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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

GENERATION AND GENDER AS REFLECTED IN CAROLINA SLAVE NAMING PRACTICES: A CHALLENGE TO THE GUTMAN THESIS

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THE 1976 PUBLICATION OF HERBERT GUTMAN'S *THE BLACK Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* was a historiographical landmark.[1] It appeared in a decade which saw an extraordinary reformulation of the slave experience, from John Blassingame's *The Slave Community* in 1972 to Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* and Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's *Time on the Cross*, both published in 1974.[2] In a sense, Gutman's book represented a culmination of the themes developed in those works just preceding it. For, through various means and with varying degrees of emphasis, each sought to present slaves as vital and active determinants of their own lives and culture, and not as merely the passive victims depicted by earlier, primarily pre-civil-rights-era historians. Gutman's contribution to this new realization of African-American cultural autonomy was to focus on a single, central aspect of slave lives, their family structure. He refuted the widespread belief that "the peculiar institution" severely hampered the development of traditional family patterns among slaves and that slave families were predominantly matriarchal in structure. Through an impressive blend of anthropological and cliometric methodology, he demonstrated that slaves were able to overcome the plantation regime's restrictions to such a degree that they established and maintained viable and relatively stable family lives, with two-parent households and lengthy slave marriages more the norm than the exception.

Among the more innovative means by which Gutman supported this contention was an analysis of slave naming practices and patterns, which he saw "as clues to the significance slaves attached to the enlarged kinship group."[3] More specifically, he based his argument largely on the extensive practice of patrilineal naming as revealed primarily in the records of four

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[1]Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

[2]John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974); and Robert W. Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1974).

[3]Gutman, *Black Family*, p. xxiii.

correctly. Had they believed that he still yearned for a return to the British empire, they would hardly have chosen him chief executive again a year later to lead the fight for independence when South Carolina faced its biggest military threat yet. Surely Christopher Gadsden, a political adversary of the Rutledges who saw himself as the living embodiment of classical public virtue and patriotism, would have made an issue of John Rutledge's continued opposition to independence if he had thought that was Rutledge's position. Instead, Gadsden complained "That the president has perverted our Sense (in my Opinion) of the Word 'Accommodation'." The word's context in the 1776 constitution, he maintained, "plainly and incontestably shews that... it refers to a *reconciliation* with G. B. and our becoming Subjects thereto again." To interpret the word differently, as Rutledge had done, was fallacious.[44]

John Rutledge, like his brother Edward, had made his decision for independence, despite whatever regrets and doubts and hesitations, in 1776. Once committed, neither of them wanted to turn back.

large plantations. These records demonstrated, according to Gutman, that a higher percentage of children were named for their father than for any other relative and that this was a "particular slave naming practice" indicative of the active role of the slave father within his family.[4] But evidence drawn from a much wider range of North and South Carolina slave records suggests that neither that conclusion nor the reasoning behind it are valid.[5]

A STUDY OF FAMILY NAMING PRACTICES, UNLIKE THAT OF names in general, requires a particular type of evidence: either birth records or other genealogical data covering multiple generations. Slave birth records themselves are numerous; they are, in fact, probably the most common form of slave lists. But most record only the name of the child or, at best, the name of his or her mother. Very few slaveholders ever bothered to include the father's name on such lists, most likely a reflection of the fact that a slave child's status followed that of his or her mother. Of those owners who did identify both parents in their records, many made only a sporadic effort to do so. Thus a relatively complete two-parent birth list that covers more than a single generation is quite rare. Of the eighty Carolina birth records used in this sample, only eighteen list both parents in recording a slave child's birth.[6] Of these, only seven are complete enough or long enough to include at least three generations. Yet despite the sparsity of complete data, there is enough evidence to raise serious questions about the typicality of Gutman's even smaller sample and about the conclusions he drew from them.

In the first place, the practice of naming a child for his or her father was by no means as distinctive among slaves as Gutman suggests. He states that "by dramatically reaffirming the important cultural role of the slave father, the slaves, once more, showed how their beliefs and practices differed from

[4]Ibid., p. 62.

[5]The evidence presented in this essay is drawn from a larger study of various aspects of names and naming practices among slaves from North and South Carolina. See Inscoe, "Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation," *Journal of Southern History* 59 (November 1983), pp. 527-554; and the M.A. thesis of the same name (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1980).

[6]Two of the eighteen lists referred to are church membership rolls, which recorded the baptisms of slave children. St. Paul's Parish Board Records (S.C.) and "Register of the Coloured People Connected with the Church of the Messiah, North Santee" (S.C.), 1843, in John Hamilton Cornish Papers. For a more limited list of baptized slaves, see Edenton (N.C.) Methodist Church Record Book, 1830, all of the above in Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

those of their owners."[7] Such a claim overlooks the universality of patrilineal naming. The practice was (and still is) manifested most consistently in regard to surnames, but is also reflected in the fact that in almost all cultures, children (most often sons) were named for their fathers more than for any other relative. According to sociologist Nathan Miller, this custom developed along with the development of the family itself as a sign of the increasing dominance of the father's role as head of the family unit.[8]

The practice was evident in the first black families in each of the Carolinas, which suggests that it was not a tradition that gradually emerged under slavery. In 1670 three slaves — John, Sr., Elizabeth, and John, Jr. — were imported to the original site of Charlestown from Bermuda.[9] The first slave family on record as such in North Carolina was listed by owner Thomas Pollock of Albemarle in 1709 as Manuel, his wife Frank, a son called Little Manuel, and three daughters.[10] Gutman, it seems, gave too much credit to the ingenuity of slaves, who, in this case, actually had less original input than they did in other aspects of their naming practices. Thus the connection between the development of patrilineal naming and the slave

[7]Gutman, *Black Family*, pp. 190-191. All of his Chapter 5 is devoted to naming patterns within families.

[8]The most complete discussion of the repetition of names within a family is found in Miller, *The Child in Primitive Society* (New York: Brentano's, Inc., 1928), Chapter 5. Next to Gutman, the most thorough analyses of slave-family naming practices on South Carolina plantations are Cheryll Ann Cody, "Naming, Kinship, and Estate Dispersal: Notes on Slave Family Life on a South Carolina Plantation, 1786-1833" [Peter Gaillard's slaves], *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series, Vol. 32 (January 1982), pp. 192-211; and Cody, "There Was No 'Absalom' on the Ball Plantations: Slave-Naming Practices in the South Carolina Low Country, 1720-1865," *American Historical Review* 92 (June 1987), pp. 563-596. Other references to naming practices among South Carolina slaves and freedmen are as varied as Duncan C. Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), pp. 96-98; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Knopf, 1975), pp. 181-186; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 217-222; Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 83-88; Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 165-166; and Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *Promiseland: A Century of Life in a Negro Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), pp. 146-147.

[9]Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 21.

[10]1709 inventory, Thomas Pollock Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. Susan Brinn deals with the names of this family and other Pollock slaves in "Blacks in Colonial North Carolina, 1660-1723" (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978).

TABLE 1: PATRILINEAL NAMING

The following chart indicates the number of times a father's name was given to a child in Carolina slave records for which the information is available. The Dulles and Cameron family records were also used by Herbert Gutman. Their inclusion here serves to indicate how the other data compares with Gutman's findings.

SLAVEOWNER	TOTAL BIRTHS RECORDED	NO. OF CHILDREN NAMED FOR FATHERS
Anderson	250	10
Dulles	245	5
Cameron	238	9
Pickens	189	2
Fripp	175	5
Sparkman	140	4
Macay-McNeely	120	6
Pettigrew	110	1
Arrington	103	1
Johnston	83	0
Allston	82	3
Moseley	79	2
Donnell	76	0
Manigault	60	0
Hammond	51	17
Pinckney, H. L.	38	2
Pinckney, C. C.	32	0
Skinner	30	0
Cornish	28	0
TOTALS	**2129**	**67**

Sources: See footnote 12.

father's family role is less significant than he suggests.

Secondly, patrilineal naming was not practiced as consistently as Gutman's samples indicate. According to his quantification of the multi-generational linkages in the names of two-parent slave households on his four sample plantations, the number of sons with their fathers' names ranged from fourteen to four; or, of more significance, those names consisted of from just over half to just under a third of all repeated names within families. As Table l shows, the frequency of the practice varied considerably more than it did on those plantations on which he based his argument.[11]

[11]Gutman's sample is based on slave records from the Stirling Plantation in Louisiana, Good Hope Plantation in South Carolina, Cedar Vale Plantation in Virginia, and the Bennehan-Cameron Plantation in North Carolina. See Gutman, *Black Family*, Table 27, pp. 188-189.

In comparing the naming patterns of the two Carolina slave communities in his sample — those of the Camerons of Orange County, North Carolina, and the Dulles family of Orangeburg, South Carolina — with other slave groups from those states, a somewhat different pattern emerges.[12] Three such groups, those slaves owned by Edward Clifford Anderson, by the Macay-McNeely family, and by James Henry Hammond, actually exceeded Gutman's samples in the proportion of children with their fathers' names.[13] Far more prevalent, though, were those slave groups in which only two, one, or no children carried their father's names, thus indicating how variable a custom this was. The lack of any repetition of a father's name (or that of any other relative in most of these cases) may have been due to an owner's policy of prohibiting, or at least discouraging, the repetition of names among slaves because of possible confusion in keeping his records. Yet considering how many names were used more than once within slave groups, whether shared by family members or not, such restrictions were probably too rare to account adequately for the predominant lack of such continuity in these examples.

Viewing patrilineal naming in terms of the proportion of slave families within which it occurred provides an even clearer indication of how infrequently the practice was observed. Even among those groups in which the practice occurred most often, far more families never named sons for fathers than did. Only a third of the newborn males among Hammond's slaves (seventeen out of fifty-one) received their father's name. Among Anderson's slaves, less than a quarter (ten out of forty-four) passed on a father's name, as did only one in seven (four out of twenty-eight) of James

[12]In addition to the two sources also used by Gutman, the data in Tables 1 and 2 is taken from: Edward Clifford Anderson Papers, Vol. 2; Pettigrew Family Papers, Manuscript Vols. 43 and 41; Macay and McNeely Family Papers, Vol. 2; John Edwin Fripp Papers, "Birth of Negroes," 1840; Archibald Hunter Arrington Papers, Vol. 1; James R. Sparkman Books, Vols. 2 and 6; Tristan Lowther Skinner Plantation Record, "List of my Negroes, January 1, 1860," and "List of M.L. Warren's Negroes," April 1, 1850; John Hamilton Cornish Papers; Steed and Phipps Family Papers, 1862-1863 slave inventory (all of the above in the Southern Historical Collection, UNC); Francis W. Pickens Papers; Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Papers; Henry L. Pinckney Plantation Book; Louis Manigault Papers (all in Manuscript Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.); John Donnell Paper, N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh; J.H. Easterby, ed., *The South Carolina Rice Plantation as Revealed in the Papers of Robert F. W. Allston* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945); Edward W. Moseley's will in J. Bryan Grimes, ed., *North Carolina Wills and Inventories* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1912); and Faust, *Hammond and the Old South.*

[13]Anderson was a resident of Savannah, Georgia, but has been included in this sample because the majority of his slave holdings were held across the Savannah River in South Carolina.

Sparkman's slave families. Only one in ten (five out of fifty-three) of John Edwin Fripp's slave parents practiced patrilineal naming, as did only one in sixteen of Francis Pickens's. Even in Gutman's own example, the Cameron family, only nine families out of fifty-six (less than a sixth) observed the practice.[14]

Analysis of the ex-slave testimony from the Fisk and WPA interviews of the 1920s and 1930s roughly corroborates these figures. Of those North and South Carolina ex-slaves who mentioned the names of both their fathers and siblings, only twenty-four out of 158 indicated that their fathers' names were passed on to a child.[15] Thus not only was this not a distinctive feature of African-American slave culture, but it was probably used even more sporadically and less often among slaves than among southern whites and other societies. Although this in itself is certainly not strong enough evidence on which to deny the strength of a father's role in his family, it does at least make one wary of Gutman's implication of the practice's frequent use among slaves.

Yet regardless of how often the practice occurred, Gutman also too readily assumed that its use reflected a father's presence or influence within his family. Actually, the opposite might well have been the case. The greater frequency of a father's namesake may have stemmed from the fact that he was more likely to be separated from a child than his mother, or even to have lived apart from the mother during her pregnancy and the birth of their child.[16] It may also have served as a means of compensating for the failure of most slaveowners to include a child's father in recording his birth, so that the child's name itself would insure his father's name on the record as well.

Gutman's statement that those children named for their fathers were almost all either the first or second-born sons is also refuted by a more extensive study of Carolina birth records, which reveals several couples who waited to bestow the father's name on their third or fourth son. Some waited even longer, such as a slave named Castilo owned by James Sparkman of Georgetown District who had five sons by two different wives before his sixth son was finally given his name, or a Rowan County, North Carolina, couple named Polly and Peyton found in the Macay-McNeely records who

[14]Gutman, *Black Family*, p. 189.

[15]These figures are drawn from a total of 194 North Carolina and 376 South Carolina interviews compiled in Volumes 2, 3, 11, 14, and 15 of George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972-1977).

[16]Gutman briefly acknowledges this possibility but then neglects it, making his conclusion a direct contradiction of such a scenario. Gutman, *Black Family*, pp. 190-191.

had at least seven children before they named a son Peyton.[17] While it is unclear what conclusions if any can be drawn from these cases, they may indicate that the selection of names was casually made, and was not the result of any strong desire or effort to insure the perpetuation of a father's name.

As for the names of slave mothers, Gutman's observation that they were infrequently passed on to daughters is more fully substantiated by the Carolina records. But since such infrequency in perpetuating maternal names was characteristic of the universally practiced patrilineal system, his treatment of it as unique among slaves is again misleading. Even so, he tends to overstate slaves' avoidance of matrilineal naming. His statement that "it nearly never happened" may be too extreme in light of its several occurrences both in these two-parent records and in some of those listing only the mothers of slave newborns.[18] Two of the most notable exceptions to the practice's avoidance are found among Iveson Brooks's slaves, in which three of the six mothers mentioned passed their names on to their daughters, and Edward Moseley's will, in which as many mothers as fathers (two of each) shared their names with one of their children.[19]

A more likely means by which a mother's name was perpetuated was in the possessive form attached to a child's name, such as Binah's Toby or Moll's Hagar. Such usage often served to distinguish between children of the same name and the mother's name was usually dropped as the child grew up. Occasionally, in the case of a daughter, the possessive form was dropped and became simply a double name, so that Sally's Ann became Sally Ann. This process was probably less common than is often suggested, considering how rarely such double names appear on Carolina slave lists. Other relationships were also indicated by this possessive label, such as Buck's Betty or Tom's Rachel, in which a wife was identified by her husband's name; or in at least one case of gender reversal, Dinah's Jim, in which the husband was distinguished by his wife's name.[20]

[17]James R. Sparkman Books, Vol. 2; Macay-McNeely Family Papers, Vol. 2. See also Edward Clifford Anderson Papers, Vol. 2, for several examples (all in Southern Historical Collection).

[18]Gutman, *Black Family*, pp. 190-191.

[19]1848 slave list, Iveson L. Brooks Papers, Manuscript Collection, Perkins Library; Edward Moseley's will, in Grimes, *North Carolina Wills and Inventories*, pp. 315-316. In constructing slave kinship networks in Edgefield County, South Carolina, Vernon Burton found that more than a third of all slave children were named for their fathers, while less than a tenth carried their mothers' names. Burton, *In My Father's House*, p. 166.

[20]Guion Griffin Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 137; Joel Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), pp. 309-310.

This photo, captioned "Five generations of one family on Smith's plantation, Beaufort, South Carolina," appears on the cover of Herbert G. Gutman's "historiographical landmark," *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925.* Black families, claims Gutman, were far more stable than had been assumed. Courtesy of the U.S. Library of Congress.

Other two-word names served to identify a slave by occupation, such as Cooper Charley, Blacksmith Isaac, and John Weaver, or by physical characteristics, as in the case of Indian Johnnie, Crippled Rose, Black Joe, and Yellow Sam. The majority of distinctions required for two slaves with the same name were made merely by the prefixes Young and Old or Big and Little. The frequency with which such labels appear indicates how often names were repeated within slave communities.[21]

[21]For multiple examples of these double or prefixed names, see James R. Sparkman Books, Vols. 2 and 3; 1848 slave list, Iveson L. Brooks Papers; undated list, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; and 1853 slave list, William Law Papers, Perkins Library.

One phenomenon which seems particularly apparent in Carolina slave birth records is the practice of necronymic naming; that is, giving a child the same name as that of an earlier sibling who died. There are at least eighty-one detectable instances of the practice in the records examined for this study. The custom was probably far more common than even that number indicates, since it would remain undetected in the many cases in which masters probably never recorded the births of dead infants, even though they were named by their parents. Though the reasoning behind this practice is unclear, it may have resulted from an idea that parents were replacing a dead child or, carried even further, from a belief that the first child born after the death of a family member was a reincarnation of the deceased, a primitive idea that might well have had its roots in African tradition.[22]

As for other relatives, a slave child's grandparent was sometimes the basis for his or her name, although the evidence of this transmission among Carolina slaves is naturally even more scarce since its detection requires two-parent records kept over at least two generations. Where it did occur, this practice served not only as a means of linking generations and reinforcing a family's genealogical ties over time, but also as an indication that some slaves were very much aware of their own parentage as they became parents themselves. Such linkages also suggest that both parents contributed to the naming of their children, since the names of paternal grandparents appear almost as often as those of maternal grandparents, as shown in Table 2. But, as with a father's name passed on to a son, the cases in which a child bore a grandparent's name vary greatly from one slave group to another, both in terms of how often it was practiced and for which of the four grandparents a child was named, as Table 2 also demonstrates. The fact that such a practice defies any pattern or generalization again casts doubt upon Gutman's claim for its consistent and frequent usage.[23]

[22]Gutman, *Black Family*, pp. 190-194. For the African origins of necronymic naming among American slaves, see Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 82-84; and P. Robert Paustian, "The Evolution of Personal Naming Practices Among American Blacks," *Name* 26 (June 1978), pp. 177-191. On religious beliefs regarding death in Gullah slave communities, see Margaret Washington Creel, *"A Peculiar People": Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), Chapter 10.

[23]Other sources suggest that the perpetuation of grandparents' names was relatively common. Vernon Burton notes that their names appear almost as often as parents' names among Edgefield County slave children, with about a fifth named for a grandfather and another fifth named for a grandmother. Burton, *In My Father's House*, p. 166. Mary Beth Norton has estimated that 57 percent of the slave children owned by Thomas Jefferson were named for their grandparents, and 43 percent named for their parents. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of*

TABLE 2: REPETITION OF FAMILY NAMES

A chart indicating the frequency and type of family name repetition, with the total number of births in parentheses.

ANDERSON (250)		**SPARKMAN** (140)	
Father	10	Father	4
Mother	2	Mother	1
Mat. Grandfather	3	Mat. Grandfather	2
Mat. Grandmother	6	Mat. Grandmother	0
Pat. Grandfather	1	Pat. Grandfather	0
Pat. Grandmother	3	Pat. Grandmother	1
DULLES (245)		**MACAY-McNEELY** (120)	
Father	5	Father	6
Mother	0	Mother	2
Mat. Grandfather	2	Mat. Grandfather	1
Mat. Grandmother	8	Mat. Grandmother	1
Pat. Grandfather	3	Pat. Grandfather	0
Pat. Grandmother	4	Pat. Grandmother	0
CAMERON (238)		**PETTIGREW** (110)	
Father	9	Father	1
Mother	0	Mother	0
Mat. Grandfather	7	Mat. Grandfather	0
Mat. Grandmother	4	Mat. Grandmother	2
Pat. Grandfather	1	Pat. Grandfather	1
Pat. Grandmother	3	Pat. Grandmother	1
FRIPP (175)		**HAMMOND** (51)	
Father	5	Father	17
Mother	0	Mother	3
Mat. Grandfather	0	Mat. Grandfather	6
Mat. Grandmother	0	Mat. Grandmother	6
Pat. Grandfather	3	Pat. Grandfather	5
Pat. Grandmother	2	Pat. Grandmother	3

Sources: See footnote 12.

American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1980), pp. 85-87. Mechal Sobel suggests that plantation slaves in eighteenth-century Virginia may have influenced their white owners to name their children for grandparents. Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 155-156.

Ex-slave testimony also suggests that the use of grandparents' names was not widespread. While many of the Carolina slaves interviewed knew the names of their grandparents, only four out of 570 slaves stated that they had been named for a grandparent (though of course many may not have been aware of it or simply did not mention it). In three instances, ex-slaves could name at least two of their great-grandparents. An extraordinary case was that of freeman George Cato. His great-great-grandfather, named Cato, had been among the leaders of South Carolina's Stono Rebellion in 1739, and the name had been passed down through three generations of males who prided themselves on their distinguished ancestor. When emancipated in 1865, the fourth such Cato made his given name his surname to insure its further perpetuation through future generations.[24]

Gutman traced similar linkages between aunts, uncles, and cousins as evidence of what he called "kin networks," developed and maintained by plantation slaves conscious of their extended family circles. But when the relationship of the child to his namesake became further removed, the possibility of coincidence in the repetition of names becomes more likely. The frequency with which names within slave communities were repeated even among unrelated slaves should make one wary of assuming too much for namesakes as positive indications of an awareness of extended family ties, particularly among these more distant connections. One can never exclude the possibility that the mere familiarity or appealing sound of a name rather than its family significance served as motivation enough for its perpetuation.

Equally as important is the fact that a plantation slave group may have functioned as an extended family, based on the intimate relationships and common identities shared by all slaves, related or not, who were owned by the same master and/or lived on the same plantation. The frequent use of the affectionate titles Uncle, Aunt, and Mammy for certain slaves used indiscriminately by all slaves within a group, and even by whites, may well reflect this feeling. Slaves' retention of an original master's surname even after being sold to another master also serves as evidence of a conscious communal identity felt by a slave community.[25] Such an identity may have been just as important as, or may even have overshadowed, a slave's identification with a distinct, blood-related family network, and therefore may have been even more influential in the perpetuation of names within

[24]Rawick, *The American Slave*, Vol. 11: *North and South Carolina Narratives*, p. 98. Peter Wood notes the example of a Texas freedman, Martin Jackson, who also chose a surname to commemorate an ancestor: in his case, the closest anglicized version of his African great-grandfather's name, Jeaceo. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 182n.

[25]See Inscoe, "Carolina Slave Names," *Journal of Southern History*, pp. 548-551, for further discussion of this practice. Nat Turner is an example of a slave who retained the surname of his original owner after he was sold to several other owners.

the group.

The purpose of all this is not to refute Gutman's basic thesis, which is far more complex than has been indicated here, and is based on much more substantial documentation than that dealt with in this essay. Rather it is to suggest that a broader range of slave records from North and South Carolina demonstrate, as Gutman's four plantations — despite their size and completeness — do not, that there were significant variations in the ways and frequency with which slaves observed family-related naming customs. They indicate that, as with American families today, some slave families were more close-knit or more interested in their ancestry than others, a variable that may very well have been due to factors beyond their control.

Yet variation can prove just as valuable as consistency in what it reveals about the people involved. In this case, such differences may well reflect the varying degrees of respect with which owners viewed the integrity or sanctity of slave familes. That in turn may well have influenced slaves' own attitudes in this regard. Those whose masters respected family unity and in which the slave family was relatively stable may have been more aware of their kin networks and thus have been more likely to perpetuate the names of family members. On the other hand, it may well have been that slaves in those situations were also more likely to have taken their families for granted and thus they attached little importance to passing on the names of relatives. Such stable situations would also have been those most likely to have created a sense of unity and closeness to the slave group as a whole, with the names of its members, whether related or not, being repeated from one generation to the next. If this were the case, the slaves who would have most valued and clung to family ties would have been those who were more insecure, having been separated, or threatened with separation, from their families. Though knowledge of more distant relatives may have been lost to these slaves in the process, their endearment to parents, spouses, or siblings they missed may have inspired a more frequent use of their names among their own offspring.

In either case, slaves acted on their own. Although greatly influenced by their particular situation, their individuality led to different feelings and reactions to those situations. Those personal responses were probably the most critical variable of all and, as such, suggest that the study of slave naming patterns is most valuable because it challenges the tendencies of historians toward generalization and homogenization in characterizing the African-American slave experience.

TWO "LIGHTNING SLINGERS" FROM SOUTH CAROLINA: THE TELEGRAPHIC CAREERS OF AMBROSE AND NARCISO GONZALES

THOMAS C. JEPSEN*

AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, AMBROSE AND NARCISO Gonzales became famous as the crusading editors of *The State*, a progressive newspaper published in Columbia, South Carolina. For both, however, journalism was a second career; they had started out as telegraph operators, or, in the parlance of the age, "lightning slingers."

Ambrose Elliott Gonzales (1857-1926) and Narciso Gener Gonzales (1858-1903) were the grandsons of William Elliott (1788-1863), a prominent South Carolina planter, legislator, and writer. William Elliott served in the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1814-1815 and in the state senate from 1818 to 1821. His daughter, Harriett Rutledge Elliott (1838-1869), married Ambrosio José Gonzales (1816-1893), a Cuban revolutionary who lived in exile in the United States. They had six children; Ambrose and Narciso were the oldest.

Ambrosio José Gonzales served in the Confederate army during the Civil War; afterwards he returned to Cuba. There Harriett died of yellow fever in 1869. In 1870 Ambrosio José returned to the Elliott family home in South Carolina, Oak Lawn, a 1750-acre plantation on the Edisto River, with their six children.

Ambrose and Narciso became telegraph operators in the 1870s to help support their large extended family; neither had any formal schooling past the age of seventeen. Ambrose worked in Grahamville, South Carolina, and in New York City; Narciso worked in Varnville (which he spelled "Varnesville"), South Carolina, and in Savannah and Valdosta, Georgia.[1]

Telegraphers were regarded as small-town wizards of the electric wire in the 1870s and 1880s, the golden age of telegraphy; they knew how to make the electric wire "talk" and provided the still-new miracle of instantaneous communication from city to city. Both Ambrose and Narciso were prolific letter writers who kept up a continual stream of correspondence with family and friends; their writings provide revealing portraits of the age and times,

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[1]Biographical information is extracted from the Elliott-Gonzales Papers in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., and from Lewis Pinckney Jones, *Stormy Petrel: N. G. Gonzales and His State* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973.)