

## “Gender and Memory among Andrew Jackson’s Slaves: The Example of ‘Aunt’ Hannah”

[Introductory remarks]

A short description of Hannah’s life is in order. She was born between 1792 and 1801 and purchased by Jackson around 1808. She and Aaron, a slave blacksmith at the Hermitage, married in 1817; they eventually had ten children. She may have been the Hannah to whom Jackson’s friend William B. Lewis referred as running the Hermitage household for Jackson early in his second presidential term. (There were at least three female slaves named Hanna[h] on the plantation in 1833, but given their ages, this Hannah was likely the one mentioned by Lewis.) In his final will (1843), Jackson bequeathed Hannah and two of her daughters, Charlotte and Mary, to his daughter-in-law, Sarah. (Hannah’s son, Ned, was bequeathed to nine-year-old Andrew Jackson III.)<sup>1</sup>

Following Jackson’s death in June 1845, Hannah, Aaron, and their children remained the property of the Jackson family. Hannah appears in the family correspondence on several occasions. Usually, the correspondent asks to be remembered in closing to the slaves, with Hannah often warranting specific mention when individual slaves were identified. As late as March 1860, Hannah was busy with the upkeep of the Hermitage. In June 1863, however, Sarah

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<sup>1</sup> Archibald Roane to AJ, 10 July 1803, AJ to Benjamin J. Bradford, 19 July 1803, in PAJ, 1:334-335, 337-339, 342-346; Will, 7 June 1843, in John Spencer Bassett, and J. Franklin Jameson, eds., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1926-35), 6:221 (hereafter cited *CAJ*).

Most of Hannah’s biographical information is taken from The Hermitage’s Slave Genealogy Database, provided by Marsha Mullin and dated July 2010. Supplementary data came from Memorandum of slaves and land in Davidson County, Tennessee, [1 January 1825], in Daniel Feller et al., ed., *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, 8 vols. to date (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980-), 6:3-4 (hereafter cited *PAJ*); William B. Lewis to AJ, 21 April 1833, in *CAJ*, 5:62. The *PAJ* volumes do not agree on Hannah’s birthdate. Vol. 3 lists it as c.1792, while vols. 6 and 7 list it as c.1801.

Jackson reported that Hannah had “gone over to the Yankees,” having “been very insolent for some time.” Rachel Jackson Lawrence, Jackson’s granddaughter, announced that Hannah was “making 20 dollars a month” and blamed her abandonment of the Jacksons on “the Yankees.”<sup>2</sup>

In the post-Civil War period, Hannah became an important source in the creation of Andrew Jackson’s image. When Hannah gave an interview to W.G. Terrell in 1880, she was living in Nashville with three of her children. She covered a number of different subjects in the interview, including accounts of Andrew and Rachel Jackson’s deaths, as well as the death of her husband. She also gave some insight into Jackson as a slave owner. Unlike other slave owners, Hannah remembered, he never sold members of her family. “He was mighty good to us all,” she remarked. According to Hannah, Jackson and his wife differed on white-slave relations, however. She recalled that a white officer “who used to stay for weeks at our house led one of the young colored girls off.” When Jackson found out, he “said nothing that I know of,” but when Rachel caught wind of the liaisons, she was “mad, mad, MAD [with rising inflection], and she was always mad about it.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Rachel Jackson [Lawrence] to Andrew Jackson III and Samuel Jackson, [25] March 1848, Rachel Jackson Lawrence to Sarah Yorke Jackson, [26] March 1848, 14 July 1848, 8 September 1848, 9 December 1848, 13 January 1849, 14 January 1850, 8 March 1860, 25 March 1860, Sarah Yorke Jackson to Rachel Jackson Lawrence, 29 August 1848, 8 February 1850, Rachel Jackson Lawrence to Andrew Jackson III, 9 June 1849, [August?] 1849, [15] August 1849, Rachel Jackson Lawrence to Samuel Donelson, 20 August 1849, Sarah Yorke Jackson to Andrew Jackson III, 15 September 1854, 11 June 1863, Sarah Yorke Jackson to Samuel Jackson, 22 June 1863, Sarah Yorke Jackson to Andrew Jackson Jr., 2 October 1858, Rachel Jackson Lawrence to Samuel Jackson, 25 June 1863, Jackson Family Papers, Ladies’ Hermitage Association.

<sup>3</sup> “Old Hannah: Reminiscences of the Hermitage,” *Cincinnati Commercial*, 22 June 1880; and ““Old Hannah’s’ Narrative of Jackson’s Last Days,” in *CAJ*, 6:415-16.

For background on William G. Terrell’s connection to the acquisition and publication of a significant corpus of Jackson papers, see John Spencer Bassett, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), ix-x; Samuel G. Heiskell, *Andrew Jackson and Early Tennessee History*, 2 vols., 2d. ed. (Nashville: Ambrose, 1920), 427-35; and John McDonough,

An 1894 (Nashville) *Daily American* newspaper article also purported to provide more details about Hannah's life as Jackson's slave, not all of which align with documentary evidence. It noted that she was born in East Tennessee and was the property of one John Carter, presumably the Washington County clerk who provided an affidavit supporting Jackson's exposure of significant land fraud that implicated Tennessee governor John Sevier. Jackson reportedly purchased her and her mother as payment for serving as Carter's legal representative in a case. The article claims that Hannah was three when Jackson purchased her and that she bore eleven children. It also recounts a very paternalistic Jackson. He carried "little Hannah in his arms" on the horseback ride from East Tennessee to the Hermitage and promised her a ginger cake if she adjusted his stirrup. The article also repeated a story from the 1880 interview. Hannah "used often to be employed by Gen. Jackson to comb his hair," it noted, "he promising to give her some trifling present in payment for her services." Because Hannah was "a favorite servant," Jackson also allowed her wedding ceremony to Aaron to take place in the Hermitage's dining hall.<sup>4</sup>

The 1894 newspaper article and an explanatory footnote in the sixth volume of the *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (CAJ)* series suggest that Hannah played an influential role in the construction of Jackson's image. Both sources claim that James Parton, Jackson's first posthumous biographer, relied on her accounts to reconstruct not only Old Hickory's life but also his character. The *Daily American* recorded that Hannah gave Parton "every word" of his account of an adolescent Jackson receiving a severe blow to the head from a British officer's

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"Introduction," in *Index to the Andrew Jackson Papers* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1967), xix-xxii.

<sup>4</sup> "One Hundred Years," Nashville (Tenn.) *Daily American*, 1 April 1894.

sword, one that left “a long, deep scar on his head.” The *CAJ* editor remarked that Parton “frequently” referred to Hannah in his biography, insinuating that her stories formed the basis of his understanding of Jackson.<sup>5</sup>

Parton’s research notebooks, compiled as he traveled across the nation interviewing individuals who knew Jackson, do not bear out these claims, but there are hints of Hannah’s influence. His notes recall his interview with her at the Hermitage, conducted in February 1859. Hannah gave Parton a tour of the main house, during which time she related a detailed description of Rachel Jackson’s illness and death. The only other comment that Parton attributed to Hannah was her impression of Jackson:

Old Hannah, when she fancied hinted disrespectfully of J. fired up & said: “We black folks is bound to speak high for old Mawster. he was good to *us*. You know what he was to you, and must speak accordin’. But *we* is bound to speak high for him.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “One Hundred Years”; *CAJ*, 6:415 n.1.

It is unclear to me whether the main editor, John Spencer Bassett, wrote this explanatory footnote, or if it was written by J. Franklin Jameson, director of the Department of Historical Research at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, which published the *CAJ* volumes, who finished editing the last three volumes and the index after Bassett’s death in January 1928. (See, *CAJ*, vol. 6, v; John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* [New York: Prentice-Hall, 1965; 2d. ed., Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1989], 6, 22-25.) For more on Bassett’s influence on Jacksonian scholarship, see Mark R. Cheatham, “Andrew Jackson, Slavery, and Historians.” *History Compass* (April 2011): 326-338.

<sup>6</sup> Research notebook #3, p. 43, James Parton Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter cited Parton Papers). I want to express my thanks to Tom Coens, research associate professor of history at the University of Tennessee and associate editor of *PAJ*, for graciously supplying his unpublished transcription of this important and overlooked source. Page numbers refer to Coens’ transcription.

Parton’s notes do not always clearly designate from whom he is receiving his information. During this trip to the Hermitage, William B. Lewis accompanied him. While away, Jackson often asked Lewis to update him on his crops and slaves, so some of the anecdotes about farm and slave life related during the visit may have come from either Lewis or Hannah. I took the conservative approach and only considered what was clearly attributed to Hannah.

Parton's biography generally fails to substantiate Hannah's role in influencing his interpretation of Jackson, with one exception. In conveying Hannah's account of Rachel's death, Parton gives another statement about Jackson that went unrecorded in his research notes: "[H]e was more a father to us than a master, and many's the time we've wished him back again, to help us out of our troubles." This description fits with Parton's presentation of Jackson in relationship to his slaves.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to discussing Hannah's alleged influence on Parton, the *Daily American* article speaks to her seeming color-blindness, which was tied to Jackson's alleged paternalism. Hannah recalled being in the same room with Jackson when he died. According to her, some of his last words were, "I hope to meet you all in Heaven, both black and white." (Other witnesses in the room, including Jackson's doctor, his niece, and his son all recorded those words or a close variation of that sentiment.) Later in the article, the author observed that

[o]n the subject of slavery, Aunt Hannah's views are different from those of most of her race. Having had an indulgent master and mistress, she has always insisted that the years spent in slavery were the happiest of her life. To labor for those who were benefactors was no slavery to her.

The author underscores Hannah's satisfaction with her lot in life by including her assessment as she looks ahead to her pending one-hundredth birthday: "Everybody is good to me, both white and colored, and I have no reason to complain."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, 3 vols. (New York: Mason Brothers, 1859-61), 2: 647; 3:154-156, 651, 678.

<sup>8</sup> "One Hundred Years"; Account of AJ's death by ERD, n.d. (transcript), Andrew Jackson Donelson Papers, Library of Congress; Robert V. Remini, "The Final Days and Hours in the Life of General Andrew Jackson," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 39 (Summer 1980): 167-177; idem, *Andrew Jackson*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977-1984), 3:524.

In 1848, disagreement over Jackson's slave-trading briefly sparked a public discussion. His defenders remarked on his paternalistic treatment of his slaves. See Mark R. Cheatham, *Andrew Jackson, Southerner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), chs. 6 and

Hannah's memory does not fit with the reality of Jackson's treatment of his slaves. Ignored in her recollection was the violence visited upon the Hermitage slave community. Jackson ordered runaway male slaves whipped upon capture. In the case of one repeat offender named Gilbert, the man was going to be whipped in front of the rest of the slaves to send a message; instead, he fought back against Jackson's overseer and ended up dead from a knife wound. Female slaves were not immune to violence, either. In 1815, one of Jackson's nephews informed him that "[y]our wenches as usual commenced open war" against the overseer, but he reported that "they have been brought to order by *Hickory oil*," a reference to whipping. In 1821, while the Jacksons were living in Florida. Rachel wrote her absent husband that her slave, Betty, "has been putting on some airs, and been guilty of a great deal of impudence." (Her sin was washing clothes for individuals outside of the Jackson household without Rachel's "express permission.") Jackson told his doctor, James C. Bronaugh, that Betty was "capable of being a good & valluable servant, but to have her so, she must be ruled with the cowhide," and he instructed Bronaugh, his nephew, Andrew J. Donelson, and his steward, Ephraim Blaine, that if

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12; Robert Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2003), 165-166; Theodore Parker, *A Letter to the People of the United States Touching the Matter of Slavery* (Boston: James Munroe, 1848), 38-41; S[amuel D[exter] Bradford to Theodore Parker, 8 June 1848, Francis P. Blair to S.D. Bradford, 23 February 1848 (2nd quotation) and 4 May 1848, Andrew Jackson, Jr., to Francis P. Blair, 23 April 1848, William B. Lewis to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 20 April 1848, Alfred Balch to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 24 April 1848, in *Boston Post*, 14 June 1848. Junior was supposed to provide another letter, from Thomas H. Claiborne, but it was never delivered. Bradford's letter and the accompanying correspondence were also published in Samuel Dexter Bradford, *Works of Samuel Dexter Bradford, LL.D.* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1858), 201-209.

Parton recorded similar defenses of Jackson's paternalistic treatment of his slaves in his notebooks. Research notebooks, pp. 4, 18, 20, 27, 43, Parton Papers.

Betty stepped out of line, then they were to punish her with fifty lashes at “the public whipping post.”<sup>9</sup>

What do we make of Hannah’s words if they were reported accurately? (And there is no evidence that they were not.) That is the \$64,000 question, and it goes beyond just Hannah and Andrew Jackson. I will admit that I am venturing outside of my specialty area, and I am happy to be corrected, but there seems to be a gap in the historical literature pertaining to slave memory. The past few years have witnessed an explosion of memory studies centered on the post-Civil War period, but former slaves’ memories of their pre-emancipation lives seem to disappear

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<sup>9</sup> Memo, [1804-06], Daniel Sayre to Andrew Jackson, 30 November 1805, Bill, 8 May 1812, Andrew Jackson to Robert Sprigg, 4 October 1812, Robert Sprigg to Andrew Jackson, 3 November 1812, Account, [18 February 1821], Notice of fees paid, [18 February 1821], Henry Johnson to Andrew Jackson, 19 August 1827, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress; Advertisement, [26 September 1804] (quotation), Thomas Terry Davis to Andrew Jackson, 20 February 1805, Jesse Roach to Andrew Jackson, 3 December 1805, John Williamson to Andrew Jackson, 12 December 1805, Andrew Jackson to John Hutchings, 7 April 1806, Andrew Jackson to Mary Caffery, 8 February 1812, Robert Hays to Andrew Jackson, 20 December 1814, Robert Butler to Andrew Jackson, 2 November 1815, James Jackson Hanna to Andrew Jackson, 30 January 1820, Andrew Jackson to James C. Bronaugh, 3 July 1821, Andrew Jackson to Egbert Harris, 13 April 1822, Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, 20 September 1824, Andrew Jackson to William Faulkner, 28 August 1827, Andrew Jackson to Andrew Hays, 30 August 1827, Andrew Hays to Andrew Jackson, 31 August 1827, Andrew Jackson to William B. Lewis, 1 September 1827, in *PAJ*, 2:40-41, 51, 73-74, 75-76, 93-95, 281-282, 3:212-214, 390, 4:353-354, 5:66-67, 170-171, 440-41, 6:384, 385-386, 386-387, 387; *State v. Ira Walton*, November 1827, Davidson County Circuit Court, Fourth Circuit, Minute Book F:524, Nov. Term 1827, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee; *The Farmer’s Library* (Louisville, Ky.), 12 September, c. November 1805, Bullitt Family Papers-Oxmoor Collection, Filson Historical Society; Advertisement, 12 September 1815, Advertisement, 24 April 1822, Advertisement, [September 1824], Receipt, 14 August 1826, Receipt, 30 March 1827, Receipt, 24 September 1827, Receipt, 13 December 1827, Receipt, 27 December 1827, Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, 4 August 1828, Andrew Jackson Papers, Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, Del.; James Jackson Hanna to Andrew Jackson, 1 March 1821, in *CAJ*, 3:41-42; Andrew Jackson to Andrew J. Donelson, 3 July 1821, Andrew Jackson Donelson Papers, Library of Congress; Robert P. Hay, “‘And Ten Dollars Extra, for Every Hundred Lashes Any Person Will Give Him, to the Amount of Three Hundred’: A Note on Andrew Jackson’s Runaway Slave Ad of 1804 and on the Historian’s Use of Evidence,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 36 (Winter 1977): 468-478; Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 37.

between the publication of antebellum slave narratives and the recording of the WPA slave narratives of the New Deal era. (Leslie Schwalm's 2008 article is an important exception.) The voices of female slaves remembering their lives in bondage are particularly silent, a surprise given the attention white women defending the Lost Cause receive.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Recent treatments of the Lost Cause include Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920," in Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, eds., *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115-139; Gary Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Susan-Mary Grant and Peter J. Parish, eds., *Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); W. Scott Poole, *Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Upcountry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); John R. Neff, *Honoring The Civil War Dead: Commemoration And The Problem Of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); idem, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Gary Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, & Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Kevin M. Levin, *Remembering The Battle of the Crater: War as Murder* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012).

Biographical studies of important individuals supportive of, or affected by, the Lost Cause include Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); William Garrett Piston, *Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and His Place in Southern History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); Alan T. Nolan, *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Kathleen Christine Berkeley, "Elizabeth Avery Meriwether, 'An Advocate for Her Sex': Feminism and Conservatism in the Post-Civil War South." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 43 (Winter 1984): 390-407; Grace Elizabeth Hale, "'Some Women Have Never Been Reconstructed': Mildred Lewis Rutherford, Lucy M. Stanton, and the Racial Politics of White Southern Womanhood, 1900-1930," in John C. Inscoe, ed., *Georgia in Black and*



I would argue that during her lifetime, Hannah served as a type of “Mammy” symbol for those who wanted to remember Jackson. While the photographic evidence that exists demonstrate that she did not physically resemble the stereotypical “Mammy” character popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s, written portrayals of her are telling in their descriptions. Parton described her as “aged 64, yellow, healthy, looking 40.” W.G. Terrell called her “a cinnamon-colored mulatto,” while the *Daily American* writer alluded to her “unusual intelligence for a

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*White: Explorations in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865-1950* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 173-201.

Other important examinations of the Lost Cause, some of which are often overlooked, include Herman Hattaway, “Clio’s Southern Soldiers: The United Confederate Veterans and History,” *Louisiana History* 12 (Summer 1971): 213-242; Reda C. Goff, “The Confederate Veteran Magazine,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 31 (Spring 1972): 45-60; Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1973); John A. Simpson, “The Cult of the ‘Lost Cause,’” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 34 (Winter 1975): 350-361; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Fred Arthur Bailey, “The Textbooks of the ‘Lost Cause’: Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75 (Fall 1991): 507-533; LeeAnn Whites, “‘Stand by Your Man’: The Ladies Memorial Association and the Reconstruction of Southern White Manhood,” in Christie Anne Farnham, ed., *Women of the American South: A Multicultural Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); James O. Horton, “Confronting Slavery and Revealing the ‘the Lost Cause,’” *Cultural Resource Management* 21, no. 4 (1998): 14-20; Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); and Robert E. May, “Southern Elite Women, Sectional Extremism, and the Male Political Sphere: The Case of John A. Quitman’s Wife and Female Descendants, 1847-1931,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 50 (Winter 1998): 251-285.

On antebellum slave narratives and the WPA narratives, see John Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), xxxii, lviii-lxii, 447-449; Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Knopf, 1979; New York: Vintage, 1980), 149-163; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 184-196; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 286-288, 313-319; Fay A. Yarbrough, “Power, Perception, and Interracial Sex: Former Slaves Recall a Multiracial South,” *Journal of Southern History* 71 (August 2005): 559-588; Leslie A. Schwalm, “‘Agonizing Groans of Mothers’ and ‘Slave-Scarred Veterans’: The Commemoration of Slavery and Emancipation,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 9 (September 2008): 289-304.

colored woman” who lacked a formal education. She possessed “a certain sprightliness of manner, comeliness of features, and much good, sound common sense. . . . Her honesty and truthfulness have ever been unimpeachable, her unselfishness and benevolence worthy of imitation.” While these descriptions do not fit with the typical “Mammy” character portrayed, for example, by Hattie McDaniel in *Gone with the Wind* (“independent . . . big, fat, and cantankerous,” as one authority describes her), Hannah certainly resembles a “Mammy” “offshoot,” the “Aunt Jemima” character. “Aunt Jemima” characters were “blessed with religion . . . [able to] wedge themselves into the dominant white culture. Generally, they are sweet jolly, and good-tempered.” Hannah’s two interviews are infused with religion and indicate her knowledge of, and participation in, the private world of the Jacksons. Terrell even described Hannah as wearing “a ‘kerchief turban-fashion,” a familiar accoutrement historically associated with “Aunt Jemima.”<sup>11</sup>

The suggestion by Hannah’s descendants that she and Jackson had, at the very least, a sexual, if not romantic, relationship that produced children also challenges our understanding of Jackson and his slave women. There are at least three families that claim descent from Jackson and a slave woman. The most provocative claim is made by Dorothy Price-Haskins, who in her “novel based on fact,” *Unholiest Patrimony: “Great Is the Truth and It Must Prevail,”* argues that Jackson had a sexual relationship with one of his slaves, Hannah, which resulted in the birth of their daughter, Charlotte. Price-Haskins also claims that Charlotte kept documentation of this

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<sup>11</sup> For scholarship on the “Mammy” stereotype and its use by white Americans, see Cheryl Thurber, “The Development of the Mammy Image and Mythology,” in *Southern Women: Histories and Identities*, ed. Virginia Bernhard et al. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 87-108; Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), esp. 4-13; Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks*, 4th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2008), 9; and Kimberly Gisele Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

sexual affair and the resulting offspring in the form of a journal, which, along with other documentation proving Jackson's paternity is being kept in private hands because family members have been harassed for proclaiming their ties to the Tennessee president.<sup>12</sup>

Price-Haskins' claims bring me to my last point. For several years, I have wondered why historians have not paid as much attention to Jackson's slave ownership as they have Jefferson's or even Washington's. Before I read Price-Haskins' book, I assumed that it was because there was no Sally Hemings to capture their imagination. A number of other possible explanations now seem possible, and I will conclude with three of them.

1. Even though there is the possibility of a Jackson-Hannah relationship, there is no DNA evidence available to corroborate the oral tradition, as was the case with Jefferson and Hemings. At the same time, unlike in Jefferson's case, there do not appear to have been any contemporary allegations about Jackson's involvement with a slave woman or with slave women. This lack of evidence makes it unlikely that a Jackson-Hannah relationship will ever grab the profession's attention, much less that of the public.
2. If it were somehow provable that Jackson and Hannah were sexually involved, it seems likely that the relationship would simply become another black mark on Jackson's legacy and would further diminish his place within the national mythology.
3. Perhaps because at the time Jackson's policies regarding slaves were less politically explosive than those affecting Native Americans, historians seem unable to recognize that his views on slavery and encouragement of Manifest Destiny in the Deep South and in Texas were just as important, if not more significant, in shaping the nation's future as

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<sup>12</sup> Dorothy Price-Haskins, *Unholiest Patrimony: "Great Is the Truth and It Must Prevail"* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2007); E-mail to author, 13 and 16 March 2010, in author's possession.

Indian removal. Jackson was a southern plantation and slave owner, and his personal experiences with his own slaves influenced the way that he approached the issue of abolitionism and territorial expansion.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Phone conversation with Jennifer James, 24 June 2013; Steve Yoder, “It’s time for Democrats to ditch Andrew Jackson,” [http://www.salon.com/2013/05/03/its\\_time\\_for\\_democrats\\_to\\_ditch\\_andrew\\_jackson/](http://www.salon.com/2013/05/03/its_time_for_democrats_to_ditch_andrew_jackson/), accessed 3 May 2013.

Dr. Jennifer James, associate professor of English and director of the Africana Studies Program at George Washington University, is one of the possible descendants of Jackson and Hannah. I am indebted to her for the first two conclusions.