelia County in December 1831. The inhabitants of Amelia alleged that the free African-American population had been a negative influence on Virginian society because 'The mark set on them by nature precludes them enjoyment, in this country, of the privileges of' liberty. Consequently, blacks could only be 'sustained by the charitable provisions of our just laws', meaning that they represented 'a burden on the community'.²⁹¹

Further petitions were more explicit in their anti-black content. In 1817, over fifty men from Isle of Wight County instructed the Virginia General Assembly 'that great and serious evils have resulted to the peaceable ... inhabitants of this section of the state from the black population'. The signatories expanded on their allegations by claiming 'That these evils are increasing to the great annoyance, & disturbance of the peace & tranquillity of society'.²⁹² To help solve the dilemma presented by their African-American population, the residents argued that penalties against whites who harboured runaway slaves should be increased, while free blacks assisting absconders would 'be deemed felons & punished by Death'.²⁹³ Many of the subscribers held small numbers of labourers. For instance, William Bagnell owned only nine slaves in 1820. William Moody (five) and Andrew Lester (eight) possessed even fewer. Indeed, of the signatories who could be identified in the 1820 census, only Joseph Ballard (forty) can be considered anything more than a middle-ranking slaveholder.²⁹⁴

Another petition of December 1827 highlighted the level of anti-black sentiment in the post-Missouri epoch. The appeal, which was penned by members of the Powhatan County Colonization Society, derided Virginia's free blacks for being 'a class of the

²⁹⁰ Chapel, Thomas & Others: Petition, Loudoun County, 1815-12-06, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

²⁹¹ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1831-12-31, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁹² Citizens: Petition, Isle of Wight County, 1817-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ Citizens: Petition, Isle of Wight County, 1817-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1 & 6; information on Bagnell is derived from 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLT-GRH> : accessed 21 October 2017), William Bagnell, New Port Parish, Isle of Wight, Virginia, United States; citing p. 267, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 132, FHL microfilm 193,691; 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLT-GRH> : accessed 21 October 2017), William Moody, New Port Parish, Isle of Wight, Virginia, United States; citing p. 278, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 132, FHL microfilm 193,691 has information on Moody; 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLT-GRH> : accessed 21 October 2017), Andrew Lester, New Port Parish, Isle of Wight, Virginia, United States; citing p. 289, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 132, FHL microfilm 193,691 contains data on Lester; 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLT-GRH> : accessed 21 October 2017), Joseph Ballard, New Port Parish, Isle of Wight, Virginia, United States; citing p. 284, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 132, FHL microfilm 193,691 holds Ballard's records.

population which all acknowledge to be idle, useless and dangerous'. The petitioners warned state lawmakers that the 'abject and miserable condition' of autonomous African-Americans meant they corrupted the state's slave population.²⁹⁵ A request from 162 inhabitants of Louisa County in December 1829 was equally clear in its content. The memorialists demanded that bondsmen recently liberated by Richard Sandridge be expelled from Virginia because they judged all free blacks to be 'obnoxious to society generally'.²⁹⁶

Petitions occasionally targeted individual African-Americans. One such appeal was submitted by Robert Dickieson of Russell County in 1825. Dickieson requested that state authorities reject an application for one of his father's bondsmen, Moses, to remain in Virginia. Dickieson accused Moses of being involved in a robbery that had deprived his father of \$1,000. Moreover, it was alleged that Moses' son had been stealing chickens. Dickieson countered claims that it was unfair to separate Moses from his family by asserting: 'The said Moses has abundant means to enable him to remove to some other state, and if it is desirable to him occasionally to visit his relations, he has the means to enable him to do so'.²⁹⁷

A comparable petition was submitted in Rockingham County in December 1829. The application represented a counter-appeal to an earlier entreaty that had asked Governors to permit Lucy and her husband to stay in Virginia following their manumission by James Laird. The petitioners alleged that Lucy should not be allowed to stay in Virginia because she had 'attempted to Pison [sic] the white members' of her master's family.²⁹⁸ Equally, legislative cases highlighted the harassment that African-Americans were subjected to by individual white citizens. An 1817 appeal to allow Hannah Frazier to remain in Virginia testified to the fact that she had 'been much persecuted by her neighbour Robert Mayo & that he will make every possible effort to prevent her being permitted to enjoy her freedom'.²⁹⁹

An appeal delivered to the Virginia General Assembly in 1831 illustrated the economic concerns that often drove popular distaste for blacks. The piece, which was approved by more than 215 Petersburg tradesmen, alleged that throughout the town there

²⁹⁵ Powhatan Colonization Society: Petition, Powhatan County, 1827-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

²⁹⁶ Citizens: Remonstrance, Louisa County, 1829-12-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁹⁷ Dickieson, Robert: Counter-Petition, Russell County, 1825-12-21, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

²⁹⁸ Citizens: Counter-Petition, Rockingham County, 1829-12-23, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

²⁹⁹ Frazier, Hannah: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Henrico County, 1817, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.7.

were 'many Slaves ... who have been instructed in the Mechanic Arts, and whose owners allow them to labour in their respective vocations, almost, if not entirely free from controul [sic]'.³⁰⁰ This was unacceptable for the mechanics, who warned that 'white men are unwilling to labour by the side of Slaves on an equality with them; much less can they reconcile it to their feelings to come in competition with negroes'.³⁰¹ Consequently, they requested that legislators enact a motion ensuring 'that in all those vocations which are regarded as respectable, and which white men are willing to embark in, they ought to have the preference' when assigning work contracts.³⁰² Jefferson's negative view of free blacks was, then, common amongst individuals from all sections of white society.

'there is no general rule without exceptions': The Complexities of Race Relations³⁰³

Nonetheless, this level of prejudice was not universally shared. Petersburg highlights the complexity of race relations in nineteenth-century Virginia better than any other area. The town was a place of unique importance for Virginia's black population, for it held the largest proportion of free African-Americans in the state. Indeed, the 1810 census showed that the 1,000 free African-Americans in Petersburg formed almost a third of the town's free inhabitants.³⁰⁴ As the 1831 petition highlighted, many whites in Petersburg were sceptical of their free black population. Yet residents from all ranks of society frequently put aside their misgivings to support local African-Americans who were deemed to offer a useful service to the community. This represents a cautionary tale for those who assume that Jefferson spoke for all Virginians when airing his perspectives on race.

An early instance of white support occurred in 1810, when more than 260 individuals from Petersburg petitioned leaders to emancipate Emmanuel, a local slave who had foiled a plot to raise the town.³⁰⁵ The memorialists asserted that Emmanuel's conduct had been 'highly praiseworthy & exemplary'. Accordingly, they believed 'that when a Negro has render'd such invaluable benefits to the Community, as this Man Emanuel has, that the Legislature ... ought to attend to him, that best and dearest of all Rights, his Liberty'.³⁰⁶ Many of the memorialists who can be identified in the 1810 census possessed small

³⁰⁰ Mechanics & Others: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1831-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Citizens of Caroline & Hanover: Petition, 1821-11-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁰⁴ P. J. Schwarz, "'A Sense of Their Own Power": Self-Determination in Recent Writings on Black Virginians', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul., 1989), p.295.

³⁰⁵ Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.1-2 holds the quote.

numbers of slaves. For instance, John Allison held 15 labourers, while Alexander Taylor owned just nine and Archibald Baugh one.³⁰⁷

Two other petitions delivered in December 1810 aimed to persuade leaders to allow free African-Americans to remain in Virginia. The first request was forwarded on behalf of Major Elbeck, who had worked as a mechanical constructor in Petersburg after emigrating from Pennsylvania in the 1790s. Elbeck was praised for 'his assiduity and attention to his business', which the ninety signatories thought were 'remarkable'.³⁰⁸ The petitioners were concerned that if Elbeck was not permitted to remain in Virginia, the laws of the state would 'be most cruelly severe & oppressive against him and his family ... it will send him to Pennsylvania and expel her to the West Indies; while their children ... will be left in this commonwealth, forlorn, friendless and unprotected'.³⁰⁹

On the same day as they received Elbeck's appeal, the Virginian Assembly were presented with a request on behalf of Uriah Tynes, who had been manumitted in North Carolina in 1800 and was, consequently, living in Petersburg illegally. Tynes was praised for conducting himself in a manner that was deemed 'correct, proper and for a man of his situation in life, exemplary'.³¹⁰ Moreover, he was described as an 'honest and extremely industrious' man, whose 'humility', 'integrity' and 'attention to his occupation', had 'acquired him the goodwill of the inhabitants, by whom he is deemed a very useful man'.³¹¹ Accordingly, the ninety-six signatories assured lawmakers 'that the continuance of the said Uriah Tynes in this Commonwealth . . . will not be injurious to the public interests in any respect whatsoever'.³¹² Many who supported Tynes and Elbeck again held relatively few bondsmen. For example, Robert Pollock owned no slaves according to the 1810 census, while David Robinson held just nine.³¹³ Similarly, backers of Elbeck's appeal included

³⁰⁷ 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZBK> : accessed 20 October 2017), Archibald Baugh, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 126, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427 has data on Baugh; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZBK> : accessed 20 October 2017), Alexander Taylor, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 126, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427 details Taylor's possessions; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZBK> : accessed 20 October 2017), John Allison, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 128, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427 has Allison's entry.

³⁰⁸ Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.
³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³¹⁰ Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.
³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

³¹³ Pollock is recorded as Robert Pollok on the census. See 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-8SD> : accessed 21 October 2017), Robert Pollok, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 120, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-8SD> : accessed 21 October 2017), David Robertson, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 124, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427 details Robertson's possessions.

Thomas Robinson, with no bondsmen, and Dandridge Spottswood, who only possessed three slaves.³¹⁴

State records highlight the diversity of roles that members of Petersburg's free black community pursued. An 1821 list of free African-Americans in the town illustrates that, although a large amount of Petersburg's free blacks were labourers, there was great variation in the occupations recorded. For example, Joseph Shepherd and John Raymond were registered as teachers, while William Eppes was employed as a butcher. Further, Amey Page and Prudence Johnson were listed as midwives, Isaac Ran and John Steward brick layers, Dunkin Cannon a plasterer, Willis Jones a fiddler, John Anderson a sausage maker, Moses Carter a fisherman, Major Elbeck a barber and Asa Bird a schoolmaster.³¹⁵ Serving in these occupations did not mean that Petersburg's free blacks were immune from the difficulties experienced by African-Americans in the rest of Virginia. Indeed, Petersburg highlights many of the hardships suffered by free blacks, for only twenty-three were reported as owning property.³¹⁶ Nonetheless, the support that some of Petersburg's free African-Americans received demonstrates that not all Virginians followed Jefferson in perceiving race as an intractable obstacle to harmonious relations.

Assistance for favoured blacks was not limited to Petersburg. For instance, residents in Fauquier County presented an appeal on behalf of Samuel Johnson in 1811. The petitioners praised Johnson for being 'constantly and uniformly diligent ... accommodating faithful and honest' and 'possessed of those qualities essential to form a valuable citizen'.³¹⁷ Johnson was forced to produce numerous appeals in subsequent years to maintain his place in free society. A particularly striking memorial was presented to lawmakers in 1826. Amongst the 300 Fauquier signatories was the former Governor of Virginia, James Barbour, who acclaimed Johnson as 'one of the most worthy ... free persons of colour that I have ever known'.³¹⁸

Some of Jefferson's neighbours in Albemarle County aided free blacks attempting to stay in Virginia. Citizens certainly backed the petition of Rachel, who had been

³¹⁴ For information about Robinson, see 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZT3> : accessed 21 October 2017), Thomas Robinson, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 117, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427; 'United States Census, 1810,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH2Q-ZT3> : accessed 21 October 2017), D N Spottswood, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Virginia, United States; citing p. 119, NARA microfilm publication M252 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 67, FHL microfilm 181,427 holds Spottswood's details.

³¹⁵ List of Free People of Color in the Town of Petersburg for the year 1821, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-20.

³¹⁶ Schwarz, "A Sense of Their Own Power", in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.295.

³¹⁷ Sam: Petition, Fauquier County, 1811-12-13, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

³¹⁸ Johnson, Samuel: Petition, Fauquier County, 1826-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.6.

emancipated for 'exemplary conduct' by J. W. Garth in 1818.³¹⁹ George Kinsolving - who held six slaves at the time of the 1820 census - credited Rachel 'As an honest, industrious orderly & well disposed woman. She also has assisted in my house and discharged herself with great credit'.³²⁰ Similarly, A. Norris testified that he had known 'Rachel for many years, and always considered her amongst the first of her colour'.³²¹

Individual whites offered staunch backing to favoured African-Americans. In 1815, Thomas Chapel of Loudon County went to great lengths to procure the freedom of Fanny, whom he had hired from the estate of Robert Whiteford since 1797. After being informed that Fanny's husband was to be sold by another planter, Chapel raised money to purchase the slave from Whiteford. He then asked state legislators to allow Fanny to stay in Virginia. In the petition, Chapel and his fellow signatories noted Fanny's 'indefatigable industry', before concluding 'that justice and humanity' required state lawmakers to pass legislation permitting her to stay in Virginia. As a final plea, the memorialists stated their hope that 'it will never be said that the Legislators of Virginia - of the state which boasts as her son the man who ... achieved the Independence of our Beloved Country - ... have supposed a legal obstruction, to be interposed to the performance of an act so obviously required by the best of motives'.³²²

Virginians were incredibly persistent when they thought lawmakers had acted unjustly towards a highly regarded African-American. In 1821, residents from Caroline and Hanover Counties submitted an appeal on behalf of Joseph Tyree and his family. Tyree had previously seen a request for his wife and seven children to be permitted to reside in Virginia rejected by state officials. The sixty petitioners were disappointed by the decision. Although they admitted to being 'well aware of the prejudices which then existed and still exist against encouraging persons of this description to settle amongst us', the applicants reminded legislators that 'there is no general rule without exceptions'.³²³ After praising Tyree's family for possessing 'characters as unexceptionable as any person of color in this Commonwealth', the citizens asserted that they should be allowed to stay in Hanover.

³¹⁹ Rachel: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Albemarle County, 1819, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

³²⁰ Rachel: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Albemarle County, 1819, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.5; Kinsolving's details appear in 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLH-1R4> : accessed 22 October 2017), George Kinsolving, Fredericksville Parish, Albemarle, Virginia, United States; citing p. 11, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 130, FHL microfilm 193,689.

³²¹ Rachel: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Albemarle County, 1819, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.5.

³²² Chapel, Thomas & Others: Petition, Loudoun County, 1815-12-06, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

³²³ Citizens of Caroline & Hanover: Petition, 1821-11-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

Indeed, rejecting Tyree's claims to residence would mean that his family were required 'to quit all the relatives, to leave a comfortable home and all the same which are calculated to make life dear to them'.³²⁴ The diversity of the petition's subscribers is illustrative. Of those who can be matched with the 1820 census returns, William Dickinson Senior of Caroline County, with forty-six slaves, held the largest number of bondsmen. By contrast, Achilles Woolfolk owned just nine labourers, while William Chandler and William Thompson only possessed one apiece.³²⁵

Legislative appeals were not just concerned with guaranteeing that useful African-Americans continued living in the state. On occasions, citizens requested that established blacks were afforded the same privileges as whites. In 1823, the mayor of Richmond, John Adams, sponsored a petition penned by members of the city's free black population. The signatories were requesting permission to build a black Baptist church. Adams testified that those who had signed the application were 'respectable' and added his 'opinion that the prayer of the petition if granted, may be productive of benefit to themselves as well as to the white population of Richmond'.³²⁶ In 1824, similarly, residents from Fredericksburg implored state lawmakers to help William Jones subsist in his old age by permitting 'some aid' to be 'extended without delay to the Petitioner in the payment of an annual Pension'.³²⁷ The signers believed Jones deserved this right as a consequence of his 'sober industrious habits' and because he had been 'zealously engaged' in the Revolutionary Wars fifty years earlier.³²⁸

Some free blacks obtained a moderate degree of wealth because of the close relationships they established with whites. Lewis Turner of Sussex County represents one example. Turner's will, probated by state authorities in 1818, highlighted that he had

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

³²⁵ All these signatories appear in *Citizens of Caroline & Hanover: Petition, 1821-11-12*, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; William Dickenson Snr's details can be found in 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLH-YWJ> : accessed 21 October 2017), William Dickenson Sr, Caroline, Virginia, United States, citing p. 164, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 129, FHL microfilm 193,688; Achilles Woolfolk appears in 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLH-YWJ> : accessed 21 October 2017), Achilles Woolfolk, Caroline, Virginia, United States, citing p. 184, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 129, FHL microfilm 193,688; William Chandler's details can be found on 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLH-YWJ> : accessed 21 October 2017), William Chandler, Caroline, Virginia, United States; citing p.162, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 129, FHL microfilm 193,688; William Thompson's census entry can be found in 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLZ-HG8> : accessed 21 October 2017), William Thompson, Hanover Parish, King George, Virginia, United States; citing p. 127, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 134, FHL microfilm 193,693.

³²⁶ *Richmond Free Persons of Color: Petition, Richmond (City), 1823-12-03*, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

³²⁷ *Citizens: Petition, Fredericksburg (Town), 1824-02-12*, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

accrued enough money to purchase his wife, Aggai, from Henry Chappell. Moreover, the testament showed that Turner possessed a plantation, 'adjoining land' and a 'stock of horses, hogs, sheep and cows'.³²⁹ Nor was Turner the only illustration of African-American wealth. Tax lists from Prince Edward County confirmed that nine free blacks owned land and employed other African-Americans as workers in 1817.³³⁰ As well as emphasising the - admittedly limited - possibilities open to some liberated blacks, these examples demonstrate how tight-knit the African-American community was in the face of hostility from sections of the white population.

Other aspects of Jefferson's racial views were rejected by his peers. Despite making occasional derogatory statements about blacks, Edward Coles believed that African-Americans could live as freemen in the United States. After moving to Illinois to manumit his workers in 1819, Coles bequeathed his former bondsmen 160 acres of land and provided them with money to seek education and training in farming to ensure their successful integration into free society.³³¹ Similarly, Susanna Meade of Frederick County asked for the \$1,000 she had inherited from her husband to be 'appropriated ... to the spiritual benefit of the slaves left ... to his son William' following her death.³³² Meade also left her brother and sister the responsibility of seeing 'to their comfortable maintenance, and instruction in reading the word of God'.³³³ As we have seen, Meade and Coles' commitment to the education of their former slaves contrasted with Jefferson's wishes.

Nor was the level of Jefferson's prejudice maintained amongst all Virginian statesmen. John Marshall's actions demonstrate that he did not wholly subscribe to Jefferson's fear of free blacks. Indeed, Marshall signed a petition in support of Jasper Graham, a recently manumitted slave, in December 1822. The appeal suggested that Graham should be permitted to reside in Virginia as a freeman, for Marshall believed he was 'a proper object for the indulgence of the legislature'.³³⁴ The Chief Justice issued another certificate to help a liberated slave stay in Virginia in 1833. In the document, Marshall stated that he had 'long known Billy, a coloured man, who was emancipated by

³²⁹ Turner, Lewis, will, 1818, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2T8552b, p.1.

³³⁰ A List of Free People of Colour 1817, Prince Edward County, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2.

³³¹ Schwabach, 'Thomas Jefferson, Slavery, and Slaves', in *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*, p.8; McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.313. Coles was not always complimentary about African-Americans. McCoy, p.318 provides a good example; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.626.

³³² 'Will, 1820, of Susanna Meade, written at "Mountain View," Frederick (now Clarke) County, Va.', Custis, Mary Lee (Fitzhugh) (1788-1853), papers, 1818-1902, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C9695a, p.1.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p.2.

³³⁴ J. Marshall, 'Certificate for Jasper Graham', Richmond, 5 December 1822, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 9: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1820 - December 1823* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p.377.

the will of the reverend Wm. [John] Buchanan' and 'thought him a quiet, peaceable, honest, faithful and submissive man, from whom nothing is to be apprehended'.³³⁵ A year later, Marshall backed a petition allowing free African-Americans to conduct burial services. In his endorsement, Marshall directed that 'humanity would dictate that the prayer of the petition be granted with any safe guards which the wisdom of the legislature may suggest'.³³⁶

Furthermore, Arthur Scherr postulates that James Monroe's opinion of African-Americans was more liberal than Jefferson's, for he 'upheld their humanity and moral and physical equality'.³³⁷ Evidence buttresses Scherr's case. In a letter to Dr Charles Everett in March 1812, Monroe declared that 'The God who made us, made the black people'.³³⁸ In another publication, he affirmed his adherence to the principle 'that whatever differences there may now be found between men in intellect, size, form, color or otherwise, there was but one race; that they had a common origin'.³³⁹

Many Dissenting Christians were equally prepared to argue that African-Americans possessed parallel intellectual capacity to their white peers. For instance, the Presbyterian pastor John Paxton stated that blacks had the ability to 'cultivate with more care their memories', despite not being permitted to read and write by state law.³⁴⁰ Additionally, Paxton rejected the allegation that the 'ignorance' of Virginia's African-Americans was a valid excuse for their enslaved status. Indeed, he contended that 'Thousands of white men are as ignorant as most slaves; this is not, however, considered a sufficient reason for reducing them to slavery. A man may be very ignorant, and yet a peaceful and useful citizen'.³⁴¹ In contrast to Jefferson, Paxton averred that any disparity of intellect had been caused by the behaviour of white Americans, declaring: 'Had the Africans brought over as slaves been of the same complexion with the whites, they never would have been held with the same iron grasp, nor would they have been so deeply degraded'.³⁴² This conviction

³³⁵ J. Marshall, 'Certificate', 23 November 1833, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.571.

³³⁶ J. Marshall, 'Endorsement of Petition of Free People of Color in Richmond for Religious Assembly', Richmond, 15 December 1834, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.574.

³³⁷ Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, p.570.

³³⁸ J. Monroe, 'To Dr. Charles Everett', Washington, 23 March 1812, in S. M. Hamilton (ed.), *The Writings of James Monroe: Including a Collection of His Public and Private Papers and Correspondence, now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 5: *1807 - 1816* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p.202.

³³⁹ S. L. Gouverneur (ed.), *The People, The Sovereigns: Being a Comparison of the Government of the United States with Those of the Republics Which Have Existed Before, with the Causes of Their Decadence and Fall. By James Monroe* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.59; Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, p.570.

³⁴⁰ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.35.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.151.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p.152.

that blacks could match their white contemporaries was exemplified by Samuel Janney, who permitted free African-Americans to enrol in Quaker schools until legislation banned the education of blacks in the 1830s.³⁴³

Newspaper articles also defended African-Americans' ability. A report that appeared in *The Genius of Liberty* in August 1818 spoke glowingly about a seven-year-old African boy 'whose native genius and brightness of intellect, would do honor to the white sons of many who riot in affluence and ease'.³⁴⁴ Seven years later, *The Genius* incorporated another letter that affirmed the author's belief in racial equality. The correspondent asserted: 'It is a fundamental principle, in our government, that all men are created equal ... And that however varied in colour, or intellectual endowments ... all are equally entitled to the enjoyment of those inestimable privileges'.³⁴⁵

Members of pro-colonization groups were sometimes more prepared than Jefferson to recognise the ability of African-Americans. For instance, the Frederick County Auxiliary branch of the American Colonization Society decried the 'impiously maintained' belief 'that the poor, unfortunate negroes, are lower than ourselves in the scale of being, and nearly allied to the apes and monkeys!'³⁴⁶ Instead, the organization maintained that 'the Africans are not brutes' and conceded that white Virginians possessed an 'obligation to repair the injuries inflicted on Africa'.³⁴⁷

Thus, while there undoubtedly remained severe limitations to the freedom liberated blacks were able to enjoy in nineteenth-century Virginia, we can see that prejudice was not uniformly held amongst any social group. This fact alone refutes the idea that Jefferson's prejudice was fully representative of opinion amongst lower-ranking Virginians, as well as those further up the social hierarchy.

Colonization: The Rise of the 'Jeffersonian Solution'?³⁴⁸

As the above analysis highlights, race relations were more complicated than might be expected in a society marked by its dependence on racial slavery. The growth in publicity

³⁴³ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.276.

³⁴⁴ 'Slave Traders', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 31, 11 August 1818, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18180811>.

³⁴⁵ 'To the Editor', in *Supplement to The Genius of Liberty*, Number 24, 21 June 1825, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18250621>.

³⁴⁶ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County, Va., for Colonizing the Free People of Colour in the United States* (Winchester: The Auxiliary Society, 1820), p.19. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009606594>.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.20.

³⁴⁸ Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, p.178.

that colonization enjoyed after 1809 demonstrated this complexity. This surge occurred at a time when Virginia's free black population was expanding dramatically. Indeed, the free African-American community increased by twenty-two percent between 1810 and 1820, a rate far higher than the growth of the white population (seven percent) or the state's slave demographic (eleven percent).³⁴⁹ Jefferson remained a keen advocate of expatriation in his later years. In his 1814 letter to Edward Coles, he suggested that his *Notes on the State of Virginia* colonization scheme represented the only practical means of challenging slavery, asserting: 'I have seen no expedient on the whole, as that [of] emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation after a given age'.³⁵⁰

This support was restated three years later in a letter to Thomas Humphreys, in which Jefferson averred: 'Personally I am ready and desirous to make any sacrifice which shall ensure their gradual but complete retirement from the State, and effectually, at the same time, establish them elsewhere in freedom and safety'.³⁵¹ Accordingly, Jefferson placed his faith in the ideals of the newly formed American Colonization Society, declaring that 'the proposition now on the carpet at Washington to provide an establishment on the coast of Africa for voluntary emigrations of people of color, may be the corner stone of this future edifice'.³⁵²

Jefferson assumed a pro-colonization stance again when writing to the Unitarian minister - and repatriation advocate - Jared Sparks in February 1824. In the dispatch, Jefferson stressed the need for African-Americans to be deported to 'some country and climate friendly to human life and happiness'. Of all the options available, he believed 'Sierra Leone promises well'.³⁵³ Jefferson remained unwavering in his belief that deportation should be funded by an increase in taxes. He, too, maintained that masters whose slaves were being expatriated needed to 'surrender the slave children for free'.³⁵⁴ Consequently, he told Sparks that his opinion on colonization had not changed since 1785, for he had 'never yet been able to conceive any other practicable plan' to end slavery.³⁵⁵

Equally, in a letter written to William Short in 1826, Jefferson emphasised that he felt 'expatriation to the governments of the W. I. of their own colour as entirely practicable, and greatly preferable to the mixture of colour here'.³⁵⁶ The reason Jefferson supported

³⁴⁹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.400.

³⁵⁰ Jefferson, 'To Edward Coles', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.494.

³⁵¹ Jefferson, 'To Dr. Thomas Humphreys', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, pp.495-496.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p.496.

³⁵³ Jefferson, 'A Plan of Emancipation', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.1484.

³⁵⁴ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.168.

³⁵⁵ Jefferson, 'A Plan of Emancipation', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.1485; Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of that race'", in *Early American Studies*, p.194.

³⁵⁶ T. Jefferson, 'To William Short', Monticello, 18 January 1826, in P. L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10: 1816 - 1826 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), p.362.

colonization remained similar. During his later writings, he frequently stated his fear that liberated slaves would exact vengeance on their former masters. This was clearly elucidated in his 'wolf by the ears' comment to John Holmes in 1820.³⁵⁷

Although he consistently backed repatriation as the only way to end slavery, Jefferson failed to join the American Colonization Society following its creation in 1816. He registered his scepticism towards the group in 1824, when he confided to Jared Sparks that he had 'ever deemed entirely impossible the idea that "an place on the coast of Africa should answer the purpose"' of expatriation societies.³⁵⁸ These doubts explain why Jefferson did not colonize any of his bondsmen. Indeed, he asked Virginia's legislators to allow the five slaves he liberated in his will to remain in the state.³⁵⁹

Jefferson's belief in colonization was shared by numerous Virginians. Support for repatriation increased following the 1812 war with Britain, during which 3,400 slaves from Virginia and Maryland fled to join opposition forces, causing many masters to become 'obsessed about an impending slave revolt'.³⁶⁰ As a consequence of these fears, Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer asked the Virginian House of Delegates in 1816 for legislative assistance in seeking 'a colony' for convicted blacks to be expatriated to.³⁶¹ The measure, which called for Governors 'to correspond with the President of the United States, for the purpose of obtaining a territory on the coast of Africa', was passed by 137 votes to 9.³⁶²

While he was obtaining support in Virginia, Mercer was inviting politicians from across America to attend a meeting in Washington, D.C. Mercer's aim was to form a movement to work towards the permanent relocation of the nation's free black population.³⁶³ The American Colonization Society gained fringe backing in most of the United States.³⁶⁴ The immediate significance of the group was demonstrated by the American government's donation of \$100,000 to the foundation in 1819. The grant helped the ACS purchase land in Liberia, which acted as the first destination for expatriated blacks.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁷ Jefferson, 'To John Holmes', in Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.497.

³⁵⁸ Jefferson, 'A Plan of Emancipation', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.1484.

³⁵⁹ P. Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery: "Treason Against the Hopes of the World"', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.203.

³⁶⁰ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.394.

³⁶¹ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.165; R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbris, 2013), p.132.

³⁶² Rev P. Slaughter, *The Virginian History of African Colonization* (Richmond: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1855), p.v. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007671785>.

³⁶³ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.400.

³⁶⁴ Wood, 'John Randolph of Roanoke and the Politics of Slavery', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, p.123.

³⁶⁵ H. Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971), p.522; Unger, *The Last Founding Father*, p.298.

Colonization was particularly popular in areas of Virginia where the proportion of blacks had swelled since the Revolution. The Piedmont counties bordering the Blue Ridge Mountains were especially affected by demographic shifts. Continuing east-west migration in Virginia meant that the enslaved proportion of the sixteen counties nearest to the Blue Ridge increased from thirty-three percent to more than forty percent between 1790 and 1810.³⁶⁶ It was in one of these regions, Frederick County, that the first auxiliary society in the state was created in September 1817.³⁶⁷ Three years later, the group released an annual report which stated members' delight that their ideals had been 'met with much encouragement' by local citizens.³⁶⁸ In fact, the minutes demonstrated that the Frederick branch had received over \$6,000 of donations within 'a short time' of their creation.³⁶⁹ Various factors motivated those who joined the Frederick County movement. Racial prejudice was a key determinant. In their 1820 report, the society asserted that 'Our own country is blackened with the victims of slavery ... and to contemplate their increase through the vista of futurity is alarming to the patriot and the philanthropist'.³⁷⁰ Overseeing the gradual abolition of slavery was another ambition of members. Indeed, the group perceived abolition to be 'essential to the improvement of agriculture and the increase of national wealth'.³⁷¹ The report highlighted the variety of individuals who were interested in colonization. For instance, Nathaniel and Philip Burwell owned ninety-three and sixty-one slaves respectively according to the 1820 census.³⁷² By contrast, Revered Alexander Balmain held just four slaves, while James Hite, with 19, can be described as a middle-ranking planter.³⁷³

³⁶⁶ R. S. Dunn, 'Black Society in the Chesapeake, 1776-1810', in I. Berlin & R. Hoffman (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), pp.63-65.

³⁶⁷ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County*, p.12.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

³⁷² [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County*, p.36; for information on Nathaniel Burwell, see 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLZ-DV9> : accessed 22 October 2017), Nathaniel Burwell, Berryville, Frederick, Virginia, United States; citing p. 40, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 138, FHL microfilm 193,697; 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLZ-DV9> : accessed 22 October 2017), Philip Burwell, Berryville, Frederick, Virginia, United States; citing p. 40, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 138, FHL microfilm 193,697 holds Philip Burwell's record.

³⁷³ 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLZ-DMP> : accessed 23 October 2017), James M Hite, Front Royal, Frederick, Virginia, United States; citing p. 33, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 138, FHL microfilm 193,697 contains Hite's details; for information about Balmain, see 'United States Census, 1820,' database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHLZ-69C> : accessed 23 October 2017), Alexander Balmain, Winchester, Frederick, Virginia, United States; citing p. 46, NARA microfilm publication M33, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 138, FHL microfilm 193,697.

The role of Virginian women in the ACS is equally noteworthy. As Eva Sheppard Wolf demonstrates, women were prominent in local branches of the ACS.³⁷⁴ In 1820, the Frederick County Auxiliary society recorded that 'female exertions' had raised more than \$146 which would be used 'for the purchase of clothes to be distributed by the agents of the Society among the unlettered sons and daughters of Africa'.³⁷⁵ Individual women affirmed their support for the concept in correspondence. For instance, Nancy Turner Hall argued that it was 'a natural impossibility that they [blacks] ... could ever enjoy the privileges of free citizens among the whites in this country'.³⁷⁶ Equally, in a letter penned following the Nat Turner rebellion, Mary Lee Custis labelled Africa 'the only proper outlet for the coloured population'.³⁷⁷

Colonization enjoyed support amongst leading Virginians. The Loudoun County Auxiliary Society was backed by prominent figures like Charles Ball, Ludwell Lee, William Ellzey and Asa Moore, in addition to the Quaker abolitionists Israel Janney and Mahlon Taylor.³⁷⁸ Moreover, James Madison's faith in deportation increased in the nineteenth century.³⁷⁹ When the American Colonization Society was founded in 1816, Madison - who was serving his second term as President of the United States - confided to a friend that he supported the group because it would rid Virginia of 'the calamity of its black population'.³⁸⁰ In 1819, furthermore, he asserted that 'To be consistent with existing and probably unalterable prejudices in the United States, the freed blacks ought to be permanently removed beyond the region occupied by, or allotted to, a white population'.³⁸¹ The Nat Turner slave revolt increased Madison's support for colonization. When writing to Thomas R. Dew in February 1833, Madison certainly discussed 'the inadmissibility of emancipation without deportation'.³⁸² In fact, he rejected Dew's criticism of the repatriation movement by asserting that the aims of the society were 'preferable to a torpid acquiescence in a perpetuation of slavery, or an extinguishment of it by convulsions more disastrous in their character and consequences than slavery itself'.³⁸³

³⁷⁴ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.168.

³⁷⁵ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County*, p.12.

³⁷⁶ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.169.

³⁷⁷ M. L. Custis, 'Letter', Arlington, 6 October 1831, Custis, Mary Lee (Fitzhugh), (1788-1853) papers, 1818-1902, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C9695a, p.1.

³⁷⁸ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.280.

³⁷⁹ Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.628.

³⁸⁰ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.401.

³⁸¹ Madison, 'To Robert J. Evans', in Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, Vol. 3, p.134.

³⁸² Madison, 'To Thomas R. Dew', in Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, Vol. 4, p.275; McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, p.301; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.628; the wider effect of the Nat Turner insurrection is demonstrated in P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.179.

³⁸³ Madison, 'To Thomas R. Dew', in Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, Vol. 4, p.275; Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.636.

Much of Madison's support for colonization arose from his belief that 'the racial prejudices that existed' in Virginia made the successful integration of the two races impossible.³⁸⁴ This fear was voiced to Harriet Martineau, who reported that Madison maintained 'the negroes must go somewhere' due to the vast growth in Virginia's African-American population. Madison 'pointed out' to Martineau 'how the free States discourage the settlement of blacks; how Canada disagrees with them; how Hayti shuts them out; so that Africa is their only refuge'.³⁸⁵

James Monroe also promoted colonization. At the 1829 Virginian constitutional convention, Monroe postulated that any manumission scheme needed to be accompanied by the removal of Virginia's African-Americans because white citizens 'would never be able to exercise equal political rights with blacks'.³⁸⁶ John Marshall was an equally prominent advocate. Marshall supported repatriation in numerous letters. For instance, he discussed potential locations where emancipated slaves could be deported in 1827. In particular, Marshall thought that Liberia represented a possible destination, for 'The colony' was 'rapidly advancing to a state of solidity ... which will make it so great an object to our people of colour ... as to justify the hope that the colonization society may soon be relieved from the expence [sic] of transporting those who wish to remove to that country'.³⁸⁷ Equally, in a note addressed to the head of the American Colonization Society - Ralph Gurley - in 1831, Marshall claimed that 'The re<mo>val of our coloured population is I think a common object, <by> no means confined to the slave states'.³⁸⁸ However, Marshall was reluctant to let his support for colonization appear in public. Therefore, he refused to comply with Gurley's request to publish his outlook on the subject, for he had 'long since formed a resolution against appearing in print on any occasion'.³⁸⁹

Moreover, John Taylor of Caroline County announced his backing for the removal of Virginia's African-American population in 1814. Rather than seeing colonization as a way to effect the abolition of slavery, Taylor's ambition was to rid Virginia of its free blacks, on whom he attributed the state's agricultural deficiencies.³⁹⁰ Indeed, he claimed that 'this middle class' of people were 'undoubtedly placed in a state of misery itself', which 'contributes greatly to that of' both masters and slaves.³⁹¹ Thus, he appealed for the

³⁸⁴ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.68.

³⁸⁵ Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, Vol. 2, p.5.

³⁸⁶ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.92.

³⁸⁷ Marshall, 'Slavery and Colonization', in Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings*, p.675.

³⁸⁸ The quote, including brackets, is derived from Marshall, 'To Ralph R. Gurley', in Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12, p.132.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.131.

³⁹⁰ Taylor, *Arator*, pp.57-58.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.59.

Virginian legislature to purchase lands in non-slaveholding territories where free African-Americans could be expatriated. Taylor believed that 'No injury ... is perceivable in the measure'.³⁹²

Colonization even received support from Christian observers. The Presbyterian preacher J. D. Paxton certainly endeavoured to create an auxiliary group of the ACS in Cumberland County before leaving the state in 1826.³⁹³ Paxton lauded the ACS for three reasons. First, he thought that expatriation to Africa would 'benefit that country, by introducing Christianity and civilization there'. He, too, calculated that the measure would 'benefit those coloured people who might go out, by placing them in a situation where they would be free'. Finally, the pastor asserted 'that it would benefit our beloved country, by the effect its success would have on the public mind and the whole system of slavery among us'.³⁹⁴

Newspapers frequently published articles in favour of colonization. The anti-slavery *Genius of Liberty* was a regular advocate of the measure. In an extract that appeared in April 1819, it was claimed: 'That a colony of the free people of colour of the U. States may be planted and protected on the western coast of Africa, at little comparative expense, can no longer be questioned'.³⁹⁵ In another dispatch, published in *The Genius* in October 1821, 'A Friend to Colonization' praised the American Colonization Society's mission to repatriate 'free people of colour, with their own consent, in some fertile and salubrious country, on the western coast of Africa'.³⁹⁶

A series of pro-colonization articles were printed in the *Richmond Enquirer* in 1825 and 1826 in response to criticism of the movement. The initial riposte was penned by 'A Member of the ACS', who lambasted opponents of expatriation for having 'passed judgment in a cause which you have not heard [*sic*]'.³⁹⁷ Endeavouring to assuage doubts about the motives of the movement, 'A Member' declared that the aim of colonizationists was to ensure 'the "removal of the free coloured people of the United States to the coast of Africa, with their own consent"'.³⁹⁸ Another proponent, 'Opimius', then penned seven pro-colonization articles. In his first dispatch, Opimius highlighted the prejudiced element of the ACS' motives, informing readers: 'Whoever is at all conversant with the character of

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.3.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

³⁹⁵ 'From the Second Annual Report of the American Colonization Society', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 14, 20 April 1819, p.1. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18190420>.

³⁹⁶ 'For the Genius of Liberty', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 39, 9 October 1821, p.3. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18211009>.

³⁹⁷ [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius*, p.30.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

the free coloured population of our country, must be satisfied that it is a source of evil rather than of good to us'.³⁹⁹ Opimius refuted accusations that the ACS was acting in consort with Virginia's abolition societies by asserting that the allegation was 'disproved, not only by the fact that it has uniformly found in those Societies its bitterest and most persevering enemies, but that it differs from them on the very principle of their existence'.⁴⁰⁰

Advocates of the solution felt that their endeavours to swell support for expatriation were gradually succeeding. In late 1827, leaders of the Powhatan County Auxiliary Society perceived 'a visible change in public opinion, in favour of the society' following the establishment of a colony in Liberia. In fact, they believed 'It may safely be assumed that their [sic] is not a man in the community, who has given the subject a moment's consideration, who does not regard the existence of the free people of colour, in the bosom of the country, as an evil of immense magnitude'.⁴⁰¹

Even Virginians who emancipated their slaves - and were generally regarded as abolitionists - backed endeavours to remove blacks from America. For instance, Edward Coles maintained that 'the difficulties attending the emancipation & transportation of the vast number of Negroes now in Va. ... appeared to me as dust in the balance compared to the innumerable evils & perilous consequences resulting from the continuance among you ... of a race of beings so dissimilar'.⁴⁰² The growing chorus in support of colonization meant that Jefferson was no longer alone in advocating the measure, as he had been for much of the late eighteenth century. In fact, the reverse was true.

Despite maintaining his private backing for colonization, it is undeniable that some proponents of expatriation offered far more support for the cause than Jefferson. Principally, most advocates of the measure embraced the motives of the American Colonization Society following its creation in 1816. Indeed, Virginia's legislators immediately passed a notion in support of the group.⁴⁰³ Moreover, lawmakers continued to expatriate convicted African-Americans who were deemed to be 'a fit object for

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.37.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁴⁰¹ Powhatan Colonization Society: Petition, Powhatan County, 1827-12-20, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

⁴⁰² E. Coles, 'Letters of Edward Coles: Edward Coles to Thomas Jefferson', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Second Series, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Apr., 1927), p.106.

⁴⁰³ Slaughter, *The Virginian History of African Colonization*, p.v.

transportation'.⁴⁰⁴ For instance, Tom Finch was recommended for repatriation in 1810 after being found guilty of raping 'Dolly Boasman a free mulatto woman'. A year later, the Governor of Virginia - John Tyler - demanded that Joseph Hill be transported rather than executed for murdering his owner.⁴⁰⁵ Equally, Laurence Voinard from Petersburg was placed up 'for sale and transportation' after initially being sentenced to death for burglary in 1816.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, Virginian judges frequently ruled that free blacks should be removed from the state. In 1822, legislators rejected the appeals of Charlotte and her four children - who had formerly been labourers of the Northumberland County planter John Harrison - to remain in Virginia. Comparably, the residency claims of Betty Good and her son were denied by officials in 1825.⁴⁰⁷

Prominent figures on the national stage like James Madison, John Marshall and James Monroe also did more to support the repatriation movement than Jefferson. In fact, all three were granted lifetime membership of the American Colonization Society. By contrast, Jefferson failed to join the organization.⁴⁰⁸ Madison followed the evolution of the ACS closely and became more involved after his Presidency ended in 1817. Accordingly, he claimed to feel 'the greatest pleasure at the progress already made by the Society' in December 1831.⁴⁰⁹ He accepted Ralph Gurley's invitation to become President of the movement two years later. In his note of receipt, Madison expressed his pride at assuming a title that possessed 'a value of which I am deeply sensible'.⁴¹⁰ Madison responded to his promotion by donating 'fifty dollars' to the association. This devotion was demonstrated again when he bequeathed money to the group in his will.⁴¹¹ Moreover, Madison contradicted Jefferson by consistently arguing for federal involvement in the financing of the plan. Overall, Madison calculated that \$600 million needed to be provided by the

⁴⁰⁴ Finch, George L: Public Claim, New Kent County, 1810-05-22, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

⁴⁰⁵ Finch, George L: Public Claim, New Kent County, 1810-11-22, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2; Hill, Sr, William, Estate of: Public Claim, Prince Edward County, 1811-08-13, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.6.

⁴⁰⁶ Voinard, Joseph: Public Claim, York County, 1816-07-22, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2.

⁴⁰⁷ Charlotte et al.: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Northumberland County, 1822, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1-2; Goff, Betsey: Petition to Remain in the Commonwealth, Henrico County, 1825, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-3.

⁴⁰⁸ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.634; Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p.70; Brant, *The Fourth President*, p.611.

⁴⁰⁹ J. Madison, 'To R. R. Gurley', Montpelier, 28 December 1831, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 4: 1828 - 1836 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.213; Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.96.

⁴¹⁰ J. Madison, 'To the Revd R. R. Gurley', Montpelier, 19 February 1833, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 4: 1828 - 1836 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.274; Brant, *The Fourth President*, p.636; Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.607.

⁴¹¹ J. Madison, 'To P. R. Fendall', Montpelier, 12 June 1833, in J. Madison, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States*, Vol. 4: 1828 - 1836 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), p.302.

national government to complete the ACS' mission.⁴¹² Madison and Jefferson disagreed again over the preferred destination for the relocation of America's slaves. While the pair had previously argued that territories to the west of Virginia offered hope for colonizationists, by the 1820s Madison favoured Africa as the destination for repatriation.⁴¹³

Equally, John Marshall's support for the ACS was unflinching. In 1819, he recorded paying a \$30 subscription fee to the society.⁴¹⁴ Marshall's importance to the ACS increased in subsequent years. First, he helped create the Richmond Auxiliary branch in 1823 after admitting to feeling 'a deep interest in the success of the society' in a letter composed to Ralph R. Gurley.⁴¹⁵ More importantly, he was elected President of the Virginia Colonization Society in 1825. Nine years later Marshall was one of sixteen citizens who combined to raise \$5,000 to help the ACS reduce its debts.⁴¹⁶ Marshall used his senior role in the foundation to help a black man and his family achieve their aim of moving to Liberia in 1828.⁴¹⁷ Additionally, he offered his slaves incentives to leave Virginia. In his will, the judge affirmed his desire to emancipate his 'faithful servant Robin' and give him \$100 if he opted to depart for Liberia. Conversely, Robin was only to receive \$50 if he decided to stay in Virginia.⁴¹⁸ Marshall and Jefferson also disagreed over where Virginia's slaves should be exiled. Thus, while Jefferson was increasingly averse to removing African-Americans to Liberia, Marshall thought that 'The only secure asylum within our reach - beneficial for them and safe for us - is Africa'.⁴¹⁹

James Monroe's actions revealed his pro-colonization ideals. Monroe - in his capacity as American President - requested that Congress donate \$100,000 to help the American Colonization Society establish a colony in Liberia in 1819.⁴²⁰ Overall, Monroe's support for the group was such that the capital of Liberia was named Monrovia in his honour. Monroe, too, assumed the status of Vice President of the Richmond auxiliary

⁴¹² Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.81.

⁴¹³ Ketcham, *James Madison*, p.626.

⁴¹⁴ J. Marshall, 'Answering "Hampden"', Richmond, 17 June 1819, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2001), p.467; Smith, *John Marshall*, p.489.

⁴¹⁵ Marshall, 'Colonizing Freed Slaves', in Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings*, p.749.

⁴¹⁶ Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p.224; Smith, *John Marshall*, p.490.

⁴¹⁷ J. Marshall, 'To Francis Key Scott', Richmond, 24 October 1828, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 11: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, April 1827 - December 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p.177; Smith, *John Marshall*, pp.489-490.

⁴¹⁸ J. Marshall, 'Will and Codicils', 9 April 1832 - 3 July 1835, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006), p.198.

⁴¹⁹ Marshall, 'Slavery and Colonization', in Hobson (ed.), *John Marshall: Writings*, p.675; Marshall re-affirmed this belief in a letter of 1835. See J. Marshall, 'To Unknown', Washington, 8 February 1835, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1831 - July 1835. With Addendum, June 1783 - January 1829* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.454; Jefferson, 'To William Short', in Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10, p.362.

⁴²⁰ Unger, *The Last Founding Father*, p.298.

branch of the ACS and was elected President of the Loudoun County group.⁴²¹ He publicly supported colonization at the 1829 Virginian constitutional convention. Monroe's argument in favour of colonization was twofold. First, he claimed that - should slaves be freed and allowed to remain in Virginia - 'they never can enjoy equal rights with the white population'. Further, he worried that 'if emancipated, interminable war would ensue'.⁴²²

Colonization plans surged in popularity following Nat Turner's rebellion. Most delegates at the 1832 slavery debates certainly conceded that Virginia's black population threatened state security. For instance, Thomas Marshall claimed there could be 'No doubt' that 'a class of that description, when sufficiently numerous, is peculiarly dangerous to society'.⁴²³ Similarly, Philip Bolling of Buckingham County asserted that Virginia's labourers were 'extremely fanatical; and, therefore, always dangerous'.⁴²⁴ Accordingly, the 1832 conference contained frequent allusions to the popularity of colonization. John Chandler certainly proclaimed himself 'decidedly in favor of the principle of declaring that all slaves born after 1840 ... if they remain in the state, shall be forfeited to the commonwealth, with a view to their transportation at the public expense to Africa'.⁴²⁵

Published works in support of colonization also appeared in 1832, with Mathew Carey - an Irish born economist and leading exponent of repatriation proposals - releasing his *Letters on the Colonization Society*. Carey advocated colonization for two reasons. Principally, he thought slavery was 'ruinous to the whites' because it 'retards improvement - roots out an industrious population, banishes the yeomanry of the country - deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support'.⁴²⁶ Equally, he believed that free African-Americans could not live peacefully in Virginia. Carey claimed: 'it is only necessary to cast a furtive glance at the scenes in St. Domingo, and the various insurrections planned and attempted in this country, to be satisfied that the subject has not hitherto attracted that consideration ... to which it is entitled by its great magnitude and importance'.⁴²⁷

The growing support for colonization amongst state leaders was reflected amongst less prominent citizens, who increasingly lobbied legislators to enact laws ensuring the

⁴²¹ Scherr, 'Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799', in *The Historian*, pp.576-577.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ Marshall, *The Speech of Thomas Marshall*, p.10.

⁴²⁴ Bolling, *The Speeches of Philip A. Bolling*, p.4.

⁴²⁵ Chandler, *The Speech of John A. Chandler*, p.9.

⁴²⁶ M. Carey, *Letters on the Colonization Society: and on its Probable Results, Under the Following Heads: The Origin of the Society; Increase of the Coloured Population; Manumission of Slaves in this country; Declarations of Legislatures, and other Assembled Bodies, in Favour of the Society* (Philadelphia: Johnson, 1832), p.27. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006539533>.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.14.

repatriation of Virginia's free African-American population. Many lower profile residents in Albemarle County were more active than Jefferson in their support for the colonization movement. Indeed, an auxiliary group was created in the county and remained 'active in the first half of the nineteenth century'. Locals like John Terrell took concrete actions in support of the group. Terrell provided for the emancipation of his slaves and their removal to Liberia in his will.⁴²⁸

Members of the Virginia Colonization Society did far more to buttress the repatriation cause than Jefferson. This included petitioning legislators in 1828. In their note to lawmakers, the group described the existence of free African-Americans as 'a positive evil' which 'imperiously calls for some adequate remedy'. Accordingly, the signatories appealed for funds to be granted to the movement, reasoning: 'Virginia indeed may emphatically be said to be the mother of the colonization plan'.⁴²⁹ Local branches of the society were equally prepared to challenge authority. For instance, John Tinsley and James Clarke, Secretary and President of the Powhatan Auxiliary Society, wrote to the Virginia General Assembly requesting financial assistance to help with the expatriation of free blacks in 1827.⁴³⁰

Two petitions in favour of colonization were composed following Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831. First, residents from Prince William County appealed to the Virginia General Assembly. Stressing that 'An evil has existed among us from almost the first settlement of the Commonwealth, of the heaviest and most serious character', the signatories demanded that lawmakers guarantee the removal of Virginia's black population, 'whose presence deforms our land'.⁴³¹ The citizens demonstrated the popularity of their idea by proclaiming: 'there are many of our people who would voluntarily surrender now ... all of this property owned by them, to the Commonwealth, provided means were dedicated to their removal and comfortable maintenance out of the limits of the United States'.⁴³²

A comparable petition from Augusta County called for legislators 'to raise and appropriate money to transport free persons of Colour to the coast of Africa, and also, the

⁴²⁸ J. L. Cooper, *A Guide to Historic Charlottesville & Albemarle County, Virginia* (London: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p.78.

⁴²⁹ Colonization Society of Virginia: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1828-12-17, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.2 & 3.

⁴³⁰ Powhatan Colonization Society: Petition, Powhatan County, 1827-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4.

⁴³¹ Citizens: Petition, Prince William County, 1831-12-29, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p.3.

power to purchase slaves and transport them likewise'.⁴³³ Overall, the *Richmond Recorder* estimated that 1,200 citizens from across twelve counties had asked for legislators to devise 'some provisions ... for the removal of the free negroes from the commonwealth' in the aftermath of the Nat Turner revolt.⁴³⁴ Equally, the *Recorder* reported that petitions from a further six counties had been signed by 398 people requesting that the United States' government 'assist in ridding us of the black population'.⁴³⁵

Some Quakers contended that expatriation was the most practical way to abolish slavery. Indeed, a group of Friends from Nelson County sent a petition to Virginia's leaders in 1832 requesting 'the enactment of a law making provision for the gradual emancipation and transportation of slaves from ... our state by sending him to the coast of affrica [*sic*]'.⁴³⁶ The signatories' desire to see the plan implemented was such that they 'would chearfully [*sic*] submit to a small increas [*sic*] in our tax if necessary to be applied to providing a place for colonizing and to the transportation of the increasing part of the free persons of collour [*sic*]'.⁴³⁷ This appeal was buttressed by Friends from Charles City County, who asked state authorities to declare 'that all persons born in the State after some period to be fixed by law, shall be free, and also that ... Virginia, provide some territory, or solicit the aid of the United States in providing one for the formation of a colony for people of colour'. The Charles City letter was signed by Fleming Bates, a prominent Quaker of the epoch.⁴³⁸

In contrast to Jefferson, some slaveholders arranged for their bondsmen to be expatriated. For instance, the Cumberland County pastor J. D. Paxton agreed for his slaves to be sent to Africa, having become convinced that 'their prospects for doing well, permanently, were better at Liberia than in this country, either in the free or the slave-holding States'.⁴³⁹ Paxton's decision was influenced by what he considered to be the prevailing 'feeling' in Virginia, which was 'not only in favour of colonizing them, but of doing it beyond the limits of our country'.⁴⁴⁰ Many planters followed Paxton's lead. Thus, John Alexander Binns of Loudoun County left instruction in his will for all his slaves to be emancipated when they reached twenty-five years old, provided they could be 'relocated outside the state'.⁴⁴¹ Equally, the Virginian Colonization Society published a list of twenty-

⁴³³ Inhabitants: Petition, Augusta County, 1831-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; also see Inhabitants: Petition, Fauquier County, 1831-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴³⁴ [Anon], *From Richmond Enquirer of 4 February 1832: 'The Letter of Appomatox to the People of Virginia'*, pp.7-8.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁴³⁶ Voters: Petition, Nelson County, 1832-12-19, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ Society of Friends (Quakers): Petition, 1831-12-14, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

⁴³⁹ Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.4.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.157.

⁴⁴¹ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.265.

three slaves who had been sent to Liberia by Thomas Pretlow of Southampton County in 1831.⁴⁴² Furthermore, Susanna Mead of Frederick County bequeathed funds to the ACS in her will, as she thought it 'an object best worthy of encouraging, as it embraces two objects of the dearest import'.⁴⁴³ Moreover, after arguing that 'great, and eternal freedom is dawning on this long injured people', Mead emancipated three of her slaves - Lucy and her two daughters - and requested that her brother and sister purchase 'Andrew the husband of the elder Lucy, and if they are thought proper persons for the African colony to offer them a residence there'.⁴⁴⁴

Given this enthusiasm for colonization, it is worth considering why Jefferson did not do more to support either local or national expatriation movements. There were several differences between Jefferson's proposal and the ideals of the ACS. Perhaps the greatest divergence arose from the fact that 'the African Colonization Society advocated voluntary migration', whereas Jefferson believed African-Americans should not be given the option of staying in America.⁴⁴⁵ Equally, the ACS contended that those who elected to leave America should be colonized to Liberia. By contrast, Jefferson thought that Africa represented a 'last & undoubted resort'. Instead he preferred to advocate reaching a deal with the new black Republic in Saint Domingue or a Caribbean island.⁴⁴⁶ Revisionist historians have also taken Jefferson's later ambivalence as evidence that he had reconciled himself to the continuance of slavery by the end of his life.⁴⁴⁷

All these explanations are valid. Furthermore, it is true that Jefferson was not the only Virginian to be sceptical of the American Colonization Society and its aims. There were still many Virginians who were not enthused by repatriation proposals. For instance, Congressman William Giles thought such schemes were an 'illegitimate, dangerous and impracticable anomaly in political science; and the most cruel in its consequences ... to the aboriginal commiserated Africans'.⁴⁴⁸ Giles was equally scathing in his assessment of ACS

⁴⁴² American Colonization Society, Virginia Branch, list, 1831, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss4Am353a1, p.1.

⁴⁴³ 'Will, 1820, of Susanna Meade.', Custis, Mary Lee (Fitzhugh) (1788-1853), papers, 1818-1902, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C9695a, p.1.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.105; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.171.

⁴⁴⁶ Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics*, p.105.

⁴⁴⁷ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, pp.206-207; Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, p.124.

⁴⁴⁸ Giles, 'Letter to Marquis de Lafayette', in Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies*, p.3.

members, who he characterised as 'fanatics and enthusiasts of all descriptions'.⁴⁴⁹ Consequently, in 1827 he conceded 'that, however painful and reluctant the admission, we must, in my judgment, of necessity submit to all the inconveniences of a mixed population for some time to come'.⁴⁵⁰ Giles received support from the pro-slavery commentator Thomas Roderick Dew, who defended slavery in 1832 by concluding 'that every plan of emancipation and deportation which we can possibly conceive, is *totally* impracticable'.⁴⁵¹

Moreover, Virginian lawyer George Tucker lost faith in the viability of the ACS' objectives. In a speech delivered to Congress during the Missouri Crisis, Tucker admitted to having 'long since abandoned the hope of deriving any remedy for the evil of domestic slavery from this quarter'.⁴⁵² Thus, although he had previously been 'an advocate for colonization', Tucker thought 'every project for ridding the country of its black population' was 'utterly hopeless and impracticable'.⁴⁵³

Uncertainty about the motives of the Colonization Society was highlighted in a letter that appeared in *The Genius of Liberty* on 1 June 1819. In the dispatch, a correspondent - writing under the pseudonym 'Cassius' - suggested that those who campaigned for repatriation 'may be possibly mistaken in their judgement'.⁴⁵⁴ 'Cassius' highlighted a prevalent criticism of colonization by stressing that the cost of removing the United States' African-American population would reach more 'than four millions of dollars'. This figure did not include the price of feeding and clothing the former slaves. Cassius predicted that these considerations would add an extra six million dollars to the overall cost.⁴⁵⁵

A detailed critique of expatriation appeared in a series of letters composed to the *Richmond Enquirer* by an observer writing under the pseudonym 'Caius Gracchus' in 1825 and 1826. 'Gracchus', who admitted to entertaining 'apprehensions' about colonization in his earlier addresses, was especially concerned about the purpose of the American Colonization Society.⁴⁵⁶ Gracchus alleged that the group's overarching goal was the eradication of slavery. Abolition was unpalatable to Gracchus, who proclaimed 'that there are many very well-informed politicians in this country, and good philanthropists too, who

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, p.8.

⁴⁵² Tucker, *Speech of Mr. Tucker, of Virginia, on the Restriction of Slavery in Missouri*, p.15.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ 'For the Genius of Liberty. Colonization Scheme', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 20, 1 June 1819, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://viriniachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18190601>.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius*, p.6.

have not been able to see all the horrors in Southern slavery which some of the busy rotaries of your scheme have imagined'.⁴⁵⁷

Colonization groups noted the animosity that was directed at them. In their 1820 annual report, for instance, the Frederick County auxiliary society complained of 'the misrepresentations of some who are either ignorant of, or hostile to, the objects of the Society'.⁴⁵⁸ Similar testimony was provided by the Powhatan County movement. In a petition delivered to the Virginia General Assembly in December 1827, members of the group lamented that 'No sooner had the Society commenced ... than it saw itself surrounded on all sides with difficulties ... its scheme was proclaimed to be altogether visionary; and predictions of its total failure, were constantly and confidently uttered'.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, advocates from Lunenburg County claimed 'that the scheme of American Colonization, has been strenuously opposed at every stage, by distinguished politicians and publick'.⁴⁶⁰ Finally, Mary Lee Custis - grand-daughter of George Washington - affirmed her disappointment that the Nat Turner 'insurrection hath unfortunately not produced a corresponding feeling' in favour of deportation.⁴⁶¹

Lower profile Virginians also registered their opposition to repatriation by requesting that legislators permit individual African-Americans to remain in Virginia following their emancipation. In 1816, Lodwick Quarles, a resident from Albemarle County, demonstrated that his former master - John Bourne - had liberated his slaves and asked for permission for them to remain as freemen in the state.⁴⁶² Equally, Alpheas Beall - a planter from Brook County - requested that assembly members allow his 'four women of colour' to stay in Virginia following their manumission in 1825 so that he could 'provide ... for their support after his death'.⁴⁶³ The belief that African-Americans could live freely in Virginia appeared again in the will of John Mason, which included provisions to ensure that 'NEGROE ANTHONY should live where he has lately built him a House ... rent free during life and provided he behaves well ... and likewise that ANNE JEFFERSON should enjoy the same privilege where she now lives if she chooses it upon the same terms'.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁴⁵⁸ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County*, p.4.

⁴⁵⁹ Powhatan Colonization Society: Petition, Powhatan County, 20-12-1827, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁶⁰ Board of Managers of the Lynchburg Colonization Society: Petition, Lynchburg (City), 1828-01-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3-4.

⁴⁶¹ M. L. Custis, 'Letter', Arlington, 6 October 1831, Custis, Mary Lee (Fitzhugh), (1788-1853) papers, 1818-1902, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C9695a, p.3.

⁴⁶² Quarles, Lodwick: Petition to Remain in The Commonwealth, Albemarle County, 1816, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.5.

⁴⁶³ Beall, Alpheas: Petition, Brooke County, 1825-12-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁶⁴ Griffith (ed.), *Pittsylvania County, Virginia: Register of Free Negroes*, pp.225-226.

Others presented affidavits to ensure that African-Americans were registered to stay in Virginia. Ann Adams of Alexandria County backed the claims of both Letty and Daniel Edwards through written documents on 12 January 1826.⁴⁶⁵ Similarly, James Shields, Loudon Warner and Ann L. Morgan were aided by the testimony of Amos Alexander in January and May 1826. Moreover, James Harris penned documents in support of Nancy, Martha and Rebecca Henson in August 1826, while Dennis Johnston did similar for Nancy and Sally Evans in September 1826.⁴⁶⁶

Statistics demonstrate that both state and national colonization movements were largely unsuccessful. In fact, just one percent of African-Americans living in the United States in 1820 were expatriated to Liberia.⁴⁶⁷ Colonization proposals were hampered by numerous weaknesses. Principally, nearly all those who advocated the removal of Virginia's slaves insisted that masters receive compensation for the loss of their bondsmen. This made enforcement of the scheme unlikely, for 'Even if dedicated entirely to buying and deporting slaves, Virginia's annual budget could not stop the increase in slave numbers - much less fulfil the fantasy of eliminating black people in America while respecting the property of whites'.⁴⁶⁸

Other factors hindered colonization. Particularly important was the lack of desire amongst African-Americans to leave their homeland. This aversion increased when reports of poor living conditions and disease started to emerge from those who had moved to Liberia.⁴⁶⁹ The radical preacher David Walker elucidated the African-American perspective on repatriation when, in 1829, he argued that 'America is more our country, than it is the whites - we have enriched it with our *blood and tears*'.⁴⁷⁰ Jefferson acknowledged the reluctance of Virginia's black population to leave the land of their upbringing when discussing colonization with Jared Sparks in 1824. Jefferson argued that many African-Americans, if offered the chance to be resettled, 'will say "we will not go"'.⁴⁷¹

Finally, a distrust of federal involvement in the scheme played a large role in the eventual failure of the ACS to gain acceptance amongst southern planters. Following the Missouri dispute, Virginian delegates became increasingly wary of the American

⁴⁶⁵ Provine (ed.), *Alexandria County, Virginia: Free Negro Registers*, p.27.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.27-29 holds all these examples.

⁴⁶⁷ N. Guyatt, "'The Outskirts of Our Happiness": Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (March 2009), p.987.

⁴⁶⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, pp.402-403.

⁴⁶⁹ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, pp.284-285; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.403.

⁴⁷⁰ A. Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.117.

⁴⁷¹ Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Boles & Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew*, p.121; Jefferson, 'A Plan of Emancipation', in Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, p.1485.

Government's motives for funding the proposal.⁴⁷² Popular scepticism was voiced in newspaper articles. Indeed, Caius Gracchus objected to the movement because it relied on aid from the national government. Gracchus thought this fact made expatriation impossible, for 'the Federal Government has no right to hold a *permanent Colony*, or to do general deeds of charity'.⁴⁷³ Although he never echoed this perspective, it is entirely possible that Jefferson entertained similar doubts given his strong opposition to Federal involvement in the Missouri crisis.

Conclusion: A Divided State

The epoch between 1809 and 1832 represented a pivotal stage in the development of thoughts surrounding slavery and race in Virginia. While it is arguable that the institution was still slightly vulnerable to attack in the era from 1789 to 1809, there is no doubt that it had become an untouchable feature of everyday life by the conclusion of the 1832 debates.⁴⁷⁴ In many respects, Thomas Jefferson's struggle with slavery reflected state-wide difficulties over the issue. For instance, although he continued to stress his distaste for the institution, Jefferson took no practical steps to undermine it. The same can be said of many of his peers, including James Madison, James Monroe and John Marshall, all of whom died in possession of slaves despite frequently denouncing slavery in private. Jefferson's stance during the Missouri Controversy was especially popular. Indeed, it was nearly impossible to find Virginians who disagreed with his stern line on 'diffusion' or his opposition to the compromise which eventually enabled both Maine and Missouri to join the Union.⁴⁷⁵

Some of Jefferson's beliefs about ownership also reflected broader trends in his native state. Many Virginians claimed - like Jefferson - that their slaves were better treated than bondsmen in other areas of the country and European servants.⁴⁷⁶ Nonetheless, most planters still traded labourers with little thought for the negative effect the practice had on slave communities. They also continued chasing runaways. Moreover, Jefferson's dealings with frequent offenders like Jame Hubbard demonstrate that he was more prepared to wield his power than he had been in his early political career. In this respect, he had undoubtedly become more Virginian in his outlook.

⁴⁷² Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.403; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.176.

⁴⁷³ [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius*, p.17.

⁴⁷⁴ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.136.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴⁷⁶ Marshall, *The Speech of Thomas Marshall*, pp.5-6; Madison, 'James Madison's Attitude Toward the Negro', in *The Journal of Negro History*, p.77.

Racial prejudice akin to that stated by Jefferson remained common. It is undeniable that newspapers and private diaries often contained statements attesting to the degraded intelligence of African-Americans. James Madison, John Marshall, John Taylor and St. George Tucker all represented high-profile planters who made derogatory remarks about black ability between 1809 and 1832.⁴⁷⁷ Similarly, petitions delivered in Charlotte and Isle of Wight County in 1810 and 1817 demonstrated that many ordinary Virginians were reluctant to see African-Americans granted equal rights.⁴⁷⁸ Consequently, numerous Virginians joined Jefferson in calling for free blacks to be permanently removed from the state. In fact, the period between 1809 and 1832 represented the only era of this thesis in which Jefferson's support for colonization was shared by a significant amount of his contemporaries.

Nonetheless, this chapter highlights multiple reasons why we should not perceive nineteenth century Virginia through a Jeffersonian lens. For instance, Virginia became increasingly divided into pro and anti-slavery factions. Neither of these reflected Jefferson's later position. Thus, many in the state did far more to aid anti-slavery endeavours than Jefferson. In particular, high-profile statesmen opted to speak out against slavery at both the 1829 constitutional convention and the 1832 debates on the subject. Some, like Thomas Mann Randolph, even forwarded proposals for the abolition of the system, while Edward Coles defied Jefferson's advice by liberating his slaves and moving to Illinois.⁴⁷⁹ Moreover, James Monroe distanced himself from the predominant Virginian view of the Missouri Crisis and differed from Jefferson by publicly denouncing slavery at the constitutional convention.⁴⁸⁰ Lower profile Virginians also challenged the institution, with the Quakers and religious activists like J. D. Paxton taking a leading role. As in previous eras, men and women with far less property still freed their slaves, even with the added difficulties presented by the 1806 laws. By contrast, Jefferson only manumitted his personal valet and four members of the Hemings family who we now know were almost certainly his children.

However, these efforts were undermined by the growth of pro-slavery views that far exceeded any position maintained by Jefferson. Throughout the period, an increasing number of high-profile planters and statesmen - including John Taylor and Thomas

⁴⁷⁷ Taylor, *Arator*, p.117.

⁴⁷⁸ Citizens: Petition, Charlotte County, 1810-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., passim; Citizens: Petition, Isle of Wight County, 1817-12-09, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., passim.

⁴⁷⁹ R. Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), p.136.

⁴⁸⁰ [Anon] (ed.), 'Missouri Compromise', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, p.6; Shepherd, *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention*, p.172.

Roderick Dew - started to publicly contend that the institution should not be challenged. Indeed, the arguments presented by Dew and Taylor perfectly summarised the 'positive good' thesis that had been building since the Colonial era and would become a staple of pro-slavery thought throughout the Antebellum South.⁴⁸¹ The fact that both pro and anti-slavery representatives felt they could use Jefferson's example to buttress their position in 1832 makes clear that the former President's ultimately fitted in neither camp. Equally, it remained true that Jefferson's slaves were not subjected to the level of sustained cruelty that was being reported on other plantations.

However, little defence can be mounted of his perspectives on race. On this issue, Jefferson remained behind most of his elite peers and many less prominent members of society. In particular, citizens from across Virginian society signed petitions to ensure that free African-Americans were granted exemptions from Virginia's anti-black laws.⁴⁸² Similarly, leaders like Chief Justice John Marshall and Governor James Barbour supported slaves' claims to freedom and greater rights. Equally, the Quakers continued defying convention by providing for the education of the state's African-Americans, while the Presbyterian pastor J. D. Paxton illustrated that Dissenting leaders could still perceive blacks to be the intellectual equal of whites.⁴⁸³

Nor could Jefferson match the efforts of many of his contemporaries on colonization. Thus, although he continued backing expatriation in private, he failed to undertake any practical measures to support the newly formed American Colonization Society or the auxiliary groups that were created throughout Virginia. By contrast, James Madison, James Monroe and John Marshall all gave money to the cause and assumed leadership roles in local and state auxiliaries.⁴⁸⁴ Men and women of lower standing also buttressed the cause by donating money and sometimes slaves to auxiliary groups. Even when they could not do this, advocates of the solution petitioned Virginia's legislators for aid.⁴⁸⁵ Paradoxically, large numbers of Virginians remained opposed to colonization. Indeed, the fact that only 10,000 African-Americans from across the United States were ever settled in Liberia arguably demonstrates the significant scepticism that the American Colonization Society faced.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ Taylor, *Arator*, p.118; Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, p.8.

⁴⁸² Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, passim; Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.; Inhabitants: Petition, Petersburg, 1810-12-15, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

⁴⁸³ Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, p.276; Paxton, *Letters on Slavery*, p.35; Johnson, Samuel: Petition, Fauquier County, 1826-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Marshall, 'Endorsement of Petition of Free People of Color in Richmond', in Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 12, p.574.

⁴⁸⁴ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.634.

⁴⁸⁵ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County*, p.36.

⁴⁸⁶ Guyatt, "'The Outskirts of Our Happiness'", in *The Journal of American History*, p.987.

All these discoveries re-enforce the conclusions reached in earlier chapters. Principally, the above analysis has demonstrated that by placing Jefferson within the context of Virginian society, rather than viewing state-wide trends through a Jeffersonian prism, we can glimpse the multitude of different views that existed in nineteenth century Virginia. This makes it easier to see areas where Jefferson's thoughts were influenced by broader perspectives and aspects in which he diverged from popular opinion. Doing so further highlights the dangers in perceiving Jefferson to be representative of Virginian society.

Conclusion

When his first attempt to challenge slavery was rebuked by the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1769, Thomas Jefferson conceded 'that the public mind would not ... bear the proposition' of a general emancipation.¹ Sixty-three years later, Virginia's legislators again voted not to pursue proposals for a gradual manumission of the state's slave population following a month-long discussion in the wake of Nat Turner's insurrection. Shortly after the convention, Thomas Roderick Dew published his *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832*. The tract is widely perceived as the point at which Virginia became a pro-slavery state, for Dew employed many of the arguments that were used by Antebellum defenders of the institution.² For instance, he stated that African-Americans were too inferior to enjoy freedom in Virginia. Moreover, Dew ridiculed the colonization movement and stressed the benign nature of slaveholding in Old Dominion, before concluding 'that every plan of emancipation and deportation which we can possibly conceive, is *totally impracticable*'.³

This thesis started with three objectives. Primarily, it sought to answer scholarly appeals for Thomas Jefferson's opinions on slavery and race - as well as his conduct as a master - to be placed within the context of Virginian society between 1769 and 1832. It also aimed to increase our knowledge of broader Virginian views on these topics by analysing the statements of understudied members of the post-Revolutionary generation and employing a new method that incorporated the perspectives of those from a lesser station than Jefferson. Third, the project intended to challenge the widely held belief that Jefferson was a representative figure for his time.⁴

These goals have been accomplished in numerous ways. For instance, our understanding of Virginian perceptions on slavery, race and ownership has been improved by the wider focus employed in the study. Many important conclusions can be reached. Principally, the analysis has demonstrated that Dew's *Review* was not the seminal moment

¹ T. Jefferson, 'Autobiography 1743-1790. *With the Declaration of Independence*', 6 January 1821, in M. D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p.44.

² A. Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility: Manumission in Brunswick County, Virginia, 1782-1862', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (Nov., 2004), p.557; W. S. Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), pp.87-88.

³ T. R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832* (Richmond: T. W. White, 1832), p.8.

⁴ W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p.429; W. W. Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Feb., 1972), p.82; F. D. Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.206; P. Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery: "Treason Against the Hopes of the World"', in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.186.

that some scholars have believed.⁵ Indeed, previous chapters have shown that Dew's pamphlet pieced together arguments that had been circulating since the Colonial era. As early as 1764, for instance, Arthur Lee postulated that Old Dominion's slaves enjoyed better living and working conditions than European labourers.⁶ The claim was frequently repeated by Virginian statesmen - including Jefferson, James Madison and William Giles - in subsequent years.⁷ Equally, assertions of racial inferiority appeared in newspapers before the American Revolution and famously found expression in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.⁸ Meanwhile, proposals for colonization and gradual emancipation never received anything approaching majority backing in Virginia, as proponents of the institution keenly emphasised.⁹ Furthermore, the historic examples of Greece and Rome were evoked alongside Biblical passages by elites to boost support for slavery in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰ While it is true that these opinions were not aired as regularly in the post-Revolutionary era as they were in 1832, the previous chapters illustrate that wealthy figures were prepared to deploy pro-slavery discourse whenever they felt the future of the system was threatened.

Importantly, this evaluation has shown that comparable perceptions were held by many ordinary Virginians. In 1785, Methodist petitioners from Pittsylvania and Frederick Counties lamented the popularity of arguments stressing the inferiority of African-Americans.¹¹ Moreover, petitions that attracted thousands of signatures between 1782 and 1786 defended slaveholding on the grounds of property rights, racial differences and the

⁵ Budros, 'Social Shocks and Slave Social Mobility', in *American Journal of Sociology*, p.557; M. D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.50.

⁶ A. Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America from A Censure of Mr Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. With Some Reflections on Slavery in General. By an American* (London: T. Becket & P. A. De Hondt, 1764), p.25.

⁷ T. Jefferson, 'To Joel Yancey', Monticello, 17 January 1819, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.43; G. Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia, on the Subject of the late Conspiracy of the Slaves; with a Proposal for their Colonization* (Baltimore: Bonsal & Niles, 1801), p.9. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008677246>; W. B. Giles, 'Letter to Marquis de Lafayette', Richmond, 20 August 1829, in W. B. Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies* (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1829), p.10. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100734248>, p.10; J. Madison, 'To Robert Walsh', Montpelier, 2 March 1819, in G. Hunt (ed.), *The Writings of James Madison: Comprising his Public Papers and Private Correspondence, Including Numerous Letters and Documents now for the First Time Printed*, Vol. 8: 1808-1819 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p.247.

⁸ 'A. Customer', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 2 December 1773, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=73.PD.56>; T. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Wells & Lilly, - Court Street, 1829), p.150. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008651842>.

⁹ J. Taylor, *Arator: Being a Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical & Political, In Sixty-One Numbers* (Georgetown: J. M. Carter, 1814), p.57.

¹⁰ Page, John, *Commonplace Book, 1795-1796*, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss5:5P1433:1, p.35.

¹¹ Electors: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Electors: Petition, Frederick County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

fact that throughout history 'it was ordained by the Great and wise Disposer of all things, that some Nations should serve others; and that all Nations have not been equally free'.¹² In fact, pro-slavery sentiment in the Anglican Church - and amongst some Baptists and Methodists - was being clearly expressed before 1800, a good thirty years earlier than most previous scholarship has thought.¹³

By comparing and contrasting Jefferson's actions with those of his political peers, the project has also furthered scholarship on hitherto understudied statesmen. For example, it has been demonstrated that James Madison followed a similar pattern to Jefferson on slavery. This suggests that he has often been afforded unduly lenient treatment by scholars.¹⁴ Equally, St. George Tucker's stance on the institution has been favourably portrayed by Paul Finkelman and George Van Cleve, despite the lawyer enduring a comparable decline in anti-slavery activity to Jefferson following the rejection of his *Dissertation on Slavery*.¹⁵ Moreover, this thesis illustrates that George Washington's stern conduct as a master has often been overlooked because of his decision to emancipate his slaves.

These discoveries have provided the broadest possible context for Jefferson's perspectives to be placed within, thus answering the appeals of recent academics like Andrew O'Shaughnessy and Andrew Burstein.¹⁶ By accomplishing this, the thesis has made a wealth of discoveries that should inform future research on Jefferson. Principally, it is to be hoped that subsequent investigations build on the method employed in this study by measuring Jefferson against the standards of others in the post-Revolutionary era instead of evaluating him against contemporary values. Employing this approach should not dampen the debate between emancipationists and revisionists. Indeed, it must embolden historically accurate discussion by ensuring that Jefferson's record is appraised within eighteenth and nineteenth century parameters rather than judged on what twenty-first

¹² Inhabitants: Petition, Brunswick County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1-2; Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Inhabitants: Petition, Accomack County, 1782-06-03, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

¹³ Inhabitants: Petition, Essex County, 1779-10-22, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3; F. Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from August 7, 1771 to December 7, 1815*, Vol. 2: *From July 15, 1786, to November 6, 1800* (New York: N. Bangs & T. Mason, 1821), p.307.

¹⁴ A. Burstein & N. Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 2010), p.200.

¹⁵ P. Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker's Plan to End Slavery', in *The William and Mary Law Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Feb., 2006), pp.1216-1217.

¹⁶ A. J. O'Shaughnessy, 'Afterword', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.196; Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.210.

century scholars think he should have accomplished. Jefferson need not 'be all racist or all liberator' after all.¹⁷

Placing Thomas Jefferson within the context of Virginian society between 1769 and 1832 has, furthermore, enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the belief - forwarded by scholars from all three categories of historiography - that he was 'representative' of wider perceptions in Old Dominion.¹⁸ By showing the limitations of this view, the analysis has illustrated that scholarship needs to move away from using Jefferson as a window through which we can perceive wider Virginian society and, alternatively, seek to assess his actions in conjunction with those undertaken by his peers. As J. B. Allen demonstrated as early as 1978, the former approach has neither helped studies of Jefferson or slavery and race in Virginia.¹⁹ Forty years on, it is time to alter our priorities.

Where, then, did Jefferson's stance on the topics of slavery, ownership, race and colonization fit amongst the array of views expressed in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Virginia? This thesis supports the 1960s revisionist and later contextualist position that Jefferson challenged slavery in his early public career, before quickly backing away from attacking the institution from the mid-1780s.²⁰ In 1769, indeed, Jefferson was embarking on a political career that would - for fifteen years - see him do more to challenge slavery than any other Virginian statesman of the era. Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* certainly detailed the moral and practical case for a gradual emancipation to an extent that none of his political contemporaries were prepared to.²¹ His eloquent denunciation of slavery was backed up in his legislative career. But for one vote, in fact, his Northwest Ordinance would have prevented involuntary servitude spreading into any state admitted to the American Union after 1784. Had Congress passed the bill, thereby confining slavery to a handful of southern states, it is certain that later events would have turned out differently.²²

¹⁷ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.210.

¹⁸ G. Wood, 'Jefferson in His Time', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p.38.

¹⁹ J. B. Allen, 'Were Southern White Critics of Slavery Racists? Kentucky and the Upper South, 1791 - 1824', in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May 1978), pp.170-171.

²⁰ Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.213; W. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Dec., 1969), p.511; Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery', in *The American Historical Review*, p.82.

²¹ Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp.169-170.

²² J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), p.28.

However, matters changed swiftly following 1784. After failing to persuade Congress to support his Northwest Ordinance and receiving criticism for his powerful denunciation of slavery in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson retreated from his hostile position to the institution. As early as 1787, he started refusing opportunities to sponsor abolitionist overtures, arguing that doing so would weaken his influence and the movement itself.²³ His opposition gradually declined over the next two decades and then inexorably following his retirement in 1810. By 1820, Jefferson was advocating the westward expansion of slavery, something he had vehemently opposed just thirty years earlier.²⁴ Furthermore, he had resorted to defending slaveholders by highlighting the supposedly benign treatment afforded to labourers in the state. Such assertions were already becoming staples of pro-slavery polemics.²⁵

This declining opposition to slavery was reflected in Jefferson's conduct at Monticello. Even at the height of his Revolutionary spirit, Jefferson bought, hired and sold slaves. This involvement in America's internal slave trade casts legitimate doubts over whether he was seeking to reduce his personal reliance on the institution at this early stage. Additionally, he consistently pursued those who ran away from Monticello.²⁶ While he has rightly not been deemed amongst the cruellest masters of his generation, Jefferson undeniably employed methods that were designed to coerce slaves to produce as much work as possible. For instance, he offered incentives - such as extra food, better clothing and improved accommodation - to those he deemed hard working. Slave testimonies highlight that the morale of labourers who received these 'rewards' was boosted.²⁷ However, workers who did not meet his expectations were ruthlessly denied these opportunities. This calculating streak was particularly clear during his retirement, where there is evidence that Jefferson assumed a more disciplinarian tone in his dealings with those he deemed recalcitrant.²⁸ As Lorena Walsh has shown, such actions created divisions within slave communities and ensured a benign workforce that was less likely to unite in rebellion against their master.²⁹ In short, the chief beneficiary was always Jefferson.

²³ T. Jefferson, 'To Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville', Paris, 11 February 1788, in J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.474.

²⁴ E. S. Root, *All Honor to Jefferson? The Virginia Slavery Debates and the Positive Good Thesis* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), pp.65-66.

²⁵ H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.274.

²⁶ Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery', in *The Journal of American History*, p.516.

²⁷ I. Jefferson, 'Memoirs of a Monticello Slave', in J. A. Bear Jr. (ed.), *Jefferson at Monticello: Recollections of a Monticello Slave and a Monticello Overseer* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), p.23; Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.110.

²⁸ T. Jefferson, 'To Joel Yancey', Monticello, 17 January 1819, in E. M. Betts (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p.43.

²⁹ The importance of this is discussed in L. S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.83.

This investigation also refutes emancipationist claims that Jefferson's stance on race softened following *Notes on Virginia's* publication by showing that he made derogatory affirmations about African-Americans throughout his life.³⁰ In this regard, the thesis buttresses the revisionist historian Douglas Egerton's contention that Jefferson's position on race remained 'static' despite being confronted with examples of African-American accomplishment.³¹ Jefferson's unstinting belief that people of African descent were 'inferior' to whites - allied with his fear of black rebellion - meant that he was unable to envisage a bi-racial America.³² Accordingly, from *Notes on Virginia's* publication until his death in 1826, Jefferson maintained that any scheme to emancipate Virginia's slaves must be accompanied by their colonization. This insistence makes his failure to back either the Virginian or American Colonization Society - or to request the expatriation of the slaves he emancipated upon his death - even stranger. Such ambivalence accords with the revisionist contention that Jefferson had little intention of challenging slavery late in his life.³³

Jefferson was far from isolated in holding any of these beliefs. He was certainly not the only Virginian leader who refused to confront slavery. Indeed, of the Virginians who signed America's Declaration of Independence from Britain in 1776, only George Washington liberated his entire workforce.³⁴ Similarly, James Monroe was alone amongst Virginians who served in the national government in being prepared to publicly query whether the institution was beneficial to Old Dominion in the nineteenth century. However, Monroe only questioned the viability of the system after his political career had concluded. Others, such as James Madison and John Marshall, equivocated over slavery in private, yet - like Jefferson after 1784 - refused to take any action to undermine it.

Many leaders who professed a distaste for slavery but failed to challenge the system claimed that they were constrained by public opinion, which they perceived had become increasingly hostile towards the idea of a general emancipation.³⁵ Previous chapters have shown that such claims were valid to an extent. A raft of petitions from throughout the state in 1785 undoubtedly called on lawmakers to repeal liberal

³⁰ W. D. Jordan, 'Hemings and Jefferson: Redux', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings & Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999), p.45.

³¹ D. R. Egerton, 'Race and Slavery in the era of Jefferson', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.78.

³² Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p.150.

³³ Finkelman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies*, p.203.

³⁴ J. T. Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (London: Collins, 1976), p.385.

³⁵ J. Madison, 'To Robert Pleasants', 30 October 1791, in R. A. Rutland, T. A. Mason, R. J. Brugger, J. K. Sisson & F. J. Teute (eds.), *The Papers of James Madison*, Vol. 14: 6 April 1791-16 March 1793 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p.91; R. Carter, 'Letter of Advice to My Children', Hampton, 12 October 1803, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss2C2466a1, p.3.

manumission laws.³⁶ Smaller and middle-ranking slaveholders were especially numerous amongst the signatories of these appeals, which repeatedly highlighted the importance of property rights in the Virginian mindset.³⁷ These requests succeeded in 1806, when the 1782 manumission bill was replaced by laws that required all slaves who received their freedom to leave the state within twelve months.³⁸ After the passage of the 1806 legislation, the institution remained largely unchallenged in Virginia. Even when the anti-slavery movement revived in the 1820s, pro-slavery forces quickly stifled any manoeuvres that might have threatened slaveholding rights.³⁹ In this regard, it is fair to state that the broader direction of Virginian views on slavery underwent many of the changes we see in Jefferson's position.

When placed within the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we see that the outlines of other Jeffersonian views were widely held. For instance, his negative opinion of African-Americans was relatively common. In *White over Black* (1968), Winthrop Jordan expertly demonstrated that hostility towards blacks was rife throughout America by the mid-eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Arthur Lee's statements concerning those with African heritage in 1764 undoubtedly highlighted the existence of derogatory racial views in Virginia, as did the discriminatory laws of the state. One newspaper article in 1773 even forwarded the idea that blacks were inferior to whites. It is highly likely that these were not lone voices.⁴¹ Such evidence refutes the post-1990s revisionist notion that Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* statements about black intellect represented a turning point in white perceptions of African-Americans. Placed within this context, Jefferson's assertions in *Notes* were extremely damaging but not novel.⁴²

Anti-black sentiment remained visible throughout the epoch. The private papers of George Washington, James Madison and James Monroe certainly contain frequent reproaches of African-Americans. Prejudice was also regularly aired in the printed press

³⁶ Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Inhabitants: Petition, Halifax County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.2-3; Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.7; J. D. Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.108.

³⁷ See, for instance, Citizens: Petition, Amelia County, 1785-11-10, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-5; W. Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p.211 discusses the importance of property to Virginians.

³⁸ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.100; E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), pp.122 & 124-125.

³⁹ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.104.

⁴⁰ Jordan, *White over Black*, p.278.

⁴¹ Lee, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Congress of America*, p.30; 'A. Customer', *The Virginia Gazette*, 2 December 1773, p.1.

⁴² R. P. Forbes, 'Secular Damnation: Thomas Jefferson and the Imperative of Race', *Torrington Articles*, Vol. 3 (2012), accessed on Saturday 9 December 2017, http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/torr_articles/3, p.23.

and other published works, including those produced by opponents of slavery.⁴³ Moreover, legislative petitions demonstrated that hostility was often directed towards blacks by lower and middle-ranking Virginians. This could take the form of believing that African-Americans were innately inferior to their white counterparts - as Methodists lamented in petitions sent to the Virginian Legislature in 1785 - or in subtle requests for state lawmakers to reduce the already meagre rights enjoyed by both slaves and free blacks.⁴⁴ Furthermore, economic concerns were evident in later complaints about free African-Americans, which tended to arise during times of heightened political tensions.⁴⁵

Such hostility - when coupled with fears of race rebellion caused by the St. Domingue uprising and Gabriel Prosser's 1800 revolt - culminated in the growth of pro-colonization sentiment. Jefferson was initially a pivotal figure in the development of the expatriation movement. Indeed, it was his correspondence with James Monroe, then Governor of the state, that persuaded members of the Virginia General Assembly to consider transporting some of Gabriel's insurrectionists away from the state. Over the next fifteen years, successive Governors used their executive authority to reprieve blacks who had been sentenced to death and recommend them for deportation.⁴⁶ Colonization received another boost following America's war with Britain in 1812. During the conflict, thousands of Virginian slaves fled to British forces in order to secure their liberty. This defection only increased concerns that African-Americans represented an 'internal enemy'.⁴⁷ At the end of 1816, legislators agreed to divert attention and funds to repatriating Virginia's free blacks. Public support for the measure also swelled, with citizens from varying backgrounds joining local auxiliary branches of the American Colonization Society and bequeathing their slaves to the organization.⁴⁸

Similarly, when set within the context of society between 1769 and 1832, we can see why some scholars have thought Jefferson was a typical Virginian planter.⁴⁹ For

⁴³ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.xv & 19; Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.11.

⁴⁴ Electors: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁴⁵ Mechanics & Others: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1831-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; R. Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste: Free Blacks in Antebellum Virginia and North Carolina* (Washington: Xilbris, 2013), pp.115-117 describes these concerns and how 'some event' could heighten prejudice.

⁴⁶ S. Shepherd (ed.), *The Statutes at Large of Virginia: From October Session 1792, to December Session 1806, inclusive, in Three Volumes*, Vol. 2: *January 1796 - January 1803* (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p.279. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009732153>.

⁴⁷ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.2. See p.7 for the 'internal enemy' quote.

⁴⁸ [Anon], *The Annual Report of the Auxiliary Society of Frederick County, Va., for Colonizing the Free People of Colour in the United States* (Winchester: The Auxiliary Society, 1820), p.12 & 19. Retrieved from *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009606594>; J. L. Cooper, *A Guide to Historic Charlottesville & Albemarle County, Virginia* (London: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p.78.

⁴⁹ G. Wood, 'The Ghosts of Monticello', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.21; P. Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* - 2nd ed. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p.131.

instance, it was common for masters to pay for their slaves to receive medical treatment. Moreover, diaries from the epoch show that many slaveholders - particularly amongst the wealthiest - offered incentives to their workers to try and increase profits. Although such acts were designed to appear benevolent, masters were always careful to ensure that they reaped the financial benefits from ensuring the good behaviour of their slaves.⁵⁰ This desire to profit from slavery ensured that nearly all planters engaged in the internal slave trade and relentlessly pursued runaway labourers. Finally, Jefferson's slaves were forced to work at similar times - from sunrise to sunset on every day barring Sunday and religious festivals - to most of their contemporaries.⁵¹

It is largely because of these parallels that Jefferson has consistently been considered a representative figure for the epoch. However, the foregoing analysis has illustrated that it is ultimately unhelpful to view Old Dominion in this era through a Jeffersonian prism. On occasions Jefferson may be credited for being ahead of his time. His actions against slavery prior to 1784 certainly exceeded those undertaken by most of his neighbours and political peers. Even when his opposition to the system had started to decline, his position remained in advance of the numerous Virginians who petitioned state governors for the revocation of earlier manumission laws and those who physically attacked abolitionists like Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke.⁵² Equally, the early nineteenth century witnessed the gradual rise of a pro-slavery thought amongst some wealthy Virginians that far exceeded Jefferson's stance on the subject. This was initially given voice in the Caroline County planter John Taylor's 1814 journal *Arator*. Similar affirmations were frequent by the time of the 1832 Virginian legislative debates on slavery.⁵³

Nonetheless, using Jefferson to gauge wider views prevents us from recognizing the tireless work undertaken by those Virginians who did far more to challenge the institution than him. In the years following the American Revolution, Nonconformist Christians - including the Quakers, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians - led a burgeoning anti-slavery movement that enjoyed moderate success. Members of these Churches acted on the egalitarian sentiments of the Declaration of Independence by liberating their slaves. They, too, frequently petitioned state leaders to legislate for a

⁵⁰ Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, p.83; P. V. Fithian, 'Journal in Virginia, 1773-1774', in J. Rogers Williams (ed.), *Philip Vickers Fithian, Journals and Letters, 1767-1774: Student at Princeton College, 1770-72, Tutor at Nomini Hall in Virginia, 1773-74* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1900), p.143; J. Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p.388.

⁵¹ R. McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia - 2nd ed.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.60.

⁵² T. Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London: Paramore, 1793), pp.35-36 & 69; Inhabitants: Petition, Mecklenburg County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.3.

⁵³ Taylor, *Arator*, p.118; Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, p.8.

gradual abolition of the system.⁵⁴ Some activists, like Robert Pleasants, were especially dynamic and relentlessly harried lawmakers to support their cause despite receiving mounting hostility for their efforts. While they were unable to persuade enough of their contemporaries to ever make a general emancipation realistic in Old Dominion, these campaigners should be credited with allowing many slaves to receive their freedom through the 1782 manumission bill. Although the Baptists and Methodists - mindful of falling numbers and chastened by the hostility their position received - had largely ceased attacking slavery by 1800, the Quakers continued their outspoken opposition to the system until abolition was completed in 1865.⁵⁵

Nor was it necessary to be an evangelical Christian to act privately against slavery. Many masters defied Jefferson's example by emancipating all their slaves following the enactment of the 1782 decree. These individuals ranged from Robert Carter and George Washington - wealthy planters who owned hundreds of slaves and were prominent figures on the state and national scenes - to smallholders who freed the one or two labourers they possessed.⁵⁶ Even after emancipation became harder following the tightening of laws in 1806, numerous masters still requested permission to free their labourers. Indeed, a second wave of liberations occurred between 1825 and 1830, prompting some scholars to label the period 'the high point of anti-slavery feeling' in Virginia.⁵⁷

Analysis of ownership trends further showcases the flaws in assuming that Jefferson was a reliable gauge of common trends. By contrast, examining wider tendencies in Virginia highlights developments within slaveholding culture that ultimately make it easier for us to place Jefferson's conduct in an appropriate context. Following this methodology also enables us to refute elements of earlier historiography. For instance, the assumption - often stated by planters seeking to exempt themselves from criticism and repeated by scholars who were over-reliant on the testimony of such men - that slaveholding standards became more benign in the years following the American Revolution is disproved by the frequent incidents of violence that occurred in all the epochs examined in this survey.⁵⁸ This notion is further refuted by Jefferson's conduct, for he

⁵⁴ Religious Society of Friends: Petition, 1802-12-17, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-2; Quakers: Petition, 1780-11-29, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Electors: Petition, Frederick County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

⁵⁵ Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury*, Vol. 2, p.307.

⁵⁶ J. Rhodehamel, 'Review: George Washington on Slavery: "My Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret"', in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, No. 16 (Summer 1997), p.129; A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), p.xviii.

⁵⁷ Root, *All Honor to Jefferson?*, p.107.

⁵⁸ F. Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky; or Fifty years of Slavery in the Southern States of America by Francis Fedric an Escaped Slave. With Preface, by the Rev. Charles Lee, M. A.* (London: Wertheim, MacIntosh, and Hunt, 1863), p.6. Retrieved from *Documenting the American South*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019,

traded labourers with scant regard for the emotional impact his actions had on his slaves. This is one aspect in which Jefferson's slaves were less fortunate than some on high-profile plantations. In contrast to Jefferson, George Washington and Robert Carter ceased buying and selling slaves in the 1780s because of their moral opposition to the trade.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the thesis illustrates that bondsmen on many plantations faced more deprivation and violence than those who laboured for Jefferson.⁶⁰ Jefferson, then, was neither a particularly cruel or kind master. Yet so many variations existed in Virginian conduct that he cannot be considered 'typical' as some have claimed. Nor, for that matter, can any other planter.⁶¹

One area where Jefferson undoubtedly emerges unfavourably is race. By placing him within the context of the post-Revolutionary epoch, this thesis has shown that Jefferson's opinions on race were frequently more extreme than those held by his political peers and many ordinary Virginians. Jefferson certainly did not speak for all Virginians when making his controversial assertions about African-American intelligence. For instance, Methodist petitioners in 1785 were prepared to denounce beliefs about black inferiority for being 'beneath the man of sense', while Robert Pleasants and other Quakers consistently maintained that slaves could match their white peers if afforded an education.⁶² Similar arguments were forwarded by the Virginian lawyer George Tucker in 1801 and again by a correspondent writing in the *Genius of Liberty* in August 1818.⁶³ Moreover, many Virginian statesmen held more moderate views of African-Americans than Jefferson. For example, George Washington treated the poetry of Phyllis Wheatley with far more respect than Jefferson. Although it is true that Wheatley had published work praising Washington, it should be remembered that Jefferson criticised Benjamin Banneker despite receiving a

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/fedric/fedric.html>; Dinah: Freedom Suit, Arlington County, 1802, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.4; *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 21 April 1775 (supplement), p.4. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=75.P.23>.

⁵⁹ Levy, *The First Emancipator*, p.110.

⁶⁰ For example, see Lucius, 'To Mr. Purdie', in *The Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), Williamsburg, 23 December 1773, p.1. Retrieved from *Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=73.PD.60>; 'Letter, 1819, of Blackford, Arthur & Co. of Isabella Furnace, Shenandoah County, Va., to Jesse Nalle of Culpeper and Orange counties, Va., concerning winter clothing for an African-American slave, Edmund', Nalle family papers, 1800-1862, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., photocopy, call number Mss1N1495a, p.1.

⁶¹ Wood, 'The Ghosts of Monticello', in Lewis & Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*, p.21.

⁶² Electors: Petition, Pittsylvania County, 1785-11-08, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; R. Pleasants, *Letterbook of Robert Pleasants. 1754-1797*. Haverford College Special Collections, manuscript collection 1116/168, p.121. Retrieved from *Haverford College Special Collections*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, http://triptych.brynmaur.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/HC_QuakSlav/id/11435.

⁶³ 'Slave Traders', in *The Genius of Liberty*, Number 31, 11 August 1818, p.2. Retrieved from *Virginia Chronicle: Library of Virginia*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=GL18180811>; Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, pp.5-6.

comparably positive letter from the astrologer.⁶⁴ Additionally, Washington fought alongside black men in the War of Independence at a time when Jefferson had serious misgivings about arming African-Americans.⁶⁵ Similarly, James Madison was more supportive of Christopher McPherson than Jefferson.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, high-profile statesmen like John Marshall and James Barbour signed appeals asking for lawmakers to legislate on behalf of popular free blacks.⁶⁷

Furthermore, legislative petitions defending the right of local blacks to remain in the state demonstrated that whites from lower down the Virginian social hierarchy were able to look beyond skin colour in order to aid valued African-Americans from their communities. Such discoveries show that race relations in Virginia were far more complex than those who use Jefferson as a way of gauging opinions suppose. Every day, whites traded and interacted with free and enslaved blacks and, on occasions, worked to ensure African-Americans were granted similar privileges to themselves.⁶⁸ Bolstered by this assistance, some blacks felt confident enough to request changes to the state's discriminatory laws.⁶⁹ The analysis of runaway advertisements provided in chapters two and three also adds to the work of Philip Morgan, who highlighted that poorer whites often helped slaves in their endeavours to abscond from plantation life.⁷⁰

Overall, urban regions like Richmond and Petersburg serve as examples of the multiple perspectives that existed in Virginia on issues surrounding race. Both cities possessed greater numbers of free blacks than most areas of Virginia. This fact sometimes created tensions that culminated in white inhabitants demanding stricter enforcement of Virginia's anti-black laws.⁷¹ Nonetheless, numerous free African-Americans in Richmond and Petersburg were able to become valued members of their communities and serve in a variety of professions. Indeed, whites often repaid the hard work of African-Americans by

⁶⁴ H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: MacMillan, 2004), p.208; A. Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), p.475.

⁶⁵ F. Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), pp.2 & 146; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.278; Wiencek, *An Imperfect God*, p.204.

⁶⁶ Burstein & Isenberg, *Madison and Jefferson*, p.636.

⁶⁷ Johnson, Samuel: Petition, Fauquier County, 1826-12-07, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.7; J. Marshall, 'Certificate for Jasper Graham', Richmond, 5 December 1822, in C. F. Hobson (ed.), *The Papers of John Marshall*, Vol. 9: *Correspondence, Papers, and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1820 - December 1823* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p.377.

⁶⁸ Citizens: Petition, Fredericksburg, 1824-02-12, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, pp.59 & 82.

⁶⁹ Richmond Free Persons of Color: Petition, Richmond (City), 1823-12-03, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.3 & 4.

⁷⁰ P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.306.

⁷¹ Citizens: Petition, Richmond County, 1811, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1; Mechanics & Others: Petition, Petersburg (Town/City), 1831-12-20, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., p.1.

backing their appeals to escape the state's harsh legislation and remain as freemen in Virginia. These applications became so commonplace after 1806 'that the language in such appeals became boilerplate, generic prose designed to flatter legislators and to praise the object of their attentions'.⁷²

Finally, it is helpful to place Jefferson's support for colonization alongside the opinions of his peers. Doing so highlights the strengths and weaknesses of Jefferson's idea and the wider Virginian movement. When Jefferson initially published his expatriation proposal in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the notion had few advocates. Parallel schemes were penned in the last decade of the eighteenth century as the black uprising in Saint Domingue raised the spectre of a comparable event occurring in the American South.⁷³ However, it was not until the Gabriel Prosser revolt of 1800 and the 1812 conflict with Britain that expatriation obtained anything approaching acceptance amongst lawmakers.⁷⁴ It is ironic, then, that Jefferson was not prepared to back the aims of the American Colonization Society or its Virginian branches, either through public statements or private donations. Refusing to act on his professed faith in colonization meant that Jefferson failed to match the efforts of national statesmen like James Madison, James Monroe and John Marshall, who all backed up their private statements in support of colonization by serving in leading roles within both local and national movements.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that colonization enjoyed substantial backing amongst the general population, even after the formation of the ACS. If anything, the number of people who helped free blacks to remain in Virginia after 1806 demonstrates a lack of faith in the undertaking. Equally, there were many - including leaders like George Washington and William Giles - who openly opposed colonization.⁷⁶ To compound matters, the expatriation movement was hindered by structural and strategical weaknesses. For instance, misgivings created by the Missouri crisis left many Virginians wary of Congressional involvement in the enterprise, while amongst a large number of slaveholders the suspicion always remained that advocates of colonization were trying to abolish slavery

⁷² Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, p.11; see List of Free People of Color in the Town of Petersburg for the year 1821, African American Narrative Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., pp.1-20 for more information on African-American occupations in Petersburg.

⁷³ Tucker, *Letter to a Member of the General Assembly of Virginia*, p.14; F. Fairfax, 'Plan for Liberating the Negroes within the United States', in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine* (December 1, 1790), pp.285-286.

⁷⁴ Shepherd (ed.), *The Statutes at Large of Virginia*, Vol. 2, p.279.

⁷⁵ T. Maris-Wolf, *Family Bonds: Free Blacks and Re-enslavement Law in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p.28.

⁷⁶ G. Washington, *Last Will and Testament of George Washington, of Mount Vernon* (Washington: Single Works, 1911), p.3; Giles, 'Letter to Marquis de Lafayette', in Giles (ed.), *Political Miscellanies*, p.3.

by stealth.⁷⁷ Most importantly, Old Dominion's African-American population resented the suggestion that they should be forced to leave a land that they considered their home.⁷⁸

In many respects, the experiences of Virginia's African-Americans highlight the severe limitations of using Jefferson as an indicator of Virginian views. It is certainly clear that most black Americans despised colonization. Equally, slaves and free African-Americans never accepted the necessity of slavery, as Jefferson had done by the end of his life. The fact that slaves were prepared to risk their lives by escaping to British forces in 1776 and 1812 serves as proof of their desire to be free.⁷⁹ Further, although they were forced to acknowledge the prejudices and discrimination that conspired against them, Virginian blacks sought to disprove the view that they were inferior beings who could never assimilate with white society by working tirelessly to gain the trust and support of their peers.⁸⁰

As well as demonstrating the limits of the view that Thomas Jefferson was representative of Virginian perspectives in the period from 1769 to 1832, this thesis has shown that there are strengths and weaknesses to the arguments propounded by both sides of the scholarly divide that has dominated Jefferson historiography over the past half century. For instance, emancipationist claims that Jefferson and his fellow leaders were unable to challenge slavery because of widespread support for the system appear valid given the hostility directed towards abolitionists and the Virginian legislature following the enactment of the 1782 emancipation bill.⁸¹ The existence of pro-slavery arguments in the decade after the American Revolution further emphasises this point. On the other hand, the analysis has bolstered the early revisionist assertion that Jefferson's perspectives on race were extreme by the standards of the post-Revolutionary period.⁸² Moreover, sympathetic scholars who have sought to portray Jefferson as a benevolent master have largely been debunked, as

⁷⁷ These anxieties are stated in [Anon], *Controversy between Caius Gracchus and Opimius in Reference to the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States: First Published in the Richmond Enquirer* (Georgetown, D.C: James C. Dunn, 1827), pp.14-15. Retrieved from *Internet Archive*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <https://archive.org/details/controversybetwe00caiu>.

⁷⁸ A. Rothman, 'Jefferson and Slavery', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.117.

⁷⁹ M. A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), p.489; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, pp.2 & 394.

⁸⁰ Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, p.58.

⁸¹ Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion*, p.108.

⁸² J. N. Rakove, 'Our Jefferson', in J. E. Lewis & P. S. Onuf (eds.), *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.225.

has the belief that the author of the Declaration of Independence 'did nothing to hasten slavery's end' in his early career.⁸³

Consequently, the thesis has tentatively fallen within the emerging contextualist literature. However, it has gone further than previous contextualist scholarship by providing a wider background in which Jefferson can be situated. In particular, the project has advanced historiography by analysing a greater sample of Jefferson's peers than has previously been attempted. By doing so, it has shown that scholarly appraisals are buttressed when attempts are made to measure statesman of the era against the standards of their time, rather than judge them by the loftier perceptions of the twenty-first century.⁸⁴

On a Virginian scale, the evaluation supports the growing body of revisionist research that suggests there was little desire for slavery to be abolished in Virginia at any time in the period.⁸⁵ Furthermore, it agrees with Alan Taylor's view that the lives of Old Dominion's slaves were not improved as much by the 'paternalist' ideal that permeated Virginian society after the Revolution as had previously been believed.⁸⁶ The picture is slightly more nuanced when it comes to race. Although it is undeniable that prejudice existed throughout the period and severely restricted the rights of both free and enslaved blacks, the extent of this discrimination was often dependent on external events (like the insurrections in Saint Domingue and Richmond) and local circumstances. This meant that African-Americans in urban areas, such as Petersburg, Richmond and Norfolk, were often able to obtain a greater degree of autonomy than those living in rural localities.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it is important to remember that this freedom was only extended to those who abided by the terms set by white society. In this respect, the study supports previous scholarship by James Sidbury and Rodney Barfield, who have identified the importance of regional factors and lifestyle in informing white conduct towards individual African-Americans.⁸⁸

Finally, this thesis has added to previous investigations of slavery and race in Virginia by conducting detailed analysis on the content of legislative petitions and, most importantly, those who signed them. With more work needing to be done to uncover the

⁸³ Wienczek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.268; D. Malone, 'Mr. Jefferson and the Traditions of Virginia', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Apr., 1967), p.137.

⁸⁴ The accusation of 'presentism' made by Douglas Wilson and others is correct in this respect. See Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.207.

⁸⁵ McDonnell, *The Politics of War*, p.489; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, pp.169 & 210; Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, pp.x-xi; McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*, p.3.

⁸⁶ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, p.51; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.271.

⁸⁷ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.143 discusses the importance of urban areas for African-Americans.

⁸⁸ J. Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.9; Barfield, *America's Forgotten Caste*, pp.58 & 82.

opinions of those underneath the elites, further surveys of such sources will be pivotal. Indeed, entire dissertations could be produced on the rich content contained in legislative appeals. Additional endeavours to discern the identities and lives of those who signed these appeals will help increase our knowledge of the views less prominent members of Virginian society held on the crucial topics covered by this project. This is certainly how I aim to develop this investigation in future.

Increasing our understanding of Virginian society in these areas will, of course, aid the task of placing Jefferson's stance on slavery, ownership, race and colonization into its appropriate context. Starting this process by showing the weaknesses in assuming that Jefferson was representative of predominant Virginian opinion is the legacy of this thesis. Future scholars seeking to understand Jefferson's views - and the forces that altered his perspectives - should, therefore, commence their analysis by considering the author of the Declaration of Independence as one, admittedly important, piece in a complex Virginian society, rather than mouthpiece for his native state. As a product of the culture in which he lived, we must move away from believing that 'If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong'.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ P. S. Onuf, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy', in J. B. Boles & R. L. Hall (eds.), *Seeing Jefferson Anew: In His Time and Ours* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p.19.

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Appendix

1.1: List of Virginian Counties by Region:¹

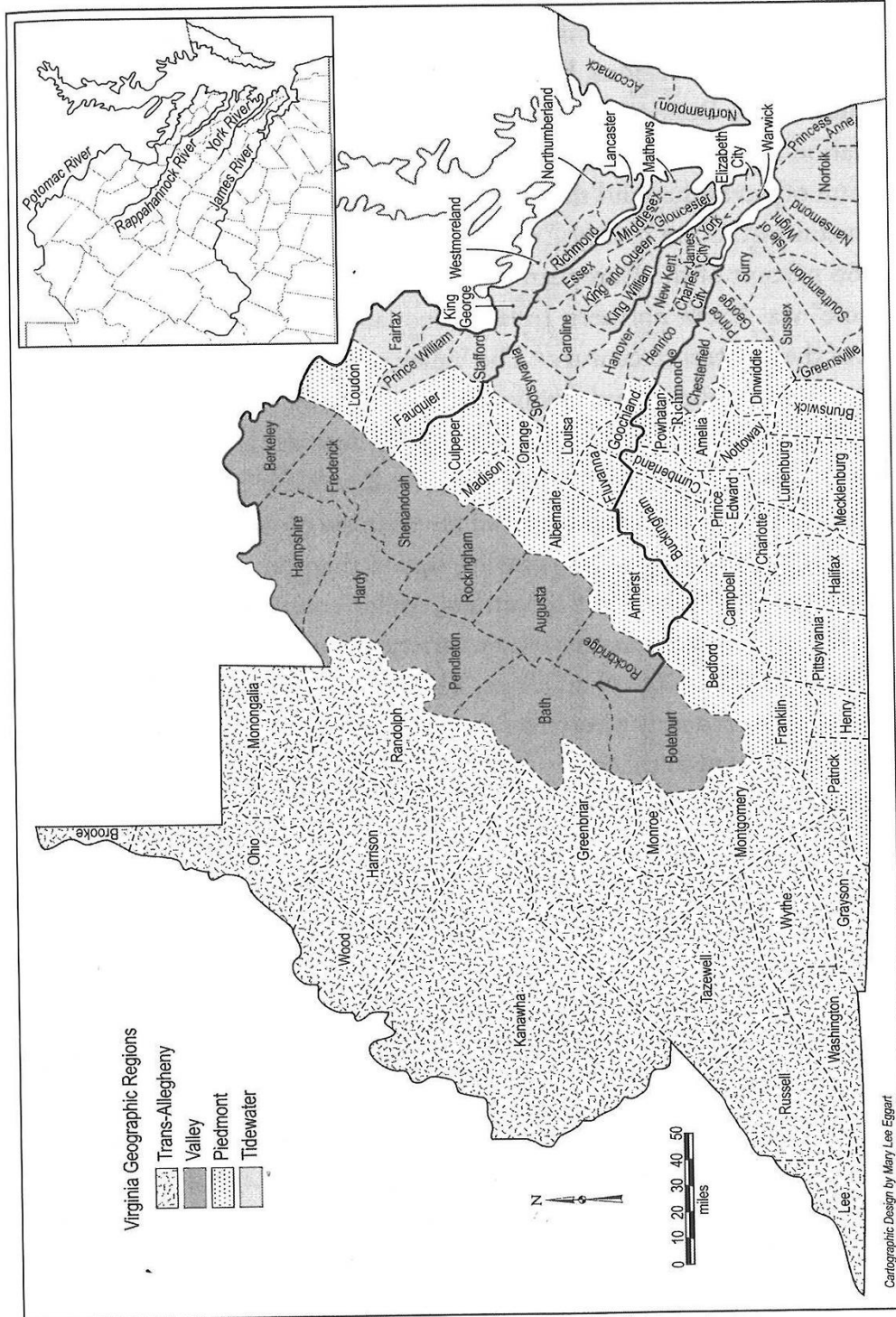
Tidewater: Accomack, Charles City, Elizabeth City, Henrico, James City, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Nansemond, Northampton, Warwick, York, Northumberland, Gloucester, Lancaster, Surrey, Westmoreland, New Kent, Middlesex, King and Queen, Princess Anne, Essex, Richmond, King William, Prince George, Hanover, King George, Caroline, Southampton, Sussex, Greensville, Matthews.

Piedmont: Stafford, Spotsylvania, Goochland, Prince William, Brunswick, Orange, Amelia, Fairfax, Louisa, Albemarle, Lunenburg, Culpeper, Cumberland, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Halifax, Prince Edward, Bedford, Loudoun, Fauquier, Amherst, Buckingham, Charlotte, Mecklenburg, Pittsylvania, Henry, Fluvanna, Powhatan, Campbell, Franklin, Nottoway, Patrick, Grayson, Madison, Nelson, Floyd, Rappahanock, Greene, Carroll.

Valley and Trans-Alleghany (West Virginia): Frederick, Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery, Washington, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Wythe, Hampshire, Berkeley, Monongalia, Ohio, Greenbriar, Fayette, Jefferson, Lincoln, Harrison, Nelson, Hardy, Mercer, Bourbon, Russell, Randolph, Pendleton, Woodford, Kanawha, Bath, Lee, Brooke, Wood, Monroe, Tazewell, Jefferson, Mason, Giles, Cabell, Scott, Tyler, Lewis, Preston, Nicholas, Morgan.

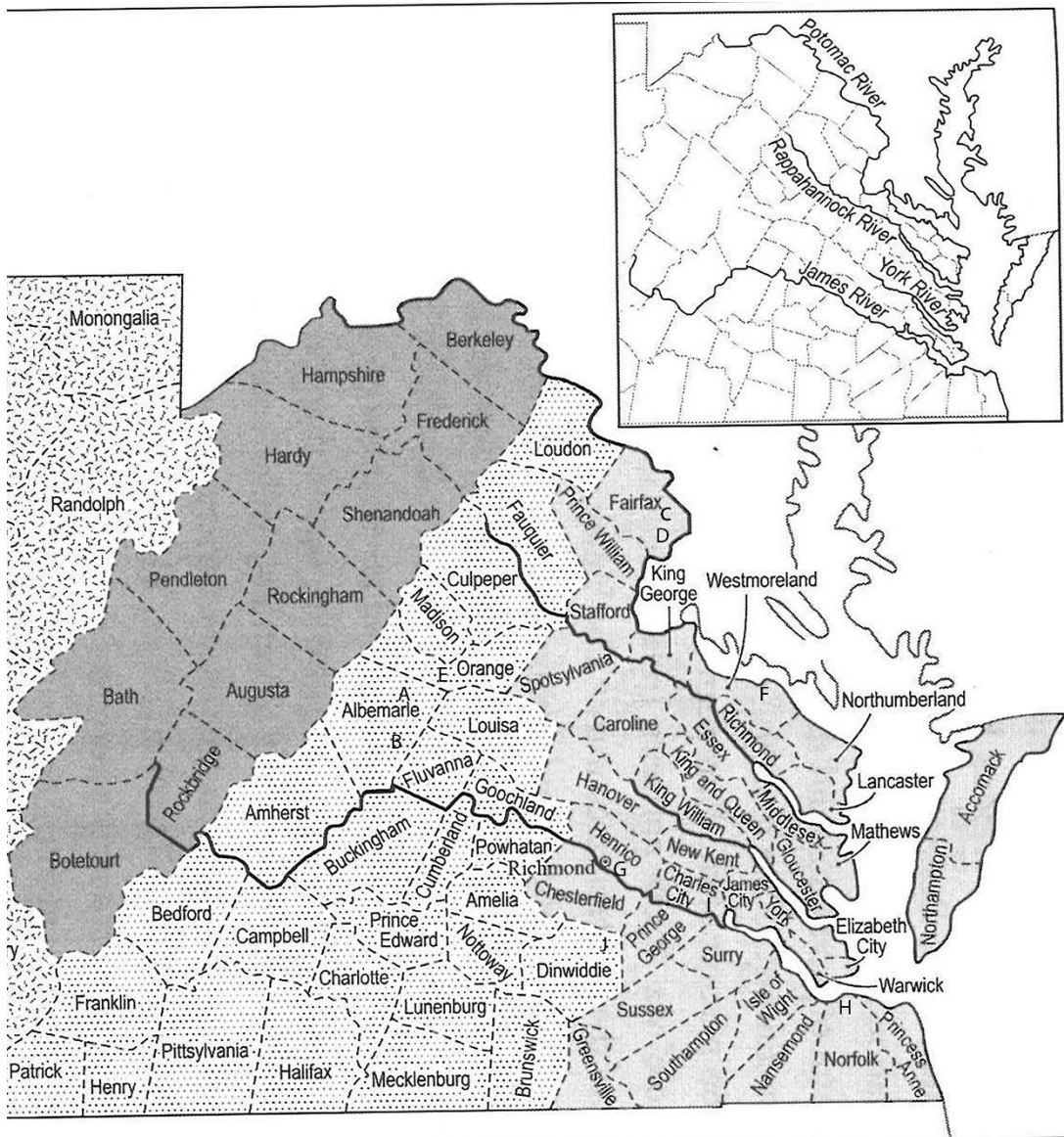
¹ This list is derived from R. McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* -2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.219.

1.2: Map of Virginia in 1800²



² The map was originally published in E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), p.41.

1.3: Important Locations in Virginia³

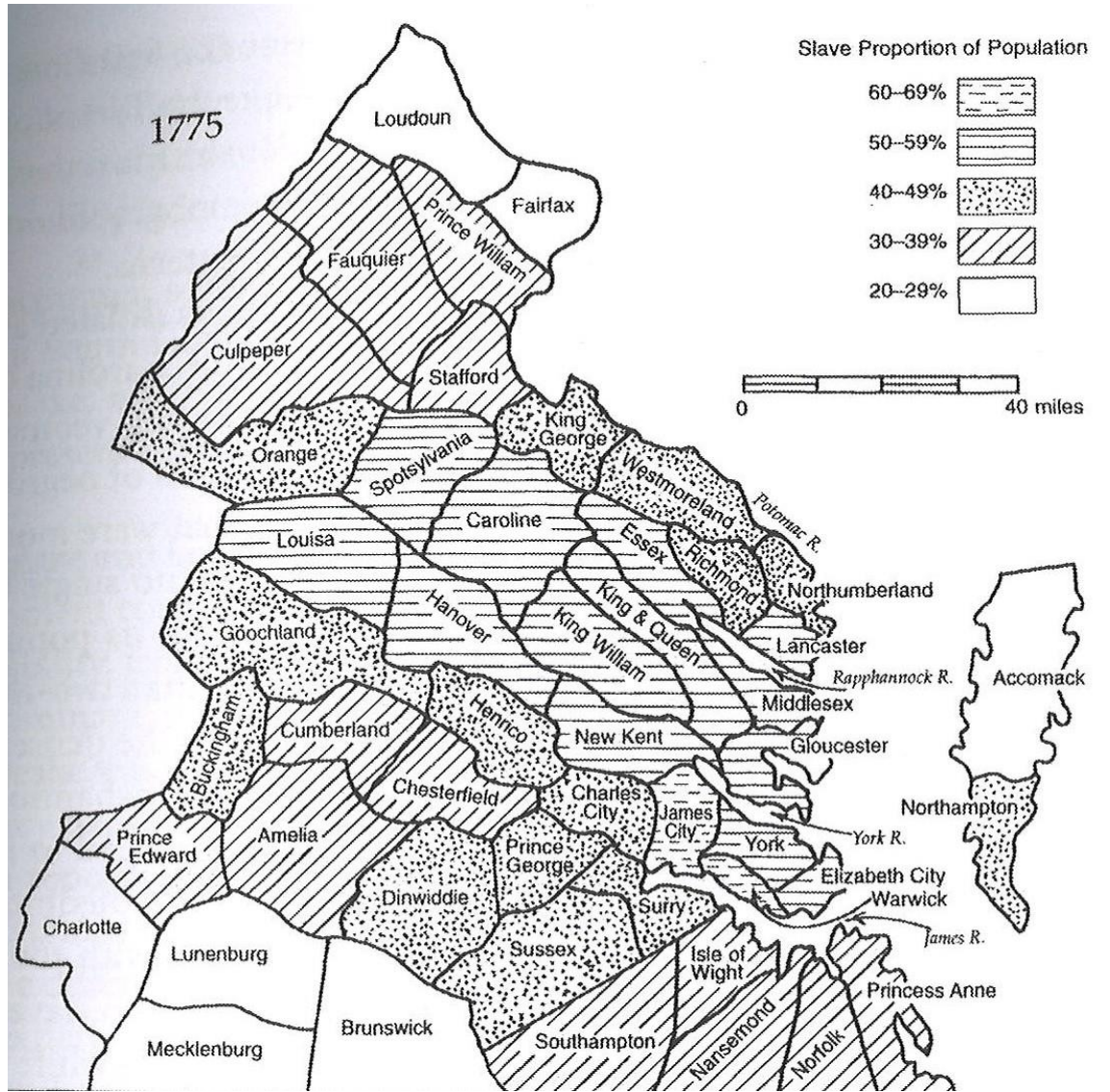


Key:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| A: Monticello (Thomas Jefferson’s plantation) | G: Richmond |
| B: Ash-Lawn Highland (James Monroe’s plantation) | H: Norfolk |
| C: Mount Vernon (George Washington’s plantation) | I: Williamsburg |
| D: Gunston Hall (George Mason’s plantation) | J: Petersburg |
| E: Montpelier (James Madison’s plantation) | |
| F: Nomini Hall (Robert Carter’s plantation) | |

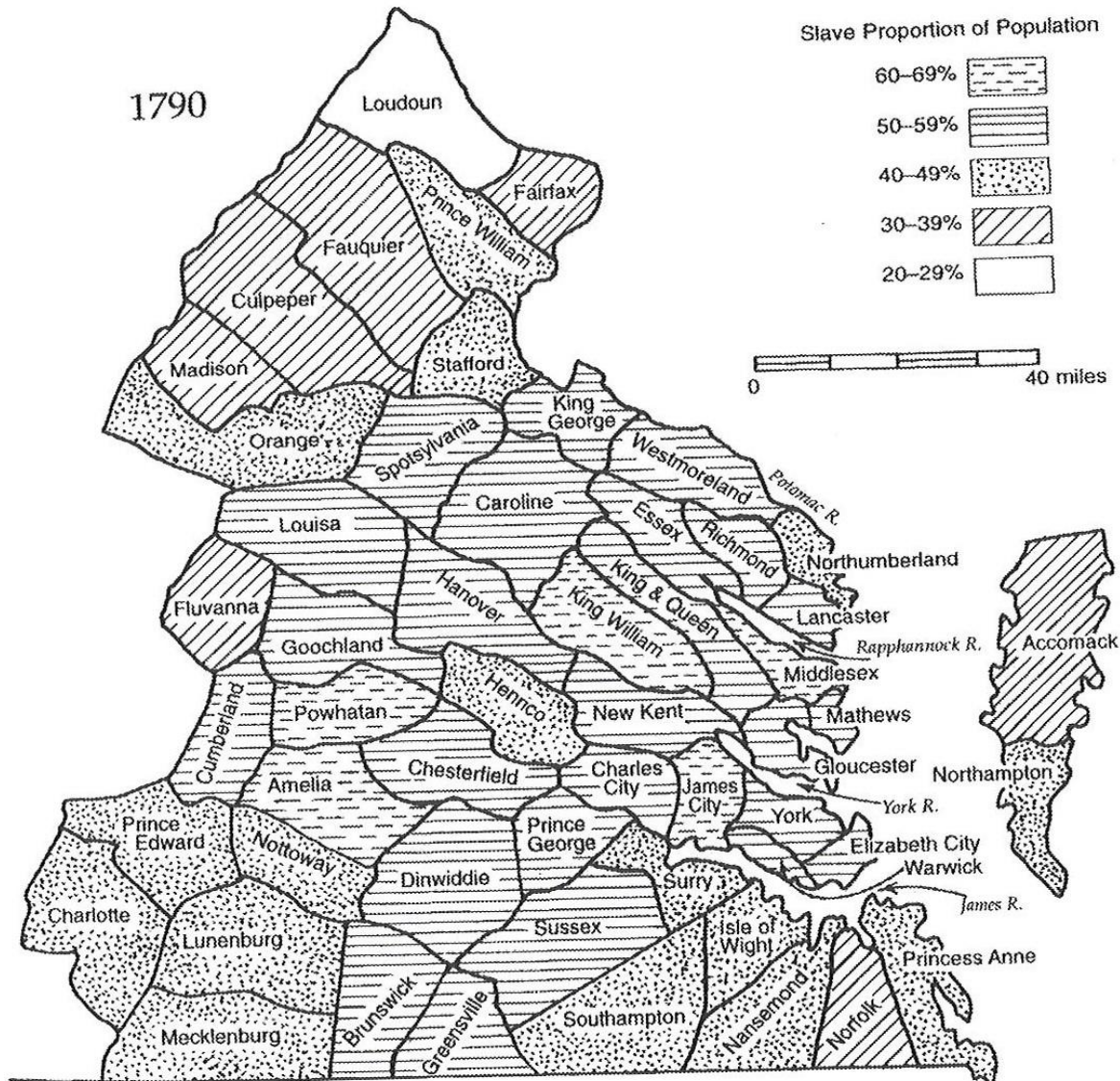
³ Alterations made from original map in Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.41.

1.4: Tidewater Slave Demographics (1775)⁴



⁴ The map is derived from P. D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), p.99.

1.5: Tidewater Demographics (1790)⁵



⁵ Ibid.

1.6: List of Key Figures

John Adams (1735-1826). Adams was a Massachusetts statesman who worked on the same committee as Thomas Jefferson at the second American Continental Congress in 1776. Adams served as Vice-President to George Washington from 1789 to 1797 and President between 1797 and 1801. Despite being political rivals, Jefferson and Adams corresponded extensively following their retirements. Like Jefferson, Adams died on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.¹

Francis Asbury (1745-1816). Asbury was the first Bishop of the American Methodist Church. He visited Virginia in 1784 and 1798 hoping to increase support for the new denomination. His diaries highlighted the hostility shown towards opponents of slavery and the demise of anti-slavery thought in Virginia.²

Edward Bancroft (1745-1821). Physician and inventor from Massachusetts who worked as a spy for both Britain and the American colonies during the War of Independence. Bancroft was intrigued by abolitionist schemes in the New Nation and corresponded with Jefferson on the matter in 1789.³

Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806). Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Banneker was a famous African-American 'mathematician, inventor, and astronomer', who published a widely acclaimed almanac in 1791. He forwarded copies to Thomas Jefferson as a challenge to the Secretary of State's assertions of black inferiority.⁴

Joel Barlow (1754-1812). A poet and American diplomat, Barlow was also a close friend of Jefferson in the early nineteenth century.⁵

Jeremy Belknap (1744-1798). Historian and Congregationalist minister from Boston, Massachusetts. Belknap corresponded extensively about abolitionism with St. George Tucker in 1795 prior to the release of Tucker's *Dissertation on Slavery*.⁶

John Bernard (1756-1828). English comedian who visited George Washington at Mount Vernon in the summer of 1798. Bernard published his recollections of life in Virginia in *Retrospections of America, 1797-1811*.⁷

Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville (1754-1793). French abolitionist who visited Virginia in 1788 and recorded his experiences of slavery in the state, including a vivid recollection of plantation life at George Washington's Mount Vernon.⁸ Brissot also formed the anti-slavery society *Amis Des Noirs* in France and invited Jefferson to join the group.⁹

¹ J. Appleby & T. Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.xxxv.

² P. D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery", in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Dec., 2005), p.418.

³ L. Stanton, 'Jefferson's People: Slavery at Monticello', in F. Shuffelton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.179.

⁴ F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.423.

⁵ Appleby & Ball (eds), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xxxvi.

⁶ Massachusetts Historical Society, 'Jeremy Belknap Papers: 1637-1891; bulk: 1758-1799. Guide to the Collection', *Massachusetts Historical Society*, accessed on Sunday 24 March 2019, <http://www.masshist.org/collection-guides/view/fa0246>.

⁷ F. Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), p.73.

⁸ K. Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), pp.292-293.

⁹ J. C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1977), p.100.

William Burwell (1780-1821) Virginian Congressman who was appointed Jefferson's private secretary during the latter's Presidency.¹⁰ Later served in the Virginian House of Representatives.

Landon Carter (1710-1788). Carter was amongst the wealthiest Virginians in the late Colonial period and owned over 400 slaves at the time of his death in 1778. His diary is one of the richest resources on the day-to-day activities of a Virginian planter.¹¹

Robert Carter (1727-1804). Carter was a Westmoreland County planter who served in the Virginian Legislature for twenty years prior to the American Revolution. Carter also oversaw the largest recorded manumission in Virginia when he emancipated more than 500 slaves in 1791.¹²

Thomas Coke (1747-1814). Methodist preacher from South Wales who toured Virginia in 1784 and 1785 trying to convert the poor. Coke's recollections from the visit chronicle the persecution experienced by anti-slavery preachers and an encounter with George Washington.¹³

Edward Coles (1786-1868). Coles was an Albemarle County neighbour of Thomas Jefferson who moved to Illinois in order to emancipate his slaves in 1819. Coles served as James Madison's private secretary during the latter's Presidency and later used his position as Governor of Illinois to campaign for slavery to be banned from the state.¹⁴

Thomas Cooper (1759-1839). Englishman who emigrated to America in the late eighteenth century. An outspoken supporter of the Jeffersonian Republicans, Cooper later advocated states' rights and the expansion of slavery after moving to South Carolina.¹⁵

John Davis (1774-1854). English tutor employed by Spencer Ball of Prince George County in the late eighteenth century. Davis' account of his work provides an insight into plantation life in Virginia and contains details of a wide-ranging conversation he had with one of Ball's slaves, 'Old Dick'.¹⁶

François-Jean Marquis de Chastellux (1734-1788). French military officer who served for the American colonies during the War of Independence. Chastellux visited Virginia in 1782, staying at Monticello. He was a frequent contact of Jefferson thereafter and published his opinions on slavery and race in *Travels in North-America*.¹⁷

Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794). Secretary of the *Academie des Sciences* in Paris, Condorcet became a friend of Jefferson during the latter's time as American ambassador to

¹⁰ H. Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2012), p.250.

¹¹ R. Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.xvii.

¹² A. Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, the Founding Father Who Freed his Slaves* (New York: Random House, 2005), p.xviii.

¹³ E. Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), pp.89-90.

¹⁴ Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xxxvi.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.xxxvi-xxxvii.

¹⁶ J. Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: R. Edwards, 1803), p.388.

¹⁷ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.74.

France. Jefferson sent him a copy of Benjamin Banneker's almanac in 1791 as evidence to support Condorcet's belief in racial equality.¹⁸

Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834). French General who fought alongside George Washington during the War of Independence. Became a close friend of Washington and a long-term correspondent of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and John Marshall.¹⁹ Lafayette visited Virginia again in 1824 and recorded his thoughts on slavery in the state.²⁰

Oludah Equiano (1745-1797) Also known as Gustavas Vassa, Equiano's recollections of his experiences in slavery provide one of the few first-hand accounts of the African slave trade. Equiano was briefly sold into Virginia following his kidnap and transportation from modern-day Nigeria, before purchasing his freedom and moving to London.²¹

Ferdinando Fairfax (1766-1820). Virginian planter from Jefferson County who penned a colonization plan in 1790 that borrowed much from Thomas Jefferson's proposal in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.²²

Augustus John Foster (1780-1848). British diplomat who visited America during Jefferson's Presidency. His *Notes on America* detailed conversations with Jefferson and other leading figures about slavery and race.²³

Albert Gallatin (1761-1849). Born in Switzerland, Gallatin emigrated to Pennsylvania in his early adulthood. He became an ardent Jeffersonian Republican, serving as Secretary of the Treasury to both Jefferson and James Madison between 1801 and 1814. Gallatin was a minister to France and Britain under subsequent administrations.²⁴

Henri Grégoire (1750-1831). Prominent French 'champion of racial equality' who Jefferson met during his time as American Secretary to France. Grégoire published *De la littérature des Nègres* in 1808 to refute claims of black inferiority.²⁵

Patrick Henry (1736-1799). Virginian lawyer and politician who played a leading role in drafting the 1776 Virginian constitution. Henry was a prominent figure at the American Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia (1787) and served as Governor of Virginia during a long career in public service.²⁶

John Holmes (1773-1843). Representative for Maine in the Massachusetts General Assembly at the time of the Missouri Crisis. Received Jefferson's famous 'the Wolf by the Ears' letter in 1820.²⁷

¹⁸ A. Gordon-Reed, 'Engaging Jefferson: Blacks and the Founding Father', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), p.173.

¹⁹ H. Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America* (London: Macmillan, 2004), pp.262-263.

²⁰ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.262.

²¹ R. Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), pp.95-96.

²² Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.107.

²³ Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, p.270.

²⁴ Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xxxvii-xxxviii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.xxxviii.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.xxxviii-xxxix.

²⁷ T. Merrill, 'The Later Jefferson and the Problem of Natural Rights', in *Perspectives on Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 2015), p.124.

Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794). Lee was a Virginian delegate to the first Continental Congress in 1775 and forwarded the notion for American independence in June 1776. Lee later served as a Virginian senator during disputes over the national constitution.²⁸

John Leland (1754-1841). Massachusetts born Baptist who moved to Virginia in 1775. Leland was a vocal opponent of slavery until he was forced to return to New England in 1790 after receiving criticism for his stance on the institution.²⁹

James Madison (1751-1836). Renowned for being 'the father of the United States Constitution', Madison succeeded Jefferson to become the fourth President of America between 1809 and 1817.³⁰ Like Jefferson, Madison trained as a lawyer and served as a legislator in Virginia before emerging on the national stage.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876). An English abolitionist who visited Virginia in 1835, Martineau recounted conversations she had with James Madison about slavery, race and colonization in her diary, *Retrospect of Western Travel*.³¹

George Mason (1725-1792). Fairfax County planter who became a leading figure in Virginia's push for independence from Britain. Mason also authored the Virginian Bill of Rights in July 1776 and served as a Virginian representative at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Despite assuming this position, Mason became one of the most high-profile Virginians to object to the national compact.³²

James Monroe (1758-1831). During a distinguished public career, Monroe served in the Virginian legislature, before being elected Governor of Virginia and - between 1817 and 1825 - fifth President of the United States. Monroe was a lifelong friend and ally of Thomas Jefferson.³³

Julian Niemcewicz (1758-1841). A Polish statesman and poet, Niemcewicz visited Virginia in 1792 and 1797, briefly staying at George Washington's Mount Vernon home on the latter trip. Niemcewicz opposed slavery and was scathing of many Virginians for the way they treated their labourers.³⁴

Dr Richard Price (1723-1791). Described as a 'liberal-minded Englishman', Price was a prominent Nonconformist who produced pamphlets on the American Revolution and publicised his hope that Thomas Jefferson would lead the anti-slavery charge after 1776.³⁵

George Tucker (1775-1861). A Bermudan born lawyer, Tucker moved to Virginia when aged twenty. He served as a Congressman for Old Dominion and wrote one of the first biographies of Jefferson. Tucker also published his own emancipation and expatriation scheme in the wake of the Gabriel Prosser revolt.³⁶

²⁸ Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xl.

²⁹ W. H. Daniel, 'Virginia Baptists and the Negro in the Early Republic', in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Jan., 1972), pp.64-65.

³⁰ Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xl.

³¹ W. D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), p.227.

³² Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xl.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.xli.

³⁴ Wienczek, *An Imperfect God*, p.348.

³⁵ L. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness': Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves", in P. S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p.208.

³⁶ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.107.

St. George Tucker (1752-1827) Another Bermudan born lawyer, St. George was the elder cousin of George Tucker. His *Dissertation on Slavery* (1796) laid out clear plans for the gradual abolition of slavery. Once rejected, however, Tucker retreated into a proslavery stance.³⁷

Harry Toulmin (1766-1823). Unitarian minister from England who visited Norfolk, Virginia, for two months in 1793. Recorded observations on slavery in his *Reports on Kentucky and Virginia*.³⁸

Philip Vickers Fithian (1747-1776). Teacher from New Jersey who served as a tutor for Robert Carter's children between 1774 and 1776. Fithian's diary highlights the tensions in Virginia on the eve of the American Revolution and provides a first-hand account of slaveholding practices in the late Colonial epoch.³⁹

George Washington (1732-1799). One of the most famous Virginians of the Revolutionary era, Washington was a celebrated General from the War of Independence before he sat as chair of the American Constitutional Convention in 1787. He was unanimously elected America's first President in 1789, a post he held for eight years. Washington became the only Virginian Founding Father to emancipate all his slaves at his death in 1799.⁴⁰

Phyllis Wheatley (1753-1784). Wheatley was a celebrated poet who was transported from Africa in her childhood and sold into slavery in Massachusetts. Her poems were first published in a 1773 collection titled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*.⁴¹ She won acclaim from George Washington for a poem she penned about him during the War of Independence.

Frances Wright (1795-1852). Scottish abolitionist who toured Virginia at the behest of Marquis de Lafayette in the mid-1820s. Wright corresponded with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison about her anti-slavery proposals, receiving a mixed response from both.⁴²

George Wythe (1726-1806). Wythe was Jefferson's law tutor at the William and Mary College. He also enjoyed a distinguished career as a judge and politician. Wythe served alongside Jefferson in the Second Continental Congress and helped to revise Virginia's laws following the American Revolution.⁴³ His conclusions in the *Wrights v Hudgins* court case of 1806 perfectly summarised natural rights arguments against slavery.⁴⁴

³⁷ Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation*, p.107; P. Hamilton, 'Revolutionary Principles and Family Loyalties: Slavery's Transformation in the St. George Tucker Household of Early National Virginia', in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Oct., 1998), p.533.

³⁸ M. Tinling & G. Davies (eds.), *The Western Country in 1793: Reports on Kentucky and Virginia by Harry Toulmin* (San Marino, Ca.: Henry E. Huntington Library, 1948).

³⁹ Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*, p.231.

⁴⁰ Morgan, 'George Washington and the Problem of Slavery', in *Journal of American Studies*, p.301.

⁴¹ Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery*, p.86.

⁴² Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp.463-464.

⁴³ Appleby & Ball (eds.), *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.xliv.

⁴⁴ A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013), p.106.

