

Vol. 01 | Issue 01

The Coalition of Master's Scholars  
on Material Culture

# Material Matters



CMSMC Material Matters 2023 Publication  
Front Matter

CMSMC Senior Leadership:

Editor-in-Chief : Hope Elizabeth Gillespie  
Creative Director : Sydney Sheehan  
Operations Director : MaryKate Smolenski

Publication Teams :

Object as Lesson : Reckoning with a  
Surrealist Sculpture

Author : Alice Matthews  
Lead Editor : Logan Ward  
Editor : Christine Staton

Gilding the Evidence: Perceptions of  
Personal Effects in True Crime Journalism,  
1870-1900.

Author: Danielle Cox  
Lead Editor : Erika Foster  
Editors : Abigail King and Victoria Moore

Catching Heliconia; Pierre-Joseph  
Redouté's Botanical Prints and the  
Napoleonic Empire.

Author : Rebecca Lo Presti  
Lead Editor: Mia Uribe Kozlovsky  
Editors : Maille Radford and Mary  
Manfredi

Gender, Grub, And Gullah: The  
Relationships Between Gender and  
Foodways Among Gullah Geechee  
Communities on the South Carolina Sea  
Island.

Author : Kathryn Eifert  
Lead Editor : Katherine Jemima Hamilton  
Editors : John Shorter and Reb Xu

2023 Symposium Committee:

Sarah Henzlik  
Reb Xu  
Peri Buch  
MaryKate Smolenski  
Christine Staton  
Hope Elizabeth Gillespie  
Sydney Sheehan

CMSMC Board of Directors :

Chair of the Board : Kathlene Toole  
Vice Chair : Sydney Sheehan  
Treasurer and Editorial Chair : Hope  
Elizabeth Gillespie  
Secretary: MaryKate Smolenski

CMSMC is run by fellow master's scholars  
as a platform for colleagues to  
disseminate their work. We are an  
independently run organization and are  
not affiliated with any university or  
institution. Coalition Of Masters Scholars  
On Material Culture Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-  
profit corporation, EIN 87-3690415. We  
are an open-access publication and this  
work is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

**Cover Image: Lo Presti Figure 2: Magnification of  
print highlighting stipple engraving technique.  
Photo credit to author. Museum purchase with  
funds drawn from the Centenary Fund, Courtesy  
of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.**

# Editor's note.



## *Hello Dear Readers, Colleagues, and Friends,*

Thank you for reading the inaugural issue of *Material Matters*, a journal published by the Coalition of Masters Scholars on Material Culture (CMSMC). This 2023 edition is based around the topic of our spring symposium, *History Should Make You Uncomfortable*. The idea that *History Should Make You Uncomfortable* was a founding principle of CMSMC when we came together in 2020. Our inaugural symposium in November of that year was built on the theme, which has served a blueprint for not only all of our symposiums since but also on how we write, edit, and present any work published by CMSMC. The concept allowed us to cut our teeth in the world of digital publishing and community building, and as such, has grown into a more nuanced and questioned statement over the last 3 years.

Our spring 2023 symposium added additional layers to the concept, such as *should* being an operative word in the phrase- what does *should* mean and how do we cope with that in academic and educational spaces. Our presenters and retrospective speakers asserted that when one takes on the responsibility for presenting uncomfortable histories, they are required to treat those topics with transparency and care.

Our Fall 2023 Edition presents four different narratives of discomfort, some immediately apparent and others that require a deeper look at our own subconscious feelings and seemingly well-known histories. We begin with Alice Matthew's object encounter with Dorothea Tanning's Verbe, Object as Lesson : Reckoning with a Surrealist Sculpture. Danielle Cox takes us on a journey through Gilded Age true crime with Gilding the Evidence: Perceptions of Personal Effects in True Crime Journalism, 1870-1900. Rebecca Lo Presti shows us the excess of empire through botanical prints in Catching Heliconia; Pierre-Joseph Redouté's Botanical Prints and the Napoleonic Empire. Finally, Kathryn Eifert crafts a culinary chronicle of Gullah Geechee food practices with Gender, Grub, And Gullah: The Relationships Between Gender and Foodways Among Gullah Geechee Communities on the South Carolina Sea Islands.

We hope that our 2023 edition of Material Matters helps you to embrace discomfort and widens your scope into the vast world of material culture.

***From all of us at CMSMC,  
thank you again and enjoy  
our 2023 publication!***

# Table of Contents

"...the uncomfortable world in which the Heliconia print came to exist becomes clear through the lens of empire and colonialism." pg. 34

## Front Matter.

Title	2
Editor's Note	3-4

## Feature Essays.

Your Object as Lesson: Reckoning with a Surrealist Soft Sculpture <i>Alice Matthews</i>	4-13
Gilding the Evidence: Perceptions of Personal Effects in True Crime Journalism, 1870-1900. <i>Danielle Cox</i>	14-31
Catching Heliconia: Pierre Joseph Redouté's Botanical Prints and the Napoleonic Empire <i>Rebecca Lo Presti</i>	34-47
Gender, Grub, And Gullah: The Relationships Between Gender and Foodways Among Gullah Geechee Communities on the South Carolina Sea Islands <i>Kathryn G. Eifert</i>	48-76

# Object as Lesson: Reckoning with a Surrealist Soft Sculpture

*Alice Matthews*

**Abstract:** Dorothea Tanning's *Verbe* (1969/70) is an unsightly thing: beige, plush, misshapen, baring its gruesome puzzle-piece teeth. It's a surrealist soft sculpture that sits encased in glass, as though it were deemed a hazard to the museum goer's safety. The very qualities that make it so repulsive, though, are the same ones that endear it to us, ask us to draw near and take it up into our arms like a child's stuffed animal. Such seemingly opposite sentiments are in fact common among surrealist art. The simultaneous attraction-repulsion has a disquieting effect on the viewer, who must sit uncomfortably with unresolved feelings. Through a concentrated and

intimate encounter with *Verbe*, we can consider how choosing to occupy the feeling of discomfort can bring forward histories of gender and material in the art historical cannon, as well as complicate the relationship between human and nonhuman occupants of a museum space. This piece offers an example of discomfort as a generative force for reckoning with exclusion and difference.

**Keywords:** *Dorothea Tanning, surrealism, soft-sculpture, museum space, object encounter*

## Consider an encounter

While walking through the modern galleries of an art museum, an unexpected form catches your eye. A tan creature reclines comfortably on a pedestal. Its soft, felt skin evokes a favorite childhood stuffed animal. Its teeth are made from jigsaw puzzle pieces, meant to be handled, touched, and patiently put back together. Many of its seams bear evidence of its maker's hands, the uneven, messy stitches recalling something that has been lovingly repaired and tended to. Were it not for the glass vitrine, you could take the creature into your arms.

These very qualities that make the creature so endearing, though, are the same ones that repulse you. Its bulbous, eyeless head tapers into a paw-like appendage. Its skin has a pallid, cadaverous hue. Its open-mouth grin reveals two rows of menacing, jagged teeth. Its invisible innards bulge at the seams, threatening to burst out.

The only thing standing between you and this creature is a glass vitrine (Figure 1).

The object is Dorothea Tanning's (1910-2012) *Verbe* (1969-70), and the seemingly opposite sentiments in this piece are in fact common among Surrealist artworks like this one. The simultaneous attraction and repulsion have a disquieting effect on the viewer, who must sit uncomfortably with contrasting feelings. Emerging as a literary, philosophical, and artistic movement out of Paris in the wake of the First World War (1914-1918), Surrealism privileged the unconscious mind and its uncanny expressions to, according to the theorist André Breton, resolve the gap between dreams and reality. [1] The effect is unnerving, bizarre, illogical... something like *Verbe* emerges. What do we stand to gain from sitting with the discomfort that this object engenders?



1

Figure 1. Dorothea Tanning, *Verbe*, 1969-70. Flannel, wool, tweed, cardboard, polyfill, forged steel, and wooden jigsaw puzzle pieces from Johannes Vermeer's *The Artist's Studio* (ca. 1665/66). Yale University Art Gallery, Janet and Simeon Braguin Fund, © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris





Figure 2 : Details of Dorothea Tanning, *Verbe*, 1969-70.



Figure 3 : Details of Dorothea Tanning, *Verbe*, 1969-70.

We might think about *Verbe* in terms of what Julia Kristeva defines as “abject,” something that, in its grotesqueness and cast-off state “disturbs identity, system, order” and mediates the relationship between Self (subject) and Other (object). Discomfort itself, then, becomes a productive mode of perception that allows us to make discursive connections within and between ourselves, others, and the world. [2] It allows us to reckon with the construct of the abject Other. When prompted to reflect on her work, Tanning said she wants to create art “that has no exit.” [3] What follows is an example of an eager acceptance of those terms.

## Skin

Your eyes might linger first on the art creature’s soft, felt skin. In some places, it is interrupted by irregular seams of hand stitching which recall something tender and affectionate: a stuffed animal so well-loved that someone has taken care to mend its worn limbs. You are drawn in by

the creature’s sentimental nature. But after a few moments, the imperfections register differently. The skin takes on an anemic, washed-out hue. The long, sinuous creases that trail from the edges of the creature’s mouth over its blind head slither down toward a tapered appendage that is vaguely shaped like a brainstem. The neat creases end abruptly where the creature’s paw has been sutured haphazardly onto the tail end (Figures 2 and 3).

The slipshod assemblage of parts evokes Frankenstein’s monster, a grotesque and decidedly abject eighteenth-century science experiment (Figure 4). Details such as these inspire feelings of terror, of fear, of queasiness—a discomfort that settles in your bones.

While experiencing both attraction and repulsion toward *Verbe* is itself an uncomfortable, unresolvable experience, for Tanning, that is exactly the point. By refusing to turn away from the creature and the affective dilemma it presents, we sink a little deeper into close looking and patient reflection. Our reward?

An embodied familiarity with the discursive connections we make with the object, and thus, a heightened sensitivity toward the relationship between Self and Other.

If we consider the materiality of the creature's soft and stitched-together epidermis, for instance, we must face the fraught history of classing art forms based on a series of exclusions—and the disruptive way in which *Verbe* finds a home outside this order of classification. So-called “fine art” was, historically speaking, concerned with painting and sculpture, which were associated with things like intellectualism, capital, whiteness, and patriarchy. [4] *Verbe*'s apparent affair with textiles, sewing, and a female maker should, according to this logic, disqualify it from the status of fine art and cast it out to the realm of apparently not-so-fine craft. But the object's soft surface materials—flannel, wool, tweed—and intentionally visible hand stitches are a rejoinder to this system of exclusion. *Verbe* instead finds kinship in the discourses and artworks of the feminist art movement which, as it emerged in the late 1960s, reclaimed craft and other materials and forms associated with “women's work” and domesticity. Through the creature's vernacular skin, Tanning employs an embodied push-pull affect to exceed the scope of “fine art” and its accoutrements.

## Teeth

After ruminating on the creature's skin, your eyes might next land on its wide-open mouth (Figure 5).



Figure 4: Boris Karloff as the Creature in James Whale's film *Frankenstein* (1931).

The teeth are familiar, nostalgic puzzle pieces beckoning you to put them back together. But their sharp angles and greenish shade also make you feel uneasy. You question if the creature is smiling, or if perhaps it is baring its teeth threateningly. As you consider both positions (and what that means for you standing right next to it), the colors and patterns on the surface of the teeth slowly cohere into something recognizable: from an upper-row incisor or canine, the visage of a woman crowned in a wreath appears upside down (Figure 6).



Figure 5: Detail of teeth studio shot of Dorothea Tanning, Verbe, 1969-70



(Right) Figure 6 : Studio shot of Dorothea Tanning, Verbe, 1969-70

The woman is in fact the subject in painter Johannes Vermeer's (1632-1675) *The Allegory of Painting* (ca. 1666/68), and, because of her adornments, is thought to be the personification of fame, poetry, or history (perhaps a nebulous triage is possible) (Figure 7). [5] The depicted painter, whose back is to us, is often understood as Vermeer's self-portrait. The painting's chiaroscuro (contrast between light and dark) and the hyper-naturalistic, albeit staged, scene are emblematic of the body of work that dubbed Vermeer an "Old Master." Such repute lent itself to the painting's extended afterlife and associations with painful periods of history, in addition to generative ones. In 1934, the Surrealist Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) painted several pieces that used Vermeer's masterwork as a referent, perhaps most notably *The Ghost of Vermeer of Delft Which Can Be Used as a Table*, in which the figure of the Dutch painter in his distinctive costume is reproduced in an eerie, barren environment with long, spindly legs that extend into a table, of sorts (for an image from The Dalí Museum, see [here](#) ).

In 1936-37, Dalí's painting hung in New York in the Museum of Modern Art's seminal show, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* —a show which, upon seeing it, first sparked Tanning's interest in Surrealism. [6] In 1939, Breton permanently expelled Dalí from the Surrealist group for his espousal of Nazism and white supremacy, ideas which were and remain inextricably linked to the constructs of "fine art" and "Old Masters." [7]



Figure 7: Johannes Vermeer, *The Allegory of Painting*, 1666/68. Oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), interested in the value of such works, looted Vermeer's *The Allegory of Painting* and hid it in the Altaussee salt mine in Austria. It was temporarily handed to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna in 1946 and entered the permanent collection in 1958. [8]

Meanwhile, Tanning's social and artistic circles, as well as her contact with the ideas of Surrealism (for which she later learned French), grew exponentially in the United States as she met artist émigrés and refugees fleeing the war in Europe. She married the German artist Max Ernst (1891-1976) and by the mid-'50s they relocated together to post-war France. In the years spanning the late '60s and the early '70s (coinciding with the aforementioned feminist art movement), Tanning had, in her own words, "an intense five-year adventure with soft sculpture." [9] *Verbe* was born out of a moment in Tanning's career when she pushed beyond the limits of Surrealism's off-kilter naturalism—which she had already explored in her lauded, earlier body of painted work—and into abject forms and materials. With the appropriation of the seventeenth-century masterwork for the creature's teeth, she establishes what Robert Slifkin calls a "temporal correspondence" between Vermeer, Dalí, and herself. [10] *The Allegory of Painting* is, for Tanning, a surrogate for the art world episteme that codified Vermeer as an "Old Master" and entitled Dalí to the inheritance of that

standing in the twentieth century through a necessarily patrilineal continuation of artistic "genius"—though, that's not to say that she did not admire their work. Rather, her foray into the world of craft and "women's work" softens Hierarchy's grip on form, material, and gender. The histories of such are reflected on the surface of the creature's not-so-shiny teeth.

## Innards

Drawn deep into the gaping mouth, you finally become aware of that which you cannot see, but which the object's bulging seams make palpable: the creature's innards. You speculate that they might be cloud-soft like the exterior, confirming the initial stuffed animal prognosis you made when you first approached the creature from across the gallery. But, having learned to be suspicious of the creature's other, more sinister side, you can just as easily imagine entrails of another sort, putrid guts that make your own churn. The answer is somewhere in between: polyfill and forged steel.

In the absence of a musculoskeletal system, a piece of manipulated metal acts as *Verbe*'s spine and enables the creature to hold itself upright. Its name, *Verbe* (French for "verb"), guides us to imagine how it might physically move itself. By rolling, hopping, or flopping along? If the slightest contraction of a muscle is all it takes to shatter the illusion



Figure 8: Dorothea Tanning, *Hôtel du Pavot, Chambre 202* (Poppy Hotel, Room 202), 1970-73. Fabric, wool, synthetic fur, cardboard, and ping-pong balls. Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou. © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

of objectness, we might recall the famous scene from James Whale's 1931 film in which the twitching fingers of the previously inanimate monster prompt the mad scientist Frankenstein to ecstatically declare, "It's alive!" Yet, even after the monster's clumsy first steps and demonstration of a fraught interiority, its subjecthood remains threatened. Verbe, of course, has no mechanism, biological or otherwise, that could facilitate automatic movement. But the impulse to imagine this creature as a living one persists, complicating its ontological position and unsettling the construct of the Other as object in relation to the Self as subject.

The creature's curatorial object file—which we might think of as Verbe's medical record—reveals more about its lived history. The polyfill in fact came from the filling of Tanning's pillows, a fitting extension of the Surrealist herself, for whom dreams held critical import for self-perception. Prior to the Yale University Art Gallery's acquisition of the object in 2008, Tanning and an assistant restored its interior structure—"it was a question of 'pose'"—since it had begun to "slump."

Verbe had been moved to the artist's home to undergo this procedure, a place where Tanning could "ponder the best outcome" for it. [11] These were such considerations Tanning applied to each of her soft sculptures. In the installation piece *Hôtel du Pavot, Chambre 202* (Poppy Hotel, Room 202) (1970-73), she creates a room crawling with anthropomorphic furniture and stuffed, lumpy figures protruding from the walls (Figure 8). The dark, twisted form and pointed-heel shoes of *Table Tragique* (Tragic Table) against the far wall harken back to Dalí's *The Ghost of Vermeer of Delft Which Can Be Used as a Table*, only here the figure-table is cast as decidedly feminine by way of features and pose (Figure 9). Moreover, the Subject-Object relationship is inverted; while Vermeer's ghost can be used as a table upon which to place things (some kind of liquor, it seems), the femme-fatale-table, as it were, both makes up the table and takes up its entire surface (rendering it defunct in its purpose as object), all while expressing its rich interiority through dramatized gesture.

Tanning's sensitivity for the ontologies of her soft sculptures like *Verbe* and *Table Tragique* makes apparent a level of care that exceeds their status as objects (Other). The anthropomorphic rhetoric here—in the creature's object file and in my own writing—is intentional; *Verbe* insists that we relate to it in an embodied way, to consider both its interior and exterior states, physical and emotional, uncomfortable though it may be to recognize this abject object as a subject.

## “No Exit”

You may be standing outside of the vitrine, but for the duration of your close looking, you are trapped alongside the creature, stuck in uneasy proximity. You have spent time intimately mulling over its skin, teeth, and innards, and now you are thoroughly confused and have nowhere to turn but back to yourself. You have not solved the affective dilemma; the forces of attraction and repulsion continue to oscillate.

An unresolvable impasse such as this one is uncomfortable, but by choosing not to exit that feeling and instead tend to the discursive connections that unfold from it, something else unexpected might happen, too. Skin might divulge the long and gendered system of exclusion an artist faced when she turned to unconventional materials and forms. Teeth, like dental records used to identify unrecognizable remains, could reveal painful lived histories. Innards can complicate the ontological position of an art creature and force us to contend with the subjecthood of an object. Consequently, the feeling of discomfort itself becomes a form of abjection, one that destabilizes the binary between Self and Other. New possibilities open for curiosity, connection, and kinship. On our next stroll through a museum, we may even seek out the abject object. When, in the classroom or the world, we encounter a text or an idea that challenges us to push beyond the boundaries of ourselves, we may embrace it. It seems there is something remedial to be found in the uncomfortable.

Figure 9: Dorothea Tanning, *Table Tragique* (Tragic Table) from *Hôtel du Pavot, Chambre 202*, 1970-73. Wood, fabric, and wool. Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou. © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



# Endnotes

[1] André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," (1929), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 14.

[2] Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection," in *Powers of Horror*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

[3] Eloise Napier, "Her Infinite Variety," *Harpers & Queen*, September 2004, 229.

[4] For an introduction to this topic and a foundational text published during Tanning's soft sculpture period, see, Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," *ARTnews* (January 1971), reproduced online in May, 2015, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/why-have-there-been-no-great-women-artists-4201/>.

[5] The painting is also known by other titles, common ones including *The Art of Painting* and *Painter in his Studio*. In Yale University Art Gallery's museum label for *Verbe*, the painting is titled *The Artist's Studio* and also dated to a slightly different date range, ca. 1665/66. In this essay, I am using the date used by the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, where the painting is housed. See, "Die Malkunst," *Objektdaten*, *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien*, <https://www.khm.at/de/object/2574/>.

[6] Dorothea Tanning, "Artist's Chronology, In her own words..." The Dorothea Tanning Foundation, <https://www.dorotheatanning.org/dorothea-tanning/chronology>.

[[7] Dalí repeatedly espoused such views and ideas, which led to an earlier temporary expulsion from the Surrealist group in 1934. For the English translation of a letter from Dalí to Breton detailing his views in 1935, see, Josep Massot, "The day Salvador Dalí invented a racist religion," *El País*, September 5, 2022, <https://english.elpais.com/culture/2022-09-06/the-day-dali-invented-a-racist-religion.html>; For a reading on the drive toward mastery over the self and others and its role in the development of modern politics, see, Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

[8] For full provenance, see, *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien*, "Die Malkunst."

[9] Tanning, "About the Artist, In her own words..." The Dorothea Tanning Foundation.

[10] Robert Slifkin, "Philip Guston's Return to Figuration and the '1930s Renaissance' of the 1960s," *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 2 (June 2011), 229.

[11] Douglas Walla, email to Jennifer Gross, March 11, 2008, object file, inv. no. 2008.68.1, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, Yale University Art Gallery.

# Bibliography

Breton, André. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Massot, Josep. "The day Salvador Dalí invented a racist religion." *El País*. September 5, 2022.

Napier, Eloise. "Her Infinite Variety." *Harpers & Queen*. September 2004.

Nochlin, Linda. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" ARTNews. January 1971. Reproduced online in May, 2015 <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/why-have-there-been-no-great-women-artists-4201/>.

Singh, Julietta. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Slifkin, Robert. "Philip Guston's Return to Figuration and the '1930s Renaissance' of the 1960s." *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 2 (June 2011): 220-242.

**Matthews, Alice. "Object as Lesson: Reckoning with a Surrealist Soft Sculpture." *The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture* 01, no. 01 (October 16, 2023): 4-13.**



# Gilding the Evidence: Perceptions of Personal Effects in True Crime Journalism, 1870–1900.

*Danielle Cox*

**Abstract:** The personal effects that appear in the true crime reports of the Gilded Age relate the changing roles of immigrants, racial minorities, and women to popular anxieties and cultural assumptions surrounding crime and victimhood. By examining a sample set of over two hundred articles from a variety of news sources, trends appear that reveal how true crime reporting portrayed different groups of people, and how the things they had with them reflected their involvement with crime and justice. The same people who tend to be underrepresented in other types of historical sources also tend to be uniquely portrayed in true crime journalism, as depictions of immigrants, racial minorities, and women generally fell into common patterns of criminality and victimhood that adhered to other societal expectations of their behavior. Studying these depictions alongside descriptions of personal effects provides a unique and untapped insight into how certain objects reflected on the people who owned them and vice versa. While these personal items contribute to historical understanding of how Gilded Age audiences perceived the people described in criminal reports, these articles also show how contemporaries understood the objects themselves as subtextual information about the subject.

**Keywords:** *true crime, Gilded Age, sensationalist journalism, criminality, victimhood*

On 4 August, 1894, the headline of the National Police Gazette read, "The Victim of a Fiend: A Pretty Girl Wronged by an Unknown Wretch."<sup>[1]</sup> While walking to work in the early morning, a sixteen-year-old postmaster's assistant named Clara Casper was attacked by an unidentified man in Fort Lee, New Jersey.<sup>[2]</sup> The attacker had handkerchiefs and rags in his possession, and after he choked Casper into unconsciousness, he used them to tie her up and gag her. After waking up in the woods, Casper freed herself from her bindings and ran home to her brother's grocery store, where she was comforted by her mother. Her brother and father rounded up the men of the neighborhood to search for the perpetrator, but the culprit was never found.<sup>[3]</sup>

True crime accounts like Casper's saturated the print media of the Gilded Age in the late nineteenth century. Even local cases, typically syndicated to regional papers, appeared in national publications like the New York Times or National Police Gazette. Many of these stories share what journalism historians David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla describe as the defining characteristics of the sensationalist genre. They feature topics like scandal, crime, disaster, and catastrophe; their tone is exaggerated with colorful adjectives and pithy, alliterative titles; and they use graphic, gore-filled detail.<sup>[4]</sup> Like the rags and handkerchiefs of Casper's attacker, the items criminals, victims, and bystanders carried in these stories were important facets of the narrative that impacted the readers' understanding of characters, motives, and behaviors.

Where the possession of weapons or burglary tools would imply an intent toward malice, decorative fripperies or business accouterments might suggest respectability and stability in sensationalist writing. In turn, the appearance of these items where they were not expected hinted at a disturbance in the social order that would immediately raise suspicion.

These articles are imperfect sources. Sensational writers may have highlighted or omitted details to better suit their narratives. <sup>[6]</sup> More than three-quarters of the individuals whose possessions were listed did not have their race or ethnicity described. Following a journalistic trend that survives to the present day, readers were likely meant to assume that these people were white and American-born. <sup>[7]</sup> Focusing on the demographic qualities that were considered noteworthy highlighted the qualities that were considered an exception to this default. These cases require interpretation and historical context to reach valuable conclusions, but conclusions are attainable with a significant sample size and careful cross-referencing with demographic sources, catalogs and advertisements, and other scholarly analyses of the period's socio-economic history. These cases and the details they included provide unique evidence for the ways in which material culture relates to the changing roles of immigrants, racial minorities, and women to popular anxieties and cultural assumptions surrounding crime and victimhood.

While xenophobia is hardly unique to the late nineteenth century, popular journalism's portrayal

of America's *émigrés du jour* is characteristic of the period's conception of criminality and the ability of American culture to assimilate and redeem supposed sinister foreign impulses. Between 1870 and 1900 the foreign-born population in the United States nearly doubled. [8] Culturally and linguistically different from most Americans, Italian immigrants were among the most maligned of the period's major migrant groups. Their reputation as impoverished and anarchical was reflected in their portrayal in the criminal press, and often mirrored the popular image of other low-status groups like Irish and Polish immigrants. [9] The perpetrator in the Casper case was described as "an Italian, about thirty-five years old, of stout figure, with a heavy black moustache, who wore a brown Derby hat and gray trousers," thought to be a member of a local gang of migrant railroad laborers. [10] The thick, dark facial hair—an Italian stereotype—and the Derby hat, which was associated at the time with railroad workers because it was less likely to blow off at high speeds, identified the perpetrator as a working-class foreigner. [11] Set against the image of a young American girl from a family of well-established local business owners, the imagery of the sinister foreigner stands in stark contrast.

While Italian people did appear in articles about crime as victims or witnesses, all five Italians in this sample set whose personal effects were described were alleged perpetrators of a crime (see Table 2). All the objects listed in their possession, except one mention of cash, were associated with violence, including four razors, a pair of scissors,

and the rag and handkerchief used to gag and bind Clara Casper. [12] The only exception was the cash-carrier who was arrested for weapons possession for having, but not using, a concealed pistol to defend himself from potential theft. [13] Again, except for the weapons possession case, each of these cases involved objects that were already on hand, potentially suggesting a spontaneous crime of opportunity. The handkerchief was an expected possession for most children and adults, and the sixth most common object mentioned among all 335 individuals (see Tables 1a-1c). [14] Casper's attacker's possession of a rag would feed into the idea that the perpetrator was a manual laborer like many new immigrants, one who was possibly involved with the railroad and would need something sturdy on hand to clean up. This repeated spontaneity reinforced the idea of Italians as inherently, and perhaps uncontrollably, violent and criminal. While not necessarily plotting or seeking out chances to cause harm, the tools they carried suggested they were always ready to meet an opportunity for trouble. Even John Solimano, who carried the concealed pistol to defend his small cash fortune, was prepared for a potentially violent encounter, though he did not seek it out. [15]

However, other major immigrant groups like Germans received strikingly different treatment in the press, even when cast in the roles of criminal perpetrators. On October 26, 1890, Captain Seeley, a retired builder who lived on a farm in Monroe, Connecticut, was found dead on the floor of his barn with a noose around

his neck. [16] Initially thought to be a suicide, testimony from Seeley's daughter and investigations into George Halm, a neighbor's farmhand who disappeared following the murder, suggested a possible plan to murder Seeley and rob him of the cash he carried. [17] Investigators found a rope among Halm's possessions that was the same type used in Seeley's death and was tied with the same unique knot. [18] The fact that Halm was a recent German immigrant who spoke little English is reiterated in the article seven times, and he is described as "a six-footer [who] weighs over 200 pounds" who told people he came from a wealthy family. [19]

In contrast to the Casper case, wherein the pleasure of the attack itself was the apparent motive, the Seeley case was allegedly motivated by money to buy horses. The depiction of Halm, or whoever the murderer was, remained brutish and selfish through detailed descriptions of the noose found around Seeley's neck and the blood patterns on his face. [20] Again, the victim is a well-established American, always called Captain, whose family sought justice for the violent actions of a "sinister" immigrant. However, in much the same way that modern crime reporting has a biased tendency to present wholesome images of white perpetrators in smiling family photos, while people of color are shown in unflattering mugshots, the article also highlighted Halm's talent with horses and the violin. [21] This reflects his supposed upper-class background, which reinforced a more positive perception of Germans and wealthier immigrants in general than the mistrusted Irish, Italian, or Polish communities. With t

he Italian suspect, readers could readily dismiss his attack on Casper as the typical behavior of someone of his origins, while reports about Halm's violence raised more questions about motive. While the Seeley attack was more deadly than Casper's, the motive was seemingly less deviant. This provided Halm with an air of respectability that the anonymous Italian suspect lacked, since his crime was driven by the more reputable goal of setting up his own ranch rather than indulging in simple base impulses.

Germans had a far kinder reputation than other immigrants, even while falling under the same unfair scrutiny. Their much longer history in America and a culture more entrenched in the mainstream meant they were more likely to be skilled craftspeople than common manual workers. [22] As opposed to the prevailing depiction of Italians as villains and perpetrators, seven out of the eight Germans mentioned in the sample set were victims of theft, suicide, or accidents, with Halm being the only suspected perpetrator (see Table 4). Besides Halm's rope, the only other weapons connected to Germans were two guns used in suicides. The violence of these weapons was offset by more sentimental objects included with them, that presented images of tragic, yet almost beautiful scenes: one young woman with a flower, lock of hair, and broken wedding ring along with other small trinkets, and an older man who died looking into a small mirror and smoking a pipe with a suicide note in his pocket. [23] The possessions of the other Germans mentioned are similarly considered mundane yet genteel, including letters, eyeglasses, watches, or scraps of fabric, again classifying them as

a step above typical laborers. [24] While these individuals were not yet “American” enough to omit their German origins from newspaper descriptions, the “very ordinary” objects associated with them show a clear departure from the heavy mistrust of newer immigrants who were considered more foreign than those of Northwestern European extraction. [25]

Reports involving immigrants as victims also reflect mainstream attitudes about their inherent criminality through their need to diffuse pre-existing stereotypes and prejudices. On 21 October 1882, The National Police Gazette reported on the latest incident in a string of robbery-homicides occurring near the railroad in Little Rock, Arkansas. The victim, “a sturdy Irishman” named John Diamond, was a railroad worker who was shot multiple times with a rifle and a shotgun and robbed of \$50 in cash, or the equivalent of nearly \$1,500 in 2023. [26] Another victim, an African American man with the mononym of Jones, survived an earlier attack long enough to give a statement describing the perpetrators as “two white men who after plundering him decided to kill him and ordered him to pray.” [27]

The cash the victims in Little Rock were killed for draws the readers’ attention to their occupations rather than their races and nationalities. [28] While readers might be initially inclined to think negatively of these individuals because of their backgrounds, the narrative that “they deserved it” would not be nearly as compelling when the perpetrators were anonymous thieves. If the articles could not erase their socio-economic status, the victims could at least be made to seem industrious and independent. For Diamond, given that the average wage for

railroad laborers was around \$1.72 per hour, the \$50 he was killed for equals around twenty-nine hours of work. Two other victims named Maholey and Connell, likely Irish immigrants though not explicitly described so, were robbed of \$5 and \$300 respectively, while Jones was robbed of \$150. This undermined popular assumptions, particularly about the Irish, of being impoverished and a burden on society. [29]

While criminal journalism was expressing popular concerns about these unfamiliar people coming from Europe, it also reflected a blend of new and old fears about the changing place of African Americans in American society. In the 1870s, slavery was less than two decades in the past. However, despite new legal, educational, and financial opportunities, by 1900 upwards of 90 percent of African Americans were doing much of the same agricultural work for former enslavers. [30] The mainstream conception of African Americans as inherently criminal stands out in coverage of Black crime, as seen in the case of an April 1894 altercation between two African American women in Topeka, Kansas. The piece opens by summarizing how “a notorious colored character,” named Fannie Wright and two accomplices nearly killed Wright’s friend Min Saunders with a knife Wright held in her possession. [31] Saunders attempted to defend herself with a brick she found nearby, and according to the article she was “also well known in police court.” [32] Despite suffering an assault, Saunders does not receive any sympathy as a victim, and both she and Wright were condemned as villains based on personal effects. “When one got into trouble, the other was generally in the same trouble,”

Reports involving immigrants as victims the article commented and, "Both women are pugnacious. Either will fight at a moment's notice and they generally carry weapons of one character or another." [33] There was a little inquiry into why Wright suddenly fought her long-time friend, and the condemnation of both parties was more explicit than that of men and white people, even immigrants. The ferocity of the incident, and the unknown motivation, was nearly dismissed beneath the characterization of these women as already prone to violence and criminality. It was a reductive examination of a motive explained away by the possession of the knife and the repetition of the phrase "notorious colored characters." [34]

The Saunders/Wright case mirrors the way many other articles portray Black people and use their personal effects to dismiss them as criminals. The most common items associated with African Americans include money, guns, keys, and knives, which are some of the most common items in the sample set as a whole (see Tables 1a-1c). However, none of the African American people in this case study carried any otherwise commonly mentioned items like watches, letters, or rings, which were all symbols of commonplace respectability at the time. Seen through the biased lens of criminality cast over Black behavior, the list of items associated with African Americans takes on a different tone than when the same items are associated with white individuals.

For example, keys are referred to seventeen times in this set and are the fifth most common possession listed (see Tables 1a-1c). Of the three African

Americans carrying keys, all three were domestic servants accused of theft. Keys can represent power and authority, especially in domestic settings. [35] Keyholders allow or deny access, flaunt or enforce privacy, and control the safety and security of the people and items within their domain. In the context of these thefts, the keys represented crimes of opportunity made possible by servitude to white employers. The servitude of these alleged perpetrators granted them a measure of trust, and any violation of that trust both upset the established social order and reinforced fears and expectations for African American behavior. In contrast, of the fourteen key holders whose race was not listed and were presumed white, only two were perpetrators of a crime. The rest were victims of murder, theft, accidents, or simply losing their possessions.

The increasing rights of women during the Gilded Age serves as important subtext in cases of female, particularly white female, victimhood. Most of the Times article's focus in the Casper case, in contrast to the Gazette's description of the hunt for the assailant, is on the victim's struggle against her attacker, detailing the injuries sustained in her resistance. Legal historian Lawrence Friedman used the Times' description of this case as an example of how "Popular culture glorified the woman who defended her honor—even to the death." [36] Showing that she fought back demonstrated that she could not be mistaken as consenting to the attack and reaffirmed her right to sympathy and victimhood. While Casper behaved "correctly" in trying to fight off her attacker, the Gazette still had to

reinforce her fragile femininity to highlight her status as victim, especially given the fact that she was attacked walking alone to a job outside the home. During a period when less than 15 percent of non-immigrant white women were employed, Casper's respectable family and virtuous reputation likely saved her from the implication that she was "asking for it" by venturing outside the domestic sphere and challenging the status quo. [37]

Conversely, Min Saunders and Fannie Wright were negatively perceived women, which brought their Blackness into sharp contrast with other stories of female victimhood. Saunders' claims of self-defense were put into question despite the fact that she was stabbed by Wright and two accomplices and attempted to fight them off with a brick. [38] While the focus of the Saunders piece is on the fight between the "Two Bad Women" of the article's title, their gender is overshadowed by their race, defined by the criminality and brutishness typically reserved for men in descriptions of white crime. Of the ninety-seven women in this set, 65 percent were portrayed as victims of a crime, only slightly higher than the 63 percent of victims within the whole set (see Table 3). However, all six Black women were portrayed as perpetrators of theft and/or assault. Knives were the only violent weapons used by Black women, including by Wright and two muggers. Every one of the items attributed to Black women in these articles were either stolen goods or tools used in theft or assault. Whether or not they carried any other possessions was not described in any of these articles.

The absence of certain items carried by

Black women further illuminates racial disparity in depictions of women and crime. While some white, American-born women in this sample set were involved in murder, assault, or suicide; like Black women, their crimes both as perpetrators and targets were primarily property offenses like theft and smuggling. Only nine of the ninety-seven women described were reported as carrying violent weapons, all but one of them pistols or revolvers, and white Americans were the only women in the set associated with guns besides a single German suicide (see Tables 1a-1c). [39] Compared to a knife, a more intimate weapon which requires close physical proximity, firearms distance white women from close involvement with violence.

Besides cash and these weapons, the items most commonly carried by white women were decorative things like pins, rings, watches, gloves, or bits of fabric (see Table 4). This reflects the association between women and property crimes. The fact that fashion items were associated exclusively with white women, even though Black women were also mostly associated with theft, suggested an image of feminine docility and respectability that did not extend to African Americans. [40] Such an association even extended to white immigrant women, as in the case of the German suicide which involved private decorative items such as flowers, rings, and locks of hair. [41]

Examined as a whole, the personal possessions in this sample set are not drastically different from what a modern person living in America might carry. Money and keys are still commonly

carried in one form or another. Cell phones replace the roles once filled by pocket watches, letters, and calling cards. Especially in a post- or peri-Covid world, handkerchiefs could translate to masks, facial tissues, and hand sanitizer. In the realm of violent crime, guns and knives also remain the most popular weapons of choice. [42] Though culture and habits have changed, people generally still have the same needs when they leave their homes or commit crimes.

Twenty first-century audiences still use cultural context to form conclusions about people described in true crime media and are informed by details like material culture and societal preconceptions about nationality, race, and gender. The scandalous topics, vivid tone, and graphic violence of these articles form a narrative rhythm in criminal reporting that would be familiar to present-day readers. Coverage of the 2017 case of Abigail Williams and Libby German covers many of the same tropes as the Casper case. They too encountered a threatening figure while walking unchaperoned in the woods, though with a fatal outcome. [43] Their suburban Indiana community was a “tight-knit [...] small-town” like Fort Lee, where neighbors also coordinated to seek justice and closure for the crime. [44] Williams, German, and Casper were all young, white, American teenage girls whose victimhood drew rapt, widespread attention.

The wave of immigrants from Latin America since the 1960s and 1970s mirrors the prejudice directed at their European counterparts a century earlier.

[45] Many anti-immigrant voices use the same arguments as they once did against other foreign-born groups: that they intrinsically have less morals and higher crime rates than American-born citizens, despite evidence that crime rates have declined in the period of increased immigration. [46] Commonly employed in manual labor for low wages like disparaged Gilded Age immigrant groups, it would be easy for a reader brought up with twenty first-century cultural impressions to place the rags and handkerchiefs of the Italian suspect in the Casper case in the hands of a Mexican worker. Coverage of the 2018 murder of white Iowa college student Mollie Tibbetts uses similar characterization, describing assailant Cristhian Bahena Rivera as “a farm worker” and “an undocumented Mexican migrant.” [47] Like Casper’s attacker, Rivera did not know Tibbetts and attacked her as a crime of opportunity while she was jogging alone, not targeting her with a motive of robbery. [48] The spontaneous and intimately violent nature of the crime, committed with a knife-like weapon, resembled Gilded Age fears about the supposed inherent criminality of foreign minorities. [49] However, recent immigrant groups to the United States face heightened controversy that did not affect their European predecessors due to current legislation around legal immigration, making explicit the idea that by nature of their origins these migrants are criminals by default. [50]

Despite four centuries passing since African peoples’ arrival in America, concerns about the inherent criminality of Black communities also persist today.



Michelle Alexander's 2010 work is one of the most notable recent analyses of this phenomenon, addressing how even seemingly liberal and enlightened approaches to Black crime rely on notions of African Americans as more likely to commit criminal acts. [51] The rhetoric of "Black-on-Black" crime in particular mirrors the attitudes that can be found in late nineteenth-century journalism, describing a "dog-eat-dog" jungle atmosphere that some pundits believe exists in Black communities. The phrase is often used to distract from institutional issues like police brutality against African Americans and is presented as a uniquely Black epidemic despite the fact that acts of violence are overwhelmingly committed against one's own race. [52] Such preconceptions are used to dismiss violence by and against African Americans as mundane, routine, or even inevitable, a phenomena demonstrated in earlier cases like that of Fannie Wright and Min Saunders.

Despite the fact that 47 percent of the workforce was female as of 2019, true crime media still shows fear surrounding women in public spheres. [53] In many cases where women, especially young white women, are attacked while alone, media outlets take the opportunity to highlight their vulnerability and caution female readers against a similar fate. A month after Mollie Tippets disappeared while jogging and less than a week after her body was found, the BBC published an article providing statistics on harassment of female joggers and tips to prevent assault while out alone. [54] Especially surrounding sexual violence, the rhetoric still exists that some victims

are "asking for it" through their behavior or appearance. Like in Casper's case, today's onus of being a worthy victim still falls on female resistance and material culture plays a role in defining women's relationship to crime. In recent years, the already booming market for self-defense tools has incorporated the feminine association with the decorative, including rhinestone-studded mace cans, tasers disguised as lipstick, and cat-shaped brass knuckles. [55] Women in the Gilded Age, specifically white women, were often associated with objects to make themselves and their surroundings seem beautiful and had to demonstrably fight for their virtue even at the risk of their own lives. [56] Independent women of the twenty-first century are still subject to the imperative to stay attractive and non-threatening in the face of violence, sexism, and racism and are offered the tools to fight for their safety and seem pretty at the same time.

Material culture means little on its own, but in the context of the culture that produced it, this source is invaluable in fleshing out the reality of the past. Despite the inclination of historians to rely predominantly on written accounts, objects are often the only evidence of marginalized experiences, even coming from a biased point of view. The popular crime journalism of the Gilded Age was a medium overwhelmingly dominated by white, male, American-born voices, and does not provide a holistic view of the lived experiences of women, immigrants, or racial minorities. However, it does provide a glimpse at the socio-cultural lens through which they were perceived by the popular majority. The trends and

archetypes presented by this lens inform the way these people navigated the world they lived in, how others treated them, and how they interacted with the law. The exact cast of these stereotypes may have changed, but the way they inform modern perceptions of crime perseveres.

## Appendix A: Data Collection Methods

The articles used in this study and the individual cases described within them were collected with digital tools to extract over a thousand newspaper and magazine articles available online, then manually read through and filtered into a collection of data large enough to be significant and provide high quality descriptions of personal effects. All of the articles came from four online newspaper archives: the Library of Congress' "Chronicling America" database, the *New York Times*' "TimesMachine," Proquest's "American Periodicals Series," and "Accessible Archives." [57] Both

"Chronicling America" and "TimesMachine" have publicly accessible APIs, which were used with a custom Python program to pull the most relevant results from January 1, 1870 through December 31, 1899 based on a list of relevant search terms. The "Accessible Archives" and "American Periodicals Series," whose licenses do not allow for text mining, were searched using their online search forms with the same list of terms. While reading through each result any mentions of possessions, race, gender, profession, crime involved in, and perpetrator/victim status were recorded in a spreadsheet. The sample size of 335 individuals from 261 articles was deemed sufficient based on a United States population size of seventy-six million in 1900, a confidence rate of 95 percent, and at most a 6 percent margin of error. [58]

## Appendix B: Tables

Tables 1a-1c: Most mentioned possessions in this sample set with contexts.

Item	Count	Gender			Role		
		Male	Female	Not Given	Victim	Perpetrator	Other
Money	163	107	52	4	128	29	6
Gun	48	38	9	1	19	26	3
Watch	36	30	5	1	28	6	2
Knife	22	14	2	0	11	5	0
Key(s)	17	12	4	1	11	6	0
Handkerchief	16	5	10	1	19	26	3
All People	335	231	97	7	212	108	15

Table 1a: Most mentioned possessions by gender and role in crime.

Item	Most Common Crimes in Sample Set								
	Theft	Murder	Lost Property	Assault	Suicide	Unidentified Body	Accident	Attempted Murder	Other
Money	59	15	24	1	4	4	1	3	48
Gun	2	14	0	2	8	0	2	7	13
Watch	15	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	12
Knife	4	4	0	0	2	2	2	0	8
Key(s)	5	2	2	0	0	3	0	0	5
Handkerchief	6	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	6
All People	109	56	25	19	18	10	10	9	79

Table 1b: Most mentioned possessions by category of crime.

Item	Most Common Races and Nationalities in Sample Set							
	Presumed White American	African American	German	Italian	Chinese	English	Polish	Other
Money	141	7	2	1	1	0	3	8
Gun	42	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Watch	32	0	1	0	2	0	0	1
Knife	15	4	0	0	0	1	0	2
Key(s)	14	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Handkerchief	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
All People	277	17	8	6	3	3	3	18

Table 1c: Most mentioned possessions by race.

Nationality	Gender		Role		Crimes and Incidents Involved In
	Male	Female	Victim	Perpetrator	
German (8)	5	3	7	1	Suicide (3); Theft (3); Accident (1); Murder (1)
Italian (5)	5	0	0	5	Resisting Arrest (2); Assault (1); Attempted Murder (1); Kidnapping (1); Murder (1); Weapons Possession (1)
English (3)	1	2	1	2	Suicide (1); Murder (1); Vagrancy (1)
Polish (3)	3	0	3	0	Theft (2); Lost Property (1)
Irish (1)	1	0	1	0	Murder (1)
Other (6)	4	2	3	3	Theft (2); Missing Person (1); Murder (1); Lost Property (1); Espionage (1)
All European Immigrants (26)	19	7	15	11	

Table 2: European-born individuals included in the sample set.

Nationality	Role			Crimes and Incidents Involved In
	Victim	Perpetrator	Other	
White American (84)	58	22	4	Theft (26); Lost Property (16); Murder (12); Suicide (5); Smuggling (5); Other (24)
African American (6)	0	6	0	Theft (5); Assault (4)
German (3)	3	0	0	Theft (2); Suicide (1)
English (2)	1	1	0	Suicide (1); Murder (1)
Other (2)	1	1	0	Theft (1); Lost Property (1)
All Women (97)	63	30	4	

Table 3: Women included in the sample set.

Item	Most Common Crimes in Sample Set							Total
	Theft	Murder	Lost Property	Assault	Suicide	Attempted Murder	Other	
Money	18	1	16	1	2	0	14	52
Handkerchief	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	7
Gun	0	2	0	0	3	1	0	6
Ring	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	6
Knife	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	5
Pin	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	5
Watch	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	5
All Women	35	13	17	4	7	1	20	97

Table 4: Most mentioned female possessions and their contexts.

## Endnotes

[1] "The Victim of a Fiend: A Pretty Girl Wronged by an Unknown Wretch Assaulted in the Woods the Criminal Is How Being Sought for by Armed Avengers He Tied the Girl's Hands Fast," *The National Police Gazette* (New York, United States: American Periodicals Series II, August 4, 1894), 7.

[2] "The Victim of a Fiend," 7.

[3] "The Victim of a Fiend," 7.

[4] David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla, *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013), xxi.

[5] For more information on this sample set, see Appendix A. All tables are in Appendix B.

[6] Cheap daily newspapers appeared in droves due to lower printing costs, higher literacy, and increased consumerism. More things to sell and media outlets in which to sell them fed the demand for advertising space, which in turn resulted in the proliferation of "Yellow Journalism." This style of journalism prioritized sensational,...

...highly readable copy over rigorous accuracy or public value. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway, *A History of the Book in America: Volume 4: Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 121.; Susan B. Carter et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States Millennium Edition Online*, Table Bc793-797: Illiteracy rate, by race and nativity: 1870-1979 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).; Michael B. Kahan, "Urban America," in *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, ed. Christopher M. Nichols and Nancy C. Unger (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 31.; Kaestle and Radway, *A History of the Book in America*, 120-123.

[7] Marc Lacey, "Journalists Need to Remember That Not All News Readers Are White," *Nieman Reports*, last modified September 1, 2020, accessed January 11, 2022, <https://niemanreports.org/articles/journalists-need-to-remember-that-not-all-readers-are-white/>.

[8] Campbell Gibson and Emily Lennon, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-1990*, Working Paper (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, February 1999).

[9] Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols, and David M. Reimers, *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 182-183.

[10] "The Victim of a Fiend," 7.

[11] Even today this visual stereotype remains strongly entrenched with the image of Italians to the point that one of fiction's most famous Italian characters, Nintendo's Mario, has many of the same features as the suspect in the Casper case, and is seen as a caricature of Italian people. Marco Benoit Carbone, "Olive Face, Italian Voice: Constructing Super Mario as an Italian-American (1981-1996)," *Cinergie - Il Cinema e Le Altre Arti*, December 22, 2022, 133. Fred Miller Robinson, *The Man in the Bowler Hat* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 18.

[12] "Officers Have an Exciting Time Arresting Three Italians," *Waterbury Democrat* (Waterbury,

[ CT, August 8, 1896), 4; "Italian's Fatal Rage: Attacks a Fellow-Countryman Who Insulted His Lineage," *The New York Times* (New York, August 28, 1899), 7.; "The Victim of a Fiend," 7.

[13] \$490 in 1899 would be worth just under \$16,000 in 2021. "\$490 in 1899 → 2021 | Inflation Calculator," *Official Inflation Data*, Alioth Finance, accessed December 29, 2021, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1899?endYear=2021&amount=490>.; "Plenty of Money," *Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk, VA, November 11, 1899), 8.

[14] *Montgomery Ward & Co., Montgomery Ward & Co. Catalogue and Buyers' Guide 1895*. (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), 96-97.

[15] "Plenty of Money," 8.

[16] "CAPT. SEELEY'S DEATH: Found Strangled in His Barn FARM-HAND HALM'S ROPE Identical with That Found on the Body. A MONROE, CONN., MYSTERY," *The National Police Gazette* (New York: American Periodicals Series II, December 6, 1890), 7.; United States of America, Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census of the United States, 1870," 1870, Nathaniel W. Seeley, *FamilySearch.org*.

[17] "Capt. Seeley's Death," 7.

[18] "Capt. Seeley's Death," 7.

[19] "Capt. Seeley's Death," 7.

[20] "Capt. Seeley's Death," 7.

[21] Alayna Colburn and Lisa A. Melander, "Beyond Black and White: An Analysis of Newspaper Representations of Alleged Criminal Offenders Based on Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 34, no. 4 (November 1, 2018): 393. Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers, *Natives and Strangers*, 73-74.

[22] An 1893 report on poverty and institutionalization claimed that it took two generations for American culture to turn immigrants into "wholesome, independent, and reputable citizens." Though Italian, Polish, and other such groups would not yet have been considered culturally assimilated under this criterion, it is interesting to note that the more positive portrayals in media and association with...

...more decorative and refined material culture applied to German but not Irish immigrants. Irish people had also come to America in waves since the Colonial period, but like Italians were further set apart from the mainstream by their Catholicism and relative poverty. Henry Martyn Boies, *Prisoners and Paupers: A Study of the Abnormal Increase of Criminals, and the Public Burden of Pauperism in the United States; the Causes and Remedies* (New York: Putnam, 1893), 44. Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers 2003, 73-74.; Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers 2003, 81-82.

[23] "Suicide By An Unknown Woman," *The New York Times* (New York, August 16, 1893), 9.; "An Unidentified Corpse: Body of an Unknown Man Found in Elysian Park," *The Herald* (Los Angeles, September 5, 1896), 3.

[24] "Killed by a Morning Train," *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier* (New Haven, CT, July 31, 1897), 3.; "Unidentified Body of a Suicide Near Ridgewood Reservoir," *The Evening World* (New York, August 11, 1894), 3.; "Adroit Pocket-Picking," *The New York Times* (New York, February 24, 1878), 5.; "Injustice to a Poor Girl," *The Youth's Companion* (Boston, January 19, 1871), 22.

[25] "Suicide by an Unknown Woman," 9.

[26] "AN ARKANSAS TERROR: Four Men Murdered Successively in One Spot and No One Hanged Yet," *The National Police Gazette* (New York: American Periodicals Series II, October 21, 1882), 10.; "\$50 in 1882 → 2023 | Inflation Calculator," Official Inflation Data, Alioth Finance, accessed May 22, 2023, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1882?amount=50>.

[27] "An Arkansas Terror," 10.

[28] Richard Sutch, "The Accumulation, Inheritance, and Concentration of Wealth during the Gilded Age: An Exception to Thomas Piketty's Analysis" (Presented to the UCR Emeriti/ae Association, Orbach Science Library: University of California, Riverside, 2016), Table 1.

[29] Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers 2003, 73-74.

[30] Scholars sometimes refer to this time as the Tragic Era or the Nadir, referring to the yawning gap between the ideals of Emancipation and Reconstruction and the reality of their execution. Omar H. Ali, "African Americans," in *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, ed. Christopher M. Nichols and Nancy C. Unger (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 116.; Stephen G. Hall, "Revisiting the Tragic Era and the Nadir: Interrogating Individual and Collective African-American Lives in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4, no. 4 (2005): 409-410.

[31] "Two Bad Women. Notorious Colored Characters Get Into a Bloody Affray," *The Topeka State Journal* (Topeka, KS, April 16, 1894), 3.

[32] "Two Bad Women," 3.

[33] "Two Bad Women," 3.

[34] "Two Bad Women," 3.

[35] Genevieve E. Cummins and Nerylla D. Taunton, *Chatelaines: Utilities to Glorious Extravagance* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1994), 64.

[36] Lawrence Meir Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 216.

[37] Oscar S. Strauss, *Statistics of Women at Work Based on Unpublished Information Derived from the Schedules of the Twelfth Census: 1900* (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, 1907), 10.

[38] "Two Bad Women," 3.

[39] "Suicide by an Unknown Woman," 9.

[40] "Ladies Smuggling," *New York Observer and Chronicle*, November 7, 1872, 357.

[41] "Suicide by an Unknown Woman," 9.

[42] *Expanded Homicide Data Table 8, 2019 Crime in the United States* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019), accessed January 13, 2022, ...

...<https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-8.xls>.

[43] A suspect was not found and charged in the case until five years after the crime was committed. Izzy Karpinski, "Delphi Suspect Charged with 2 Counts of Murder; Investigation Far from Complete," *Fox 59*, October 31, 2022, accessed May 22, 2023, <https://fox59.com/indiana-news/delphi-murders-investigators-announce-arrest-details/>.

[44] Shapiro, "Indiana Teens' Mysterious Murders."

[45] Marta Tienda and Susana Sanchez, "Latin American Immigration to the United States," *Daedalus* 142, no. 3 (2013): 48.

[46] Lupe S. Salinas, *U. S. Latinos and Criminal Injustice* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015), 93-94.

[47] "Mollie Tibbetts: Farm Worker Gets Life for Murdering Iowa Student," *BBC News*, August 31, 2021, Online edition, sec. US & Canada, accessed January 13, 2022 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58390687>.

[48] "Mollie Tibbetts: Farm Worker Gets Life."

[49] Eric Levenson, "Mollie Tibbetts Autopsy Finds That She Died by 'Multiple Sharp Force Injuries,'" *CNN*, August 23, 2018, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/23/us/mollie-tibbetts-autopsy/index.html>.

[50] With the exception of anti-Asian legislation like the Chinese Exclusion Act, prior to the 1920s, there was little concept of an "illegal immigrant" and migrants could enter the United States without a passport, visa, or green card. Thomas Muller, *Immigrants and the American City* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 4-5.

[51] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Tenth Anniversary Edition. (New York: The New Press, 2020), 2.

[52] Samara Lynn, "Black-on-Black Crime: A Loaded and Controversial Phrase Often Heard

amid Calls for Police Reform," *ABC News*, last modified August 1, 2020, accessed November 19, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/black-black-crime-loaded-controversial-phrase-heard-amid/story?id=72051613>.

[53] *Women in the Labor Force: A Databook* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor and Statistics, April 2021), accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2020/home.htm>.

[54] Ritu Prasad, "From Catcalls to Murder: What Female Joggers Face on Every Run," *BBC News*, August 30, 2018, Online edition, sec. US & Canada, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45337810>.

[55] Jenny Singer, "Self-Defense, but Make It Cute," *Glamour*, last modified June 3, 2021, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.glamour.com/story/self-defense-tools-for-women-are-sparkly-and-sharp>.

[56] Even today the trend toward beauty and purity is more strongly associated with lighter-skinned women. Jessica Defino, "How White Supremacy and Capitalism Influence Beauty Standards," *Teen Vogue*, last modified October 19, 2020, accessed March 6, 2022, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/standard-issues-white-supremacy-capitalism-influence-beauty>.

[57] "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers", Library of Congress <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>; "TimesMachine", *The New York Times*, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>; "American Periodicals Series", ProQuest, <https://about.proquest.com/en/products-services/aps/>; "Accessible Archives," Accessible Archives, <https://www.accessible-archives.com/>.

[58] Nicole Stoops and Frank Hobbs, *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*, Census 2000 Special Reports (Government Printing Office, Washington DC: US Census Bureau, 2002).

# Bibliography

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Tenth Anniversary Edition. New York: The New Press, 2020.

Carbone, Marco Benoit. "Olive Face, Italian Voice: Constructing Super Mario as an Italian-American (1981-1996)." *Cinergie - Il Cinema e Le Altre Arti*, December 22, 2022, 127-144. <https://doi.org/10.6092/ISSN.2280-9481/15824>.

Carter, Susan B., Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, Alan L. Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright. *Historical Statistics of the United States Millennial Edition Online*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. <http://hsus.cambridge.org/>.

Colburn, Alayna, and Lisa A. Melander. "Beyond Black and White: An Analysis of Newspaper Representations of Alleged Criminal Offenders Based on Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 34, no. 4 (November 1, 2018): 383-98.

Cummins, Genevieve E., and Nerylla D. Taunton. *Chatelaines: Utilities to Glorious Extravagance*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1994.

Defino, Jessica. "How White Supremacy and Capitalism Influence Beauty Standards." *Teen Vogue*, October 19, 2020. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/standard-issues-white-supremacy-capitalism-influence-beauty>.

Dinnerstein, Leonard, Roger L. Nichols, and David M. Reimers. *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Friedman, Lawrence Meir. *Crime and Punishment in American History*. New York: Basic books, 1993.

Gibson, Campbell, and Emily Lennon. "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-1990." Working Paper. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, February 1999. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/1910foreignbornpop.pdf>.

Hall, Stephen G. "Revisiting the Tragic Era and the Nadir: Interrogating Individual and Collective African-American Lives in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4, no. 4 (2005): 409-15.

Kaestle, Carl F., and Janice A. Radway. *A History of the Book in America: Volume 4: Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Karpinski, Izzy. "Delphi Suspect Charged with 2 Counts of Murder; Investigation Far from Complete." Fox 59, October 31, 2022. <https://fox59.com/indiana-news/delphi-murders-investigators-announce-arrest-details/>.

Lacey, Marc. "Journalists Need to Remember That Not All News Readers Are White." Nieman Reports, September 1, 2020. <https://niemanreports.org/articles/journalists-need-to-remember-that-not-all-readers-are-white/>.

Levenson, Eric. "Mollie Tibbetts Autopsy Finds That She Died by Multiple Sharp Force Injuries." CNN, August 23, 2018, Online edition. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/23/us/mollie-tibbetts-autopsy/index.html>.

Lynn, Samara. "Black-on-Black Crime: A Loaded and Controversial Phrase Often Heard amid Calls for Police Reform." ABC News, August 1, 2020. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/black-black-crime-loaded-controversial-phrase-heard-amid/story?id=72051613>.

Montgomery Ward. *Montgomery Ward & Co. Catalogue and Buyers' Guide 1895*. Skyhorse Pub., 2008.



Muller, Thomas. *Immigrants and the American City*. New York: NYU Press, 1994.

Nichols, Christopher M., and Nancy C. Unger, eds. *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017.

Prasad, Ritu. "From Catcalls to Murder: What Female Joggers Face on Every Run." BBC News, August 30, 2018, Online edition, sec. US & Canada. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45337810>.

Robinson, Fred Miller. *The Man in the Bowler Hat*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Sachsman, David B., and David W. Bulla. *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting*. Transaction Publishers, 2013.

Salinas, Lupe S. *U. S. Latinos and Criminal Injustice*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015.

Shapiro, Emily. "Indiana Teens' Mysterious Murders Still Unsolved 2 Months Later, Leaving Fear, Frustration in Delphi." ABC News, April 13, 2017. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/indiana-teens-mysterious-murder-unsolved-months-leaving-fear/story?id=46751470>.

Singer, Jenny. "Self-Defense, but Make It Cute." *Glamour*, June 3, 2021. <https://www.glamour.com/story/self-defense-tools-for-women-are-sparkly-and-sharp>.

Stoops, Nicole, and Frank Hobbs. "Demographic Trends in the 20th Century." *Census 2000 Special Reports*. Government Printing Office, Washington DC: US Census Bureau, 2002.

Strauss, Oscar S. "Statistics of Women at Work Based on Unpublished Information Derived from the Schedules of the Twelfth Census: 1900." Washington, DC: Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, 1907. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1907/dec/women-at-work.html>.

Sutch, Richard. "The Accumulation, Inheritance, and Concentration of Wealth during the Gilded Age: An Exception to Thomas Piketty's Analysis." *Orbach Science Library*: University of California, Riverside, 2016.

<https://economics.ucr.edu/repec/ucr/wpaper/201601.pdf>.

Tienda, Marta, and Susana Sanchez. "Latin American Immigration to the United States." *Daedalus* 142, no. 3 (2013): 48–64.

[https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED\\_a\\_00218](https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00218).

"Adroit Pocket-Picking." *The New York Times*. New York, February 24, 1878. Accessed December 30, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1878/02/24/archives/adroit-pocketpicking.html>.

"An Arkansas Terror: Four Men Murdered Successively in One Spot and No One Hanged Yet." *The National Police Gazette*. New York: American Periodicals Series II, October 21, 1882.

"An Unidentified Corpse: Body of an Unknown Man Found in Elysian Park." *The Herald*. Los Angeles, September 5, 1896.

"Capt. Seeley's Death: Found Strangled in His Barn Farm-Hand Halm's Rope Identical with That Found on the Body a Monroe, Conn., Mystery." *The National Police Gazette*. New York: American Periodicals Series II, December 6, 1890.

Expanded Homicide Data Table 8. 2019 Crime in the United States. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019. Accessed January 13, 2022. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-8.xls>.

"Injustice to a Poor Girl." *The Youth's Companion*, Boston, January 19, 1871. Accessed December 30, 2021.

<http://www.proquest.com/docview/127036360?accountid=9959&parentSessionId=%2BhzA%2Bggpue79jesoYJnuWGvKNatph81llhNRFhrWpaZo%3D>.

"Italian's Fatal Rage: Attacks a Fellow-Countryman Who Insulted His Lineage." *The New York Times*. New York, August 28, 1899.

"Killed by a Morning Train." *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier*. New Haven, CT, July 31, 1897.  
"Ladies Smuggling." *New York Observer and Chronicle*. New York, November 7, 1872. Accessed January 6, 2022.

<http://www.proquest.com/docview/136633078?accountid=9959&parentSessionId=jXbAIPWgMO9Jh3hwzg2kugyWxtOfTo%2BHkVFNECXv4c%3D>

"Mollie Tibbetts: Farm Worker Gets Life for Murdering Iowa Student." *BBC News*, August 31, 2021, Online edition, sec. US & Canada. Accessed January 13, 2022.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58390687>

"Officers Have an Exciting Time Arresting Three Italians." *Waterbury Democrat*. Waterbury, CT, August 8, 1896. Accessed December 29, 2021.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/201627050/2/1896-08-08/ed-1/seq-4/>

"Plenty of Money." *Virginian-Pilot*. Norfolk, VA, November 11, 1899.

"Suicide by an Unknown Woman." *The New York Times*. New York, August 16, 1893.

"The Victim of a Fiend: A Pretty Girl Wronged by an Unknown Wretch Assaulted in the Woods the Criminal Is How Being Sought for by Armed Avengers He Tied the Girl's Hands Fast." *The National Police Gazette*. New York: American Periodicals Series II, August 4, 1894.

"Two Bad Women. Notorious Colored Characters Get Into a Bloody Affray." *The Topeka State Journal*. Topeka, Kansas, April 16, 1894.

"Unidentified Body of a Suicide Newark Ridgewood Reservoir." *The Evening World*. New York, August 11, 1894.

"Women in the Labor Force: A Databook." Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor and Statistics, April 2021.

<https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2020/home.htm>

**Cox, Danielle. "Gilding the Evidence: Perceptions of Personal Effects in True Crime Journalism, 1870-1900." *The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture* 01, no. 01 (October 16, 2023): 14-31.**

A detailed botanical illustration of a Heliconia Humilis plant. The image shows several long, lanceolate leaves in shades of green and blue-green. The central focus is a cluster of large, overlapping bracts in vibrant yellow and purple. The background is a plain, light cream color.

CMSMC

# Catching Heliconia; Pierre-Joseph Redouté's Botanical Prints and the Napoleonic Empire

*Rebecca Lo Presti*

**Abstract:** This article analyzes Redouté's *Heliconia Humilis* print as a product embedded in the French Napoleonic Empire, arguing for the interpretation of the print *Heliconia Humilis* as evidence of the imperial networks of Europe that commodified nature through the production and circulation of botanical prints. First, the author demonstrates that the production of *Les Liliacées* marked an evolution of botanical art within imperial France by using print culture to make previously internal botanical holdings

available to European libraries and French allies. By providing a biography of *Heliconia* to understand how this tropical plant from South America came to reside within the greenhouses of Joséphine Bonaparte and the pages of Redouté's prints, the uncomfortable world in which the *Heliconia* print came to exist becomes clear through the lens of empire and colonialism.

**Keywords:** *Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Botanical Prints, Napoleonic Empire, Heliconia*

*Heliconia Humilis* takes up the space of its paper confines ( Figure 1 ). Its leaves and flowers, saturated with vibrant colors, all stretch outwards towards the edges of the paper, threatening to escape the page. The base of its stem bisects the engraved script that lists its Linnean name, showing no care for borders. [1] This is a plant captured at the peak of bloom, dominating the blank surroundings of its paper page. When the real *Heliconia* bloomed in the early nineteenth century, French botanical illustrator Pierre-Joseph Redouté would have meticulously observed the plant within a greenhouse built for flowers like *Heliconia* . Without this steamy enclosure of glass walls, *Heliconia* would have died in the climate of northern France; it was, after all, not native to the region. In fact, *Heliconia* was not native to the continent. In the second half of the eighteenth century, someone transported *Heliconia* from Venezuela to Europe. As either seeds or buds, *Heliconia* traveled on the same trade routes that extracted exploited resources and people to profit the empires of the Atlantic World. Once in Europe, *Heliconia* was placed in greenhouses, including one at the Jardin du Roi as it was called prior to the French Revolution, or the Jardin des plantes . [2] Inside one of these greenhouses, *Heliconia* ultimately obtained the attention of Redouté between 1805 and 1816. During this time, Redouté created the stipple engravings that came to populate his masterpiece *Les Liliacées* , including the *Heliconia Humilis* print of focus, under his patron Empress Joséphine Bonaparte. [3]

In this article, I will analyze Redouté's *Heliconia Humilis* print as a product embedded in the French Napoleonic Empire. In doing so, I argue for the interpretation of the print *Heliconia Humilis* as evidence of the imperial networks of Europe that commodified nature through the production and circulation of botanical prints. The role of botanical prints as objects of knowledge

1



Figure 1: *Heliconia Humilis*. Pierre-Joseph Redouté. France; 1805-1816. Stipple engraving on paper. 2018.0027.002.005. Museum purchase with funds drawn from the Centenary Fund, Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.

production has been an area of focus among historians of empire of the last few decades; Londa Schiebinger specifically argued that linguistic imperialism occurred when colonial powers implemented the Linnaean taxonomy system onto the natural world, therefore exhibiting the intrinsic relationship between knowledge production and power.[4] Likewise, Daniela Blichmar explored how botanical illustrations of the Americas expanded access among residents of empires to these overseas colonized spaces.[5] While Redouté's work fits within these networks of botanical and intellectual exchange facilitated by imperialism, the academic and public perception of him remains mostly focused on the quality and legacy of his art.

This essay does not seek to diminish the beauty of Redouté's work, but rather contextualize his creation of *Les Liliacées* within the Napoleonic Empire and the ongoing environmental colonization that defined the Enlightenment and imperial expansion. Through scientific observation, the implementation of the Linnaean system, and the production of botanical illustrations, European knowledge producers sought to control the flora and fauna of colonized spaces. The French Empire of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries was no exception, and successive rulers exploited foreign environments in the name of science and intellectual growth; colonization and the field of botany go hand in hand during this age of empire. [6]

This is the uncomfortable world in which the *Heliconia* print came to be, as the stunning stipple engraving exists because of the resources and privileges afforded to Redouté as the botanical artist to Empress Joséphine and the Napoleonic Empire. I will first demonstrate that the production of *Les Liliacées* marked an evolution of botanical art within imperial France by using print culture to make previously internal botanical holdings available to European libraries and French allies. [7] Then, I will provide a biography of *Heliconia* to understand how this tropical plant from South America came to reside within the greenhouses of Joséphine Bonaparte and the pages of Redouté's prints.

## **Botanical Painting and Printmaking in the French Empire.**

Redouté did not begin his career as a printmaker, despite this being the skill that would come to define his work. He established himself as a talented oil painter and watercolorist among artists in Paris who frequented royal botanical spaces to hone their techniques. [8] It was in these gardens in the early 1780s that Gerard van Spaendonck, the Professor of Flower Painting at the Jardin du Roi under King Louis XVI, noticed Redouté's talent. Redouté's first assignment under his new mentor was to contribute paintings to *Les Vélins du Roi*,

a natural history catalog started under Gaston, Duke of Orléans and continued by subsequent monarchs. [9] Importantly, the Vélins served as an evolving documentation of plants and animals owned by French royalty and inhabiting various imperial gardens and zoos. Louis XIV, who inherited the Vélins from the Duke, identified the role of the catalog as, “a monument to the glory of the French monarchy and placed them on display at the Bibliothèque du Roi.” [10] Clearly, the imperial boundaries of seventeenth-century France were not limited to geographic or economic realms. Rather, the regime of Louis XIV and those of nearby European empires became what historians James E. McClellan, III and François Regourd have termed a “scientifico-colonial machine” – a state that carried out calculated efforts to facilitate scientific growth through the exploitation of colonial resources. [11] Many of the flowers that populated the grounds of the Jardin du Roi and the pages of the Vélins arrived in France following government-funded trips to tropical areas within the French colonial sphere. [12] Here, the explicit purpose was to collect plants that could benefit the French Empire, whether aesthetically, financially, scientifically, or all three. As such, the Vélins were never just beautiful paintings, but rather constructed demonstrations of the intellectual, scientific, and geographic dominance of the growing French empire.

A century later, appointed artists like Spaëndonck and their respective students continued to add to the Vélins during their tenure by translating specimens



Figure 2: Magnification of print highlighting stipple engraving technique. Photo credit to author. Museum purchase with funds drawn from the Centenary Fund, Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.

onto the vellum with opaque paints or watercolor. [13] In this established effort to document botanical and animal exploits to the French empire, the artists of Les Vélins du Roi overtook the ephemerality of nature, and trapped their subjects on vellum for perpetuity. Botanical illustrations produced under the empire demonstrated the attempt to control the irregularities, cycles, and impermanence of nature. This is the world within which Redouté refined his technique; a world that inventoried and controlled botanical holdings through art. [14]

Following the French Revolution, Redouté found a new patron under Empress Joséphine, who was also acutely aware of the political influence of gardens populated by exotic plants. In their partnership, Joséphine and Redouté evolved the media of state-sponsored botanical art through the production of the colored stipple engravings that populated publications like *Les Liliacées*. While *Les Liliacées* was by no means the first compendium of printed botanical illustrations, the publication did encompass the pinnacle of stipple engraving, print production, and distribution among imperial networks. [15] Their collaboration both harkened back to the long history of *Les Vélins*, while also demonstrating the power and artistry of the new regime. Redouté wrote in the preface of an 1813 *Les Liliacées* edition, "... qu'il ne restait plus guère à désirer que de voir se multiplier par l'impression les brillantes productions du pinceau ." [16] Evidently, he understood that the production of these prints advanced botanical art from the singularity of publications like *Les Vélins*. In order to achieve such a print comparable to paintings, Redouté employed stipple engraving. [17] More importantly, though, Redouté had the time and resources afforded by Joséphine's patronage to undertake the laborious stipple engraving and coloring process. This point is especially important when examining the *Heliconia Humilis* print as a product of the Napoleonic Empire.

Redouté employed the stipple engraving technique – an intaglio printing process

that produces an image out of repetitive dots rather than cross marks or hatching ( Figure 2 ). [18] To produce all of his *Les Liliacées* prints, Redouté first made watercolors of his subjects, adjusting the scale of the plant to the standardized size of his printing paper. After creating this watercolor, Redouté and those in his workshop then transferred the design onto a resin-coated plate using mattoirs, rockers, and burins. [19] The former two were used to physically pocket the surface of the plate with thousands of dots, and the latter to create the text that appeared at the bottom of each illustration. After the plate was dipped in an acid bath, an uncolored copy of the print was made for Redouté to edit. [20]

Where Redouté truly elevated the production process was in the next step: adding color to the plate. Redouté and his employees colored the single plate by section, using the *à la poupée* method to smoothly blend the ink. [21] As a result, each print could be completed with one press, rather than needing to layer a new plate for each color. After the print was created, Redouté or another artist in the workshop would go in and finish the design by hand. [22]

This hand-painted detail work, combined with the *à la poupée* and stippling gave *Heliconia Humilis* a high-quality, and detailed appearance that would have been unattainable by other methods; stippling produced forms and tones that best mimicked the nonlinear forms of plants. Redouté wrote in the aforementioned preface that he believed that he had perfected, " l'un des arts qui



Figure 3: Section of print under showing application of color. Photo credit to author. Museum purchase with funds drawn from the Centenary Fund, Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.

copient le plus fidèlement la nature " in his careful use of engraving and coloring – *Heliconia Humilis* supports this point. [23] Stippling neatly compliments the thick base and elegant taper of each flower, as well as the healthy stem and leaves. A particularly excellent section of the engraving, seen in Figure 3, features the lowest left flower of *Heliconia* with several young green buds emerging from within. Redouté captures these buds as they organically lift up from inside the already-blooming flower. This section also shows the success with which stippling captured the folds of *Heliconia*'s flowers. The compact dots meticulously embedded with a rocker or mattoir seamlessly blend together to provide a depth both inside the flower and at the base where the flower meets the stem. *Heliconia Humilis* presents the same

fluidity as seen in Redouté's paintings, proving stipple engraving as the ideal technique to capture botanicals as prints.

For comparison, a set of late eighteenth century color prints by Anne Allen after French artist Jean-Baptiste Pillement demonstrate the restraints of etching when capturing realistic floral figures ( Figure 4 ). [24] Touted as " fleurs idéales, a l'usage des dessinateurs et des Peintres ," these prints relied on freehand etched lines to not only show the texture of petals and stems, but also to portray the shadows intrinsic to three-dimensional subjects. Seen clearly on shaded areas of the flowers, depths are reduced to darker patches created with uneven layering of colors. Especially when compared to other floral prints from the same region and time, Redouté and his workshop



produced work of extremely high quality and veracity achieved through stipple engraving. Additionally, Redouté employed a particularly high-end stipple engraving technique that he had learned from Francesco Bartolozzi, an engraver to George II in England. [25] In conjunction with his tutelage under Spaëndonck, Redouté's artistic education occurred under the most esteemed workshops in France and England. His mastery of the technique, then, demonstrated another area of dominance under the Napoleonic Empire.

To that point, Redouté's stunning combination of high-end stipple engraving, à la poupée coloring, hand-painted details, and full-size black-and-

white drafts demonstrates the immense privilege that Redouté had as an artist. The production of *Les Liliacées* was a massively expensive one due to use of all these aforementioned techniques; prints like *Heliconia Humilis* are therefore intrinsically tied to the time and money afforded to Redouté through his patron, Empress Joséphine. Redouté had the financial backing of Joséphine before any *Les Liliacées* prints were made – she actually front ordered fifty albums of *Les Liliacées* to bequeath to libraries and allies, thus securing at least partial earnings before Redouté even began to work. [26] In addition, *Les Liliacées* was never meant to reach a large audience of consumers, and subsequently could be

Figure 3: Section of print under showing application of color. Photo credit to author. Museum purchase with funds drawn from the Centenary Fund, Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.



produced using the laborious stipple engraving à la poupée and hand-coloring processes that would otherwise be unsuitable for larger scale production.

In fact, no editions of the album ever exceeded 200 copies. Even before its materialization, the producers of *Heliconia Humilis* made it with the intention of reaching wealthy consumers – not the general public. *Heliconia Humilis* and its *Les Liliacées* floral counterparts are high end commodities produced with the luxury of time and money that few artists of the time period could obtain. Therefore, *Heliconia Humilis* must be understood as a product of the French Napoleonic Empire funded through Joséphine's money.

## The Biography of *Heliconia*.

In 1810, Napoleon wrote a letter to Joséphine telling her that he had reserved 100,000 francs for her use at Malmaison “*faire planter tant que tu voudras*.” [27] Although the two were divorced by this point, his letter demonstrates how Joséphine funded her gardens and related artistic productions. At this point in his reign as Emperor, Napoleon had reinstated enslavement as a legal practice in Haiti for two years, led takeovers in several more countries, and decimated hundreds of thousands of people in battles. [28] As Napoleon carried out brutal imperialist campaigns beyond the borders of the French empire, Joséphine internally developed the gardens of

France funded by her husband's wealth from such destructive endeavors. Redouté sourced all his floral subjects, including *Heliconia*, from either the Jardin des Plantes or Malmaison, Joséphine's personal estate. [29] Joséphine spent her time as Empress cultivating the gardens on these grounds, becoming a well-respected horticulturalist in her own right. Joséphine curated her gardens similarly to those of regimes before her by developing a landscape full of foreign plants imported along imperial routes. In fact, contemporaries of Joséphine commented on the parallels between her actions in the gardens and her husband's actions abroad. Botanist Étienne Pierre Ventenat wrote in the introduction of his 1803 book *Jardin de la Malmaison* that examining the imported flowers in Joséphine's garden gave, “le plus doux souvenir des conquêtes de votre illustre Époux.” [30] Joséphine, like Napoleon, had conquered her surroundings.

She also used her connections to other European empires – both familial and political – to access plant seedlings and handling instructions that allowed her to make gardens of elite, international proportions. The DuPont family was one such empire (in this case, American) that Joséphine knew from the family's origins in France. Éleuthère Irénée du Pont, the founder of the DuPont Company, sent Joséphine at least twenty-two different seedlings of North American plants with accompanying care instructions in 1802 [31] Although E. I. DuPont did not send along *Heliconia Humilis*, his contributions demonstrate the networks that populated Joséphine's gardens in the form of plants;

her gardens housed the botanical exports of personal and political allies connected through an array of imperial connections. Joséphine showcased her imperial power on the French landscape through her imported gardens, while her husband invaded neighboring nations. *Heliconia Humilis* was one such pawn in this parallel imperialism of Napoleon and Joséphine.

The *Heliconia Humilis* flower lived in the Jardin des Plantes as evidenced by an 1815 inventory taken by René Louiche Desfontaines, then a professor of botany at the Jardin. *Heliconia* occupies a single line of text in this inventory, which reads, "de Jacquin . caracas. s. ch.  $\psi$  ." [32] Using Desfontaines's key in the preface of the inventory, each abbreviation reveals a lifeline about the tropical plant. de Jacquin is the Author Citation, a practice in Linnaean botanical studies that credits the botanist who first identified the plant within the Linnaean System. In this case, the Author Citation names Austrian botanist Nikolaus Joseph Freiherr von Jacquin as first identifying *Heliconia* to European scientific circles. "Caracas" refers to the origin of the plant believed by Desfontaines to be Caracas in present-day Venezuela. "S. ch." is an abbreviation for *serre chaud*, the French word for hot house or greenhouse. [33] This abbreviation is used in the inventory to describe the needed growing conditions of each plant. The last symbol, " $\psi$ ," identifies *Heliconia Humilis* as a perennial. This short line of abbreviations provides a biography for *Heliconia*. The de Jacquin Author Citation is particularly helpful, as it contextualizes the integration of *Heliconia* into European gardens.

Jacquin traveled to present-day Central and South America in the 1750's, sent by the Emperor of Austria to collect samples of indigenous plants to bring back to his country. [34] Jacquin's trips are another example of the eighteenth-century "scientifico-colonial machines" of the empire under which *Les Vélins* originated, in which scientific studies of colonized spaces were funded and facilitated by imperial powers — in this case, the Holy Roman Empire. Given the attribution of *Heliconia* to Jacquin, as well as its place of origin identified as a South American city, it is likely that Jacquin took notice of *Heliconia* during this mid-century trip and included it among his exports to Vienna. As a result, European intellectual spheres extracted *Heliconia* from its natural environment, classified it under a foreign identification system, and recultivated it in unfamiliar land.

By 1815 latest, *Heliconia* had been forced to assimilate again, this time in a greenhouse within the Jardin des plantes. The route of the flower from Jacquin's time in colonial South America to the Jardin des plantes is currently unknown, but its circulation speaks to the network of imperial powers that encompassed intellectual and material spheres. Such networks of exchange allowed the empires of France to access the flora of foreign lands colonized by other imperial nations. Greenhouses, in particular, made the importation of foreign plants into European spaces possible, and in turn, gave artists like Redouté and collectors like Joséphine access to an international array of natural subjects within a controlled environment. In fact, Joséphine had a greenhouse constructed on her

Malmaison property to hold tropical plants that “reminded her of her youth” in Martinique. [35] Under Joséphine, the imperial French gardens became facsimile locations of the colonized West Indies environments that defined her childhood. Although it is unknown if *Heliconia* migrated from the Jardin into one of the Malmaison’s greenhouses, Joséphine’s importation of tropical plants into the gardens of northern France speaks to use of greenhouses as artificial environments that forced the growth of tropical plants in the otherwise inhospitable areas. [36] Here, even variables like temperature and humidity could be controlled with militant regularity. Greenhouses became the holding places for natural goods like *Heliconia* that were traded along the routes of late Atlantic World networks.

Redouté created the print that now resides in the Winterthur Museum by referencing the *Heliconia Humilis* plant extracted from Venezuela and forced to grow in French greenhouses. Through this print and others in *Les Liliacées*, Redouté continued the established tradition among French rulers to document their natural commodities onto paper. Whereas past French regimes sponsored *Les Vélins du Roi*, Redouté and Joséphine created state-funded albums that could be sent outside of the collection of the French ruler. Therefore, *Les Liliacées* extended the spectacle of French gardens beyond French borders using print technology that captured flowers on paper; as prints, *Les Liliacées* transcended the singularity of *Les Vélins du Roi*. Likewise, the *Heliconia Humilis* print came into existence during a time in which natural history, particularly

botanical, was treated as a consumable and collectible commodity. [37] Although neither Redouté nor Joséphine started this movement, they actively engaged with this objectification and classification of nature, particularly that of foreign plants. Through the production of their respective prints and gardens, both partook in this elite exchange of natural resources as consumable commodities – visually and intellectually.

In natural history publications like *Les Liliacées*, artists superseded cycles of life, death, growth, and decay and captured their subjects on paper in positions of forced timelessness. As a print, *Heliconia Humilis* is portrayed in permanent full bloom, tucked between pages of other flowers that it would never have existed near without imperial trade routes that extracted nature from colonized lands and imported them back to Europe. Joséphine front ordered copies of *Les Liliacées* to give to diplomats with the majority of remaining albums being purchased by European libraries and private collectors. Printing extended the established networks of *Heliconia* – Venezuela, Austria, Paris – to European rulers and elites, and eventually the United States. These albums further disseminated the already displaced flowers of foreign lands and made the internal botanical holdings of the French Empire available externally. *Les Liliacées* granted elite access to Joséphine’s gardens and imperialist exploits through the prints contained inside the pages. With a copy of *Les Liliacées*, elite readers could partake in the French Empire’s environmental colonization without ever setting foot in Malmaison or the Jardin.

In this way, *Heliconia* became an unwilling representative of Napoleonic France to other imperial powers.

## Conclusion.

Redouté enjoyed a lengthy career as botanical illustrator to the many imperial families of France for nearly fifty years before and after the French Revolution. He not only avoided the guillotine, but also found almost consistent employment among the variety of empires that wrangled for control in post-Revolution France. His legacy for astutely observed and intricately detailed botanical illustrations outlasted the lifespan of him and his patrons; Redouté's work has thrived in public-facing exhibitions, including the Teyler Museum, the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, and the American Philosophical Society. His work has also received significant attention in non-academic publications and digital media. Modern consumers, for example, can even buy copies of his prints at Walmart, Wayfair, and Pottery Barn. As of July 2023, a search for "Pierre-Joseph Redouté" on Etsy reveals 1,806 options of his prints made available to purchase on cards, plates, and cross stitch patterns.

The public can now gain access to facsimiles of art for under \$10 online, although those seeking to see the original prints must still make the trek to cultural institutions like Winterthur, the New York Public Library, and the Teylers Museum. Access to the prints produced by Redouté himself still reflect the selectiveness of the

intended audiences of *Les Liliacées*. Nonetheless, the botanical holdings of the French Empire have been further multiplied through new extensions of print technology, this time into the digital sphere. Redouté's work, and therefore the environmental control of the Napoleonic Empire, is far from sedentary even today. It is from these established networks of scientific imperialism and his patron Empress Joséphine that Pierre-Joseph Redouté came to create the *Heliconia Humilis* print. As much as this print is an example of stunning artistry and mastery of stipple engraving, it is also evidence of the environmental colonization that transported *Heliconia Humilis* from Venezuela to France, and the imperial funding that allowed Redouté to create his beautiful, time-consuming work.

## Endnotes

1] Gill Saunders, *Picturing Plants; An Analytical History of Botanical Illustrations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 8. In the mid-eighteenth century, Carl Linnaeus introduced the modern taxonomy of classification that set the foundation for the contemporary classification system. The Linnaean system delineates plants by their sexual morphology and was quickly adopted among European naturalists as a means to regulate and standardize classification.

[2] Translation: King's Garden. Translation: Garden of the Plants.

[3] Pierre-Joseph Redouté, *Les Liliacées* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur. Impr. de Didot Jeune, 1813), n.d., digitized by the Biodiversity Heritage Library.

[4] Londa L. Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[5] Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible empire: botanical expeditions and visual culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[6] James E. McClellan, III and François Regourd, "The Colonial Machine: French Science and Colonization in the Ancien Regime," *Osiris* 15, *Nature and Empire: Science and Colonial Enterprise* (2000): 32.

[7] Teylers Museum, 35.

[8] Martyn Rix, *The Golden Age of Botanical Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 128.

[9] Translation: The King's Vellums.

[10] Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, *An Oak Spring Flora: Flower Illustration from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Time: A Selection of the Rare books, Manuscripts, and Works of Art in the Collection of Rachel Lambert Mellon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 152.

[11] McClellan and Regourd 2000, 32.

[12] McClellan and Regourd 2000, 41.

[13] Teylers Museum, 12.

[14] Despite their close connections to Marie Antoinette, both Redouté and Spaëdonck escaped the French Revolution unharmed. Redouté seemed to be a political chameleon, evidenced by his almost consistent employment by opposing French regimes for almost four decades.

[15] Brent Elliot, "Gardens and Horticulture in Early Modern Europe," *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 1 (2011): 24-41. In 1530, Johann Schott printed the first botanical illustrations of actual plants (rather

than imagined) in *Herbarum vivid eicones*. The popularity and desire for highly accurate and scientific depictions of flora only increased from here, especially during the Enlightenment and continued imperial presence in the late Atlantic World.

[16] Redouté, *Les Liliacées*, n.d. Translation: "...that little more remains to be desired than to see the printing multiply the brilliant productions of the brush."

[17] Of important note, "stipple engraving" is actually a misnomer; the intaglio process uses a chemical bath, making it more accurately stipple etching, rather than the mechanical connotations of "engraving." That being said, stippling engraving is the phrase used in both academic and technical spheres, so I will continue to use it.

[18] Roger Baynton Williams, *The Art of the Printmaker* (London: A & C Black Publishers Limited, 2009), 110.

[19] Teylers Museum, 17. Although Redouté relied upon a workshop to produce these prints, I have not been able to find the names of all those whom he employed. The exceptions are his brother, Henri-Joseph Redouté, and De Gouy (first name unknown) who is named as the engraver on *Heliconia Humilis*. The identities of those in Redouté's workshop needs further research to properly credit those whose labor went into the production of the prints.

[20] Teylers Museum, 19.

[21] Stephanie Delamaire, "WPAMC Connoisseurship Block: Prints and Paintings." (Winterthur Museum, September - October 2022). "À la poupée" translates roughly to "with the doll," referring to the wad of fabric used to delicately apply color to the plates. Although I was not able to have the print tested by the Winterthur Conservation Department, it would be beneficial to do a pigment analysis to determine if any of the colors in the print were likewise created from materials extracted from colonized environments.

[22] "De Gouy Sculp" is engraved in the lower right corner of the print, indicating that a De Gouy was..

...the engraver. On the lower left corner of the print is "P. J. Redouté pinx," naming Redouté as the painter.

[23] Redouté, n.d. Translation: One of the arts that most faithfully copies nature.

[24] Allen, Anne after Jean-Baptiste Pillement, Plate, from *New Suite of Notebooks of Ideal Flowers for Use by Draftsmen and Painters*, 1795. Color etching with à la poupée inking on ivory laid paper, 19.5 x 14 cm. Art Institute of Chicago. 2018.413.5. The Amanda S. Johnson and Marion J. Livingston Fund.  
<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/246810/plate-from-new-suite-of-notebooks-of-ideal-flowers-for-use-by-draftsmen-and-painters>

[25] Allen, Anne after Jean-Baptiste Pillement, Translation: ideal flowers, for use by draftsmen and painters.

[26] Baynton-Williams 2009, 110.

[27] Teylers Museum, 19.

[28] Napoléon I, *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine pendant la première campagne d'Italie, le consulat et l'empire; et lettres de Joséphine à Napoléon et à sa fille* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1833), 316. Translation: To plant all that you want

[29] David A. Bell, *Napoleon: A Concise Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 70-73.

[30] Rix 2015, 144. Note that on page 1, *Jardin des Plantes* was referred to as the *Jardin du Roi*. The former, translating to Garden of Plants, replaced the latter during the French Revolution to remove associations with the overthrown monarchy.

[31] Étienne Pierre Ventenat, *Jardin de la Malmaison* (A Paris: De l'imprimerie de Crapelet, et se trouve chez l'auteur, 1803-1804), page n.d. Translation: "The sweetest memory of your illustrious spouse."

[32] Éleuthère Irénée du Pont, "Lists of seeds and trees for Madame Bonaparte, La Peyrouse, Morel, Riffault, Robin, Dreux, Michely, Thouin, Amelot, Lelieur, and Homberg & Frères (of Le Havre), in France," (Manuscripts and Archives Repository at the Hagley Museum, New York, 1802), letter.

[33] R. Louiche Desfontaines, *Tableau de l'école de botanique du Jardin du roi*, 2d. éd. (Paris: J. A. Brosson, 1815), vii.

[34] H. Walter Lack, "Nikolaus Joseph Jacquin's enigmatic *Icones selectarum stirpium americanarum* (1797)," *Archives of Natural History* 40, no. 2 (2013): digital text.

[35] Rix 2015, 144.

[36] Esther Helena Arens, "Flowerbeds and Hothouses: Botany, Gardens, and Circulation of Knowledge in Things," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 40, no. 1 (2015): 265-283.

[37] Saunders 1995, 85.

## Bibliography

Arens, Esther Helena. "Flowerbeds and Hothouses: Botany, Gardens, and the Circulation of Knowledge in Things." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 40, no. 1 (2015): 265-83.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24583138>.

Allen, Anne after Jean-Baptiste Pillement. Plate, from *New Suite of Notebooks of Ideal Flowers for Use by Draftsmen and Painters*. 1795. Color etching with à la poupée inking on ivory laid paper, 19.5 x 14 cm. Art Institute of Chicago. 2018.413.5. The Amanda S. Johnson and Marion J. Livingston Fund.  
<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/246810/plate-from-new-suite-of-notebooks-of-ideal-flowers-for-use-by-draftsmen-and-painters>

Baynton-Williams, Rogers. *The Art of the Printmaker; 1500-1860*. London: A & C Black Publishers Limited, 2009. Print.

Bell, David A. *Napoleon: A Concise Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Print.

Bleichmar, Daniela. *Visible empire: botanical expeditions and visual culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment*. Chicago: London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Desfontaines, R. Louiche. *Tableau de l'école de botanique du Jardin du roi*. 2d. éd. Paris: J. A. Brosson, 1815. HathiTrust. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433003300989&view=1up&seq=57&skn=2021>

Delamaire, Stephanie. "WPAMC Connoisseurship Block: Prints and Paintings." Winterthur Museum, September through October 2022.

du Pont, Éleuthère Irénée. "Lists of seeds and trees for Madame Bonaparte, La Peyrouse, Morel, Riffault, Robin, Dreux, Michely, Thouin, Amelot, Lelieur, and Homberg & Frères (of Le Havre), in France." Manuscripts and Archives Repository at the Hagley Museum, New York, 1802.

Elliot, Brent. "The world of the Renaissance Herbal." *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 1 (2011): 24-41.

Jacquin, Nicolai Josephi. *Selectarum stirpium Americanarum historia*. Vindobonae: Ex officina Krausiana, 1763. Digitized by the Biodiversity Heritage Library. <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/561>.

Lack, H. Walter. "Nikolaus Joseph Jacquin's enigmatic *Icones selectarum stirpium americanarum* (1797)." *Archives of Natural History* 40, no. 2 (2013). <https://www.eupublishing.com/udel.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.3366/anh.2013.0181?role=tab>.

McClellan, James E. III and François Regourd. "The Colonial Machine: French Science and Colonization in the Ancien Régime." *Osiris* 15, Nature and Empire: Science and Colonial Enterprise (2000): 31-50.

Napoleon I, E. of the French., Josephine, E. (1833). *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine pendant la première campagne d'Italie, le consulat et l'empire: et lettres de Joséphine à Napoléon et à sa fille*. Paris: Firmin Didot frères. Digitized by Harvard University and accessed through Hathi Trust. [33] [R. Louiche Desfontaines. \*Tableau de l'école de botanique du Jardin du roi\*. 2d. éd. \(Paris: J. A. Brosson, 1815\). vii.](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433003300989&view=1up&seq=57&skn=2021)

*Of elephants & roses: Encounters with French Natural History, 1790-1830: An Exhibition Guide*. American Philosophical Society Museum, 2011. Print.

*Pierre-Joseph Redouté; Botanical Artist to the Court of France*. Teylers Museum. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2013. Print.

Redouté, Pierre-Joseph. *Heliconia Humilis*. 1805-1816. Stipple Engraving on Paper, 14 15/16" x 21 1/2", Winterthur Museum, 2018. 0027.002.005. Redouté, Pierre-Joseph. *Les Liliacées*. Paris: [chez l'auteur. Impr. de Didot jeune](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433003300989&view=1up&seq=57&skn=2021), 1805-1816. New York Public Library Digital Collections. [https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/les-liliacees?keywords=&sort=mainTitle\\_ns+asc#/?tab=about](https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/les-liliacees?keywords=&sort=mainTitle_ns+asc#/?tab=about).

Rix, Martyn. *The Golden Age of Botanical Art*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. Print.

Saunders, Gill. *Picturing Plants; An Analytical History of Botanical Illustrations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Print.

Schiebinger, Londa L. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Ventenat, Étienne Pierre. *Jardin de la Malmaison*. A Paris: De l'imprimerie de Crapelet, et se trouve chez l'auteur, 1803-1804. Accessed digitally at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/70396>.

Tomasi, Lucia Tongjorgi. *An Oak Spring Flora: Flower Illustration from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Time: A Selection of the Rare books, Manuscripts, and Works of Art in the Collection of Rachel Lambert Mellon*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

**Lo Presti, Rebecca. "Catching Heliconia: Pierre Joseph Redouté's Botanical Prints and the Napoleonic Empire." *The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture* 01, no. 01 (October 16, 2023): 34-47.**



CMSMC

Gender, Grub, And  
Gullah: The  
Relationships  
Between Gender and  
Foodways Among  
Gullah Geechee  
Communities on the  
South Carolina Sea  
Islands

*Kathryn G. Eifert*

## CMSMC

**Abstract:** The Gullah Geechee are a distinct group of African-descendant people in the United States, known for their language, spirituality, and cuisine. Their communities had foodways distinct from other communities in the United States, which often fell along gendered lines. Because of extended periods of isolation during slavery and continued isolation following emancipation, Gullah Geechee people of the Sea Islands retained more Africanisms than other African descendant people in the United States. However, as isolation on the islands ended, the land was stripped

*Food* is a tangible tool for studying groups' past as well as their present. Across all times, places, and cultures, people have been, and still are, dependent on food. Humans are the only animals that do not eat most food as it is found in nature, altering, and preparing it for consumption. Food preparation is broad, involves multiple steps, and is not universal. Katie White holds her Ph.D. in Women's Studies from the University of Maryland. In her dissertation on the relationship between food and gender, White notes, "The preparation of food is just as important as its cultivation because it is steeped in ritual, culture, and history." [1] The act of preparation is a critical aspect of humans' relationship with food, but the steps taken, techniques used, and those who prepare food are not the same across cultures.

Moreover, identity and culture define individuals' interactions in the food

away, so farming was not always a viable source of income, and women often needed to take on other roles. The traditional gender divisions of labor and food preparation began to break down as development and tourism increased. In particular, the building of bridges between the islands and to the mainland caused many Gullah people were to depart from the Sea Islands in enormous numbers and often by force. This piece examines how those food traditions and the Gullah people have changed and adapted to the new environment on the Sea Islands.

**Keywords:** Gullah Geechee, foodways, cultural adaptation, food preparation

preparation process, as identity often falls along religion, age, marital/relationship status, socioeconomic status, career, family size, and composition, and what is essential to this project: one's gender. Gender plays an integral part in a person's place within a family, community, society, or culture. In the case of the Gullah Geechee, [2] these multiple factors intersected to form their specific traditions regarding food preparation. Some groups in West Africa acted in matrilineal, matrilineal, or matriarchal ways, which probably influenced or even transferred into Gullah Geechee culture. Gullah people use food to assert power, maintain culture and traditions, and pass down knowledge. Mothers from a young age begin having their children alongside the preparation and cooking, interacting with the techniques and ingredients while telling the importance of Gullah foodways both in the past and the present. Food was often how life skills were taught and

for Gullah people, often one of the only things in their limited control. Interaction with food has most often and continues to fall along gendered lines among the Gullah peoples, with certain steps or actions reserved for a specific gender. In some cases, the entire process might be assigned to one gender over the other.

The Gullah Geechee people are descendants of enslaved Africans along the coastal regions of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida. Along this stretch of the coast is a series of barrier islands, also referred to as the Sea Islands. On the islands and coastal plantations, enslaved peoples cultivated rice, indigo, and Sea Island

cotton for nearly two centuries. During the trans-Atlantic slave trade, captured Africans from diverse ethnic groups brought their cultural traditions, which intermingled. Additionally, the cultures encountered and were influenced by Indigenous and European cultures. This intertwining of cultures morphed the group now known as Gullah or Geechee, for whom food plays a significant part in their daily lives and cultural distinctions.

Food preparation in Gullah communities, as in many other cultures throughout the globe, is often a gendered task. For roughly three centuries, enslaved Africans and their descendants were isolated on the Sea Islands from the coastal



Figure 1: Watercolor map of The South Carolina Sea Islands, Molly Joseph Fine Art.

mainland. Due to this isolation, retention of various West African culture, including food preparation techniques, remained consistent and were passed down throughout generations. When bridges were built from the mainland, the isolation of the Sea Islands ended. As such, new social and economic patterns affected the Gullah's lives. Food preparation among Gullah Geechee communities changed and shifted along gendered lines in the first half of the twentieth century as the isolation of the Sea Islands ended.

This piece will examine Gullah Geechee culture, their specific food preparation practices during and after enslavement, and how those practices changed during the end of isolation on the South Carolina Sea Islands. Four specific islands will be highlighted throughout this project: James Island, Edisto Island, St. Helena Island, and Hilton Head Island.

## **Existing Historiography.**

For many historians, food is not often studied or seen as beneficial to their studies. Typically studies of food are left to sociologists or anthropologists. However, food is a very effective way of teaching and studying culture. [3] As anthropologist and anatomist William Pollitzer writes, "Culture is the sum total of learned behavior in a society." [4] Culture is necessary to understand the past, and food has been around longer than any other aspect of culture. [5] One of the first things a human learns from birth is

how to consume food; their relationship surrounding food is almost immediate but can also change over time. Information on a culture's foodways and the changes over time help to frame the overall progression of events for a group or region.

Each culture, though, has a different relationship with foodways. Foodways refers to the social, cultural, and often economic practices and customs relating to the preparation and consumption of food. There is an inherent connection between ideas/thoughts and food, often shown through language and food metaphors. [6] Food is shared, learned, integrated, symbolic, and dynamic - foodways change as a result of interaction within and without one's culture, being influenced by the conditions of the world around someone. [7] African American foodways are no different. Black communities in the United States have often identified along the lines of foodways, production, preparation, and consumption, mainly due to the role that slavery and agriculture played in the development of Black identity.

Most historians discuss that South Carolina was first a colony and then a state that, throughout most of the period of slavery, had a majority Black population. Especially in rural areas and especially the Sea Islands, the Black population outnumbered the white population by a ratio of almost (and sometimes over) three to one. [8] The ratio and the desire to keep Black people enslaved led to restrictions and laws prohibiting the movements of both free and enslaved Black folks. Following the

Stono Rebellion in 1739, stricter laws were placed prohibiting gatherings and restricting the movements of enslaved Africans to prevent further uprisings. Yet, as many scholars have maintained, the Sea Islands were largely unpoliced due to their isolation and lack of European contact. In terms of native exchange, the Yamassee wars wiped out Indigenous people in the coastal areas immediately following 1715-1718. [9] Most interaction with Indigenous communities would come in the very early, but very influential, years of colonization of the Sea Islands from 1670-1720.

Historians of Gullah culture also stress the group's unique relationship with food. Food appears in many aspects of Gullah culture, including language, religion, and art. Many scholars have studied the Gullah language as one of the most prominent cultural components of Gullah culture, especially its African linguistic roots. By modest estimates, there had been over five hundred languages (or dialects, depending on the delineation between the two) in the West African region most heavily depopulated by the slave trade. [10] By finding similarities between languages, enslaved Africans found a way to communicate with one another, creating the Atlantic Creole "Gullah" or "Geechee." [11] Scholars who have explored the Gullah culture stress the importance of Gullah as a language rather than a dialect of broken English, as it had commonly been assumed in the twentieth century.

With language comes the transference of knowledge - knowledge can be anything from religious ideas and storytelling, the

story of Br'er Rabbit, or recipes to feed one's family. Rhymes, songs, and riddles are embedded in storytelling and religion, with the intention of transferring knowledge to younger members of the community. Meanwhile, some researchers have determined that Christianity became the dominant religion of many Gullah Geechee people, although island and traditional West African belief systems also influenced the culture. Islam had already reached the west coast of Africa by the tenth century, so it was deeply embedded in many regions, including the Senegal River region leading to familiarity with the Arabic language among some enslaved. [12] Most enslavers forced Africans to convert to Christianity in the Americas, usually Methodist or Episcopal, but the enslaved peoples retained aspects of both Islam and spiritual traditions. [13] Religion often was a center for the Gullah community on plantations, according to scholars, and with community came food

Emory Campbell noted that food was "perhaps the most widely accepted Gullah cultural aspect" [14] by those who identify as Gullah, but also the white majority. Even studies of the art forms associated with Gullah Geechee people today emphasize the historical relevance of food. [15] Historians note that West African rice cultivation societies first made the most famous sweetgrass baskets. Making the baskets required the knowledge that came with the enslaved to the Americas. The large, circular fanner baskets had a flat bottom and short walls for cleaning, threshing, and winnowing the chaff from the harvested rice. [16] Since rice cultivation ended in the



Figure 2: Fanner basket, 1972 Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. National Museum of American History Behring Center.

Charleston area after the Civil War, women continued to make and use baskets to harvest crops or to sell at markets. Pottery also had its purpose in food preparation, an art learned from American Indigenous groups. Catawaba clay pots, for instance, were commonly used to make one-pot dishes, such as okra soup. In addition, Gullah net-knitting is now seen as an art form, but historically these nets were necessary for food procurement. [17] Thus, food and the production of food-related items had been embedded into almost every aspect of Gullah life.

Most historians agree that the land and its isolated nature defined food and culture in Gullah Geechee life.

The consensus among the Gullah Geechee community and scholars is that the Gullah Geechee community thrived and retained more African traditions than other African descendent groups in the United States due to three centuries of geographic isolation. In the coastal regions, particularly on the Sea Islands, where rice, indigo, and Sea Island Cotton plantations required substantial enslaved labor, the population existed in virtual isolation from the mainland. [18] Wilbur Cross noted that "numerous studies have pointed out that this isolation helped to preserve family, spiritual, and cultural values their ancestors brought from Africa."

Some historians, such as Judith Carney, have also examined the patterns of slave labor in the context of Gullah studies. In the Lowcountry, the labor systems developed differently than in other areas. The gang system of slave labor was used where indigo and Sea Island Cotton were cultivated. It functioned mainly as other gang systems did, directed by overseers, drivers, or the enslavers themselves. [19] However, the task system was essential to the Gullah people's views of land after emancipation. [20]

The task system appeared on rice plantations and was often seen by enslavers and later historians as a less brutal form of slave labor. The task system assigned specific tasks to individuals, often of specific genders, which allowed for more "free time" for enslaved people in the evenings after their work was completed. [21] Free time could be spent caring for one's family or community by hunting or farming to provide food. Gullah people could also teach skills and create products such as baskets, sewing, pottery, or fishing nets. Those products could be sold or used to aid the land's production and utilization. Such labor patterns would carry past enslavement. [22] Historians have concluded that these tasks and skills usually fell along gendered lines: Procuring meat and fish fell to men, as did butchering, although women would also be taught those skills. [23] Yet, men would seldom make baskets or sew.

Family in Gullah communities benefited from the strong role that women played. A family was not defined in the strict nuclear style that the dominant culture in

America tended to foster. [24] As one scholar has explained, "Women of all generations, as mothers and as extended-family members, play a critical role in fostering self-reliance and a sense of collective memory in their children of both genders." [25] This goes back to enslavement when family units were not always clearly defined and to many West African ethnic groups for which a village or community functioned as one family often centered around women. Matriarchs and elder women were responsible for the preservation of culture and community through knowledge and food. The familial compounds of plantation complexes remained the dominant form of community structure. Life was centered around the yard as a place of food and the center of enslaved communities. Therefore, scholars have agreed that the size of the yard became more important than the size of the house. [26]

Many crops that are staples in Gullah diets are not native to the Americas. The trans-Atlantic slave trade brought enslaved Africans and African crops, culinary traditions, agricultural practices, and crafts relating to food procurement and production. Jessica B. Harris is a leading culinary historian on the relationship between West African and American cuisines. She observed that the middle passage lasted from roughly 1526 to 1866, with slave ships requiring more food than any other vessel. [27] There were three basics of food on slave ships: rice, corn, and yams. Along with those three staples, other crops include okra, greens, black-eyed peas, hot peppers, sorghum, watermelon, squash, and benne

(sesame) seeds. "Many of these crops are nutritious, high value and stress tolerant," meaning that they can survive in a multitude of climates and conditions and hold significant value in global food production. [28]

Indigenous and European groups also introduced crops and cooking techniques to enslaved Africans in the Americas. Curator and Folklorist Rayna Green explores how Indigenous foodways affected southern cuisine, as initially, the only southern food story was that of the indigenous peoples. Green notes that the introduction of corn-based products had a widespread impact on European and enslaved African cuisine, including that of the Gullah. [29] With crops came the new cooking techniques that are still familiar today in Charleston, including frying food in oil, roasting over an open fire without water, one-pot dishes such as gumbo, heavy seasoning, and steaming food in banana or plantain leaves. [30]

The agricultural practice that arrived during the trans-Atlantic slave trade that is most notable is rice cultivation. The geographical features of coastal Carolina, tidal rivers, and wetlands resembled West Africa's terrain, which already had prominent rice-growing communities. Wetland rice cultivation in the Lowcountry resulted in a greater demand for labor and higher mortality rates in enslaved communities. [31]

Rice was deeply embedded in Gullah culture, and its origins in Africa aided in the intense build-up of the slave trade to America. [32] The cultivation, preparation, and consumption of rice within the "rice

coast" of West Africa almost mirror rice practices among people of African descent, particularly Gullah communities. [33] The similarities were largely because the Lowcountry rice cultivation came about almost exclusively through knowledge of African techniques. [34]

Many scholars agree on the links between Gullah women and rice growing. Sierra Leone was the heart of the rice coast in West Africa, where cultivation was done predominantly by women, which some scholars maintains was also a pattern in Gullah Geechee culture. [35] Others note that "female slaves constituted the majority of 'prime hands' on Carolina and Georgia rice plantations." [36] Agriculture was disproportionately 'ooman's wuck' in Lowcountry plantation societies, which transferred into the handling and preparing of food for Gullah families and communities. [37]

Rice was held in such high esteem in Gullah communities that "several elderly women also recalled a time when rice held such a special place in their communities that children were not permitted to eat it except on Sundays or special occasions." [38] Many Gullah peoples, especially elders, might feel like they had not eaten a proper meal unless the meal involved some form of rice.

Each year millions of people from all over the world flock to the American South to experience and taste "old Southern cooking." The idea of the "Old South," or the Antebellum, is a figment of people's imagination. The "Old South" is a misnomer for "the former slaveholding



states and the history and culture they collectively birthed from the days of contacts through civil rights." [39] This narrative has been so deeply embedded into American society that fiction has become a reality for many, with one scholar stating that "we are so quick today to romanticize southern food as nourishing, hearty, and comforting that if nothing else it is worth remembering a major portion of the southern food story was one of decidedly unromantic, painful loss." [40] This romantic myth has persisted to present day. The fictional plantation narrative is a racist representation of a slavery narrative that is not real. However, from this narrative, crops, cooking styles, and dishes are often extracted and capitalized on without properly acknowledging their creators. Many of the foodways that have been used in the "Old South" narrative originate in Gullah communities and are stories of gendered labor.

Most scholars who have identified a link between gender and foodways note that all aspects of food interactions can and do happen in gendered ways. [41] There is a relationship between food, responsibility, and power. This responsibility and power did not equal control. Enslavers placed the production of meals in the hands of women, sometimes under strict supervision, and only when resources were provided to those women. In their own homes, it was the same. Women had the responsibility to provide a meal for their families or community, but they usually did not control the resources or the allocation of the meal. It could have been subordination or a need to serve and

satisfy. Food researcher Psyche Williams-Forsen also notes that the work that goes into providing food is significant, but it is often overlooked and underappreciated because of gender. Williams-Forsen states, "What is clear, nonetheless, across lines of gender and sexuality is the considerable amount of work involved in planning and preparing meals." [42] Gullah food cooked traditionally was very time-consuming to prepare. Women who would later work outside their homes were also less likely to have control over food, its production, and its consumption. [43]

Food refusal is meaningful in all cultures and signifies the denial of a relationship. [44] This act was often an act of resistance for the enslaved and, for women specifically, a reclamation of their power in foodways. The refusal of food and the trans-Atlantic slave trade had significance for the enslaved on the sea islands. The heavy demands of rice cultivation required men and women to arrive in Charleston with muscle mass, so they were often force-fed on slave ships with a speculum oris. Enslaved women often refused food to show agency over their bodies and relationship with food. They potentially could refuse to provide food, which is seen as a woman's responsibility, to assert their control in a given situation, either within the enslaved/enslaver dynamic, or their family and community dynamic.

Women suffered from hunger at a greater rate than men, despite being the primary handlers of food. Enslavers would exert their power over the enslaved women by withholding food to cook with

or even refusing the food women were offering to them. The spaces in which food was handled or prepared, homes and kitchens, gave food, and those who prepared and served the food power. [45]

People in the United States often create their identities based on gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Those identities affect how a person interacts with food on a daily basis. While attention has been given to the relationship between food and gender, "little focus has been given to the issues of racial ethnicities [relationships with food]."[46] This "old Southern cooking" that people search for is the story of race and enslavement in the formation of our country. The lack of effort in this discussion stems from gender and race politics, the subordinate positions, particularly Black women, have been forced into, and the white patriarchy that has dominated this nation from its colonial era.

Elizabeth Engelhardt uses her book *A Mess of Greens* to describe a crucial transition period in Southern foodways from 1870 to 1930, particularly the shift from Reconstruction into the dominant Jim Crow era that defined the South. This work was as much about race as it was about gender in delineating what mattered in Southern foodways. Engelhardt utilized the differentiating of biscuits and cornbread to show gender and race issues and how class and politics were embedded in food choice and consumption.[47]

Gullah foodways and gender relationships as a unit have not had a

significant place in the scholarship of Gullah Geechee people and communities. Foodways and discussions surrounding food are accepted throughout scholarly discussions and examination of Gullah culture, but when relating that to gender, it is not always a considerable part of the conversation. Josephine Beoku-Betts spent several years on the Sea Islands in the late eighties and early nineties with Gullah women, learning about their roles in their communities and leading the discussion between gender and food in Gullah communities. In her article, "We Got Our Way of Cooking Things," Beoku-Betts notes, "Food preparation in Gullah households tends to be gender-specific and organized around particular tasks; each successive task is more highly gender-stratified." [48] Both men and women play roles in procuring food, but women are more likely to take responsibility for cooking and feeding. While this seems to be assumed by most scholars, Beoku-Betts makes one of the first concrete assertions that food preparation and gender are linked in Gullah communities.

Katie White wrote her Ph.D. dissertation "Food On the Move: Gendered Representation, Cultural Sustainability, and Culinary Practices of Gullah Women" in a similar fashion, almost expanding on what Beoku-Betts did about twenty years prior. She began with the gendered actions in West Africa, as women held the knowledge for successful rice cultivation and were captured and enslaved to educate the enslaved males "on the rituals of rice cultivation." [49] Throughout her dissertation, White constantly touches on food preparation as ritualistic to

preserve the cultural tradition and pass down information in the community.

## Before the Bridge

Like many other Sea Islands, the four islands highlighted—James, Edisto, St. Helena, and Hilton Head—have their own distinct island subcultures. Each island settled at its own rate and for its own purpose. The intense period of geographic isolation from the mainland had remained constant across all islands, and before the development of bridges, most of the island residents were enslaved Africans.

In the 1680s and 1690s, small plantations began popping up along James Island's waterways, predominantly invested in livestock and lumber commerce. There was limited freshwater availability on James Island, so colonists opted out of rice cultivation and instead invested in the indigo market.[50] At its height, James Island was home to over seventeen different plantation properties and over two thousand enslaved people. It is believed that forty to sixty percent of enslaved Africans entering the colonies and the United States came through the ports of Charleston. Charleston was only a five-minute boat ride from the eastern side of James Island, so it would seem improbable that a significant number of enslaved Africans would have been purchased elsewhere.

After the Civil War, most freed people remained on the island for several reasons. Often there was hesitance for freed people to leave the island or even

the land on which they had been enslaved. If a family member had been sold away, often the rest of the family remained on the land, hoping that whoever had been sold would be able to find their way back. There was a lack of transportation off the island, as a bridge was not yet connected to the mainland. Despite being a short boat ride away from Charleston, many of the island's Black residents did not have access to a boat and could not afford to buy one or rent one out. Finally, enslaved Africans were not taught to swim; they were taught to fear the water, so swimming to the mainland was not an option immediately after emancipation. Sea Island Cotton cultivation, often in the form of tenant farming, persisted on the island following the end of the war.

Spanish missionaries from the colony in Florida settled on Edisto Island around August 1569. Their ideas were largely not received by the Indigenous people on the island and the surrounding areas. Those few who stayed made their living in agriculture and trading with the Indigenous groups.[51] Several English colonists "purchased"[52] land from Indigenous peoples in the 1680s and began using the island for large-scale cultivation. The island is not one piece of land but two islands separated by a small creek with other tidal creeks veining the surface.[53] Rice was unsuccessful, but indigo flourished until the 1820s, and Sea Island Cotton was introduced to Edisto in 1790.[54] Prior to the Civil War, census records indicate that on Edisto Island, there were 325 White and 5,082 enslaved peoples, of whom many descendants lived on the island following the war for

many of the same reasons people stayed on James Island.[55] Most enslaved on Edisto were purchased in Charleston, forty miles north, or at smaller markets on Wadmalaw Island, three nautical miles away, and transported along creeks to the island.[56]

Unlike other Sea Islands in the area, St. Helena Island was first colonized by the French, later the Spanish, and finally the English when they realized how similar the island was to the rice-growing areas of West Africa. It is one of the largest Sea Islands of South Carolina and one of the only ones not fronted on the Atlantic Ocean but tucked behind several other smaller islands. The freshwater access made it more successful in rice cultivation than other Atlantic-fronted Sea Islands. Enslaved Africans were purchased from Charleston, Savannah, Georgia, and Beaufort, South Carolina. Many plantation owners spent their time in the mainland city of Beaufort nearby or further north in Charleston, leaving their land in the hands of overseers or drivers.[57] St. Helena Island grew in prosperity at the expense and expertise of the enslaved to aid in Beaufort planters becoming the second largest and most wealthy city in South Carolina.

Hilton Head Island is one of the more well-known Sea Islands, but before resorts and golf courses, the island was home to twenty-four plantations and a few thousand enslaved people, in the years leading up to the Civil War. Spanish explorers landed on the island around 1521 and attracted the English Captain William Hilton in 1663, the island's namesake. It was not Hilton, but Irish

settlers who were first granted land on the island. Indigo was the main cash crop until the introduction of cotton in 1791. Like St. Helena, most enslaved people were purchased from Charleston or nearby Savannah and brought along creeks. Some might have been purchased directly in Beaufort, South Carolina. Cotton on Hilton Head prospered, with some planters able to sell Sea Island Cotton at top dollar of twelve dollars a pound in 1860.[58] Sea Island Cotton was just the first step in securing Hilton Head as an island of luxury.

There often was a degree of autonomy for the enslaved on the Sea Islands as they were distanced and often isolated from large white populations and other enslaved communities. Rice plantations utilized the task system, which did allow enslaved men and women to spend time, usually in the evenings, working to take care of their families in different ways. Sam Gadsden of Edisto described it as "a good way to work. When you get done with your task, you come help me. When we two are done with mine, we both go help our sister. We all work together until each person's task is done for that day." [59] There was cooperation and community in the task system to ensure everyone finished their task and had the time to help around the community.

On Sea Island Plantations, the enslaved were given minimal resources from their owners to feed each other. Plantation manuals show weekly rations or allowances given to households, such as "a peck of meal is given every Sunday morning... meat and syrup are given out on Monday night... with one quart or

syrup the meat allowance is reduced to 1 ¾ pounds of pickle pork or bacon... when meat alone is given, 3 pounds of pickle pork or bacon is the allowance.”[60] In the state of South Carolina, it was illegal for enslaved people to grow their own gardens without expressed permission from their owners. At McLeod Plantation on James Island, the owner allowed small vegetable patches outside each enslaved residence to be tended to after completing their daily tasks. Men would also often take that same time to head to rivers, creeks, and the ocean to procure some other form of protein, such as fish, shrimp, and oysters. In general, the diets of the enslaved were not adequate to meet the demands of their workload and living conditions, leading to health problems, lower life expectancy, and higher infant mortality.[61]

With such little food or allowances, there was nothing to spare, everything could be used to create something useful. Often, the enslaved were given undesirable cuts of meat, including but not limited to organ meats, feet, heads, necks, and ham hocks. “Meaningless-to-the-Master” parts were turned into meaningful meals for families and the community.[62] People had to cook in season, meaning that the enslaved and the Gullah ate certain dishes because of the crops available at certain times of the year. Okra is harvested mainly in the summer, so okra soup is a summer dish.[63] Bill Green of St. Helena Island described the heartiness of Gullah food: “This type of food, Gullah food, you can feel ‘em when you eat it... one bowl will carry you a long way.”[64] Food was something to sustain people through the hard-working conditions of

the Sea Islands until their next meal and a reward for all the work that went into growing crops and surviving.[65] Every crop, animal, dish, and meal was appreciated in the Gullah community.

Labor roles on plantations crossed gender lines in one direction but not the other. Residents of Edisto Island, such as Greg Estevez, often recount the vital roles women held: “Enslaved African women were extremely important to the Edisto community as a whole.”[66] Women often did field labor with men, but men seldom did domestic work with women.[67] Men and women would both play roles in procuring food sources, but men were less likely to take on what may be seen as domestic tasks in food preparation, such as cleaning, cooking, and serving the food. This was true for serving one’s family and providing food for the enslavers. It was often preferable for enslavers to have women do domestic labor as the plantation mistresses could assert their dominance over the enslaved women more so than the enslaved men.[68]

Performing labor also began at very young ages. Giving tasks to children happened at varying ages, depending on the plantation owner. A child might be given a small task, usually of domestic nature, and usually that task was working around women. Some children did not have a clearly defined task but would be around to serve the plantation mistress and children.[69] Children were involved in labor almost from birth. They watched, observed, and learned before they were given their first task. In enslaved dwellings, children would begin doing chores as early as women deemed necessary.

# A War and “Freedom”

The Civil War hit each Sea Island differently. On James Island, it was felt immediately as the first shots fired upon Fort Sumter came from Fort Johnson on the island's eastern side. Confederate troops on James Island ordered the mandatory evacuation of all residents. However, many of the island's enslaved were left behind and tasked under the jurisdiction of the Confederate Army. James Island remained occupied by Confederate troops for most of the war until February 1865, and there were a handful of “skirmishes” on James Island, including the Battle of Secessionville.

Edisto Island was abandoned by planters in late 1861, while enslaved residents and self-emancipated men and women set up refugee camps. “When the Civil War broke out, everything changed. Many Gullah Geechee people served in the Union Army's First South Carolina Volunteers. As a result, enslaved Africans on the Sea Islands were among the first Black folks in the South to gain freedom.”[70] A few minor skirmishes also hit Edisto while Union and Confederate troops occupied the island, albeit at different times. Union troops landed more than twelve thousand soldiers on the islands surrounding the Port Royal harbor, including Hilton Head, just six months after the assault on Fort Sumter, forcing plantation owners to evacuate the islands, leaving the over ten thousand enslaved on the island, as was often done before

the war. Mitchelville was established with the aid of Union Major General Ormsby Mitchel on Hilton Head and became the first self-governed town of the formerly enslaved by late 1862.

St. Helena perhaps had the most unique experience during the Civil War, culminating in the Port Royal Experiment. When Union troops took Hilton Head during the Battle of Port Royal, they also gained control of St. Helena. First, with the islands abandoned by Confederates and plantation owners, Northerners wanted to profit off the luxury Sea Island Cotton. During the first year of occupation, field hands “were paid \$1 for every four hundred pounds of cotton harvested and thus were the first [formerly enslaved] freed by Union forces to earn wages for their labor.”[71] In January 1862, the request for teachers from the North to educate the formerly enslaved began, leading to the appointment of a Boston attorney to officially begin the Port Royal Experiment, creating schools, setting up hospitals, and allowing formerly enslaved people to buy and run the abandoned plantations on the island. The Penn School was built several months later and remained an active education institution until 1948 when the state took over public education on the island. The Penn School and others on the Sea Islands following the demise of Reconstruction reinforced the idea that the only thing Black (Gullah) people were capable of was plantation tasks: agriculture was taught to boys, and domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and sewing were taught to girls. [72] Schools also promoted speaking English rather than Gullah, so many students were discouraged from existing

within their culture. Despite this, the Port Royal experiment glimpsed what Reconstruction could have been, as freed families began to be educated, own land, and become financially independent while remaining isolated on their islands.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) was established by Congress on the third of March 1865 to provide resources and services to displaced Southerners, including newly freed people. The Bureau was more about helping to solve everyday problems and often did not have lasting effects, especially on the Sea Islands. Not every island had a Freedmen's Bureau agent to assist in obtaining services, which often meant that to get help, one would have had to travel to another island or the mainland, and travel across water was not commonly available. James Island, which did have an agent for about eighteen months after the war, saw a lack of medical treatment, resulting in about half of the island's freed people (roughly thirteen hundred) losing their lives or becoming seriously debilitated due to the smallpox epidemic.

Some freedmen received land under General Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15, colloquially referred to as "40 acres and a mule." Up to forty-acre parcels of abandoned land on the Sea Islands could be given to a household by a Freedmen's Bureau agent. For those who did not receive land, agents often encouraged freedmen and women to enter exploitative tenant farming or sharecropping contracts with former plantation owners. Little progress had been made for people on the Sea Islands

when Congress abruptly abandoned the program in 1872. Those who did receive land, such as Pompey "Hardtimes" Dawson, formerly enslaved on James Island, had their land stripped away under President Andrew Johnson and given back to the former plantation owners.[73] In the decades following the Civil War, the less-than-adequate state that the Freedmen's Bureau left the Sea Islands in often led to struggles over land ownership and resources, but Gullah culture persisted.

Because of the maintained isolation after the end of the war, many formerly enslaved stayed on the islands working and living off the land as they had prior. Sallie Ann Robinson described her family's experience with isolation: "We didn't know any more than living off the land... we just had a good life." [74] People remained comfortable living in isolation on the islands and fostering unique, strong communities. As the communities on the islands transformed and transportation to and from grew, Gullah communities could not be replicated elsewhere because of Gullah shared history and isolated living conditions that no longer existed. Despite strong community ties, island life was threatened as the centuries shifted into the 1900s.

Mother Nature had her way with the Sea Islands in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, severely affecting life on the islands and aiding in the push to end isolation. From 1886 to 1913, there were significant storms every six years, according to Sam Gadsden, who lived through all of them. [75]

Gadsden noted that two events were more significant than the others – the hurricane of 1893 and the arrival of the boll weevil in the 1910s. It had been estimated that the Great Sea Island Hurricane of 1893 took over two thousand lives across the islands between Savannah and Charleston, with those centered around Beaufort getting hit the hardest. [76] Crop production in the region was affected for upwards of four years on some islands, leading to a lack of income and food for one's family.

## The Development of Bridges

Bridges from the mainland to the Sea Islands came to each island at different points in the twentieth century. These bridges were built by the nearest city or the state of South Carolina's Department of Transportation, often at the expense of the island's Gullah residents. State governments stripped away land from Gullah residents, leaving them with no homes and no resources of which they were used to. The ending of isolation happened at different times for various islands, but all the islands felt the effects of development in similar ways.

James Island is the closest Sea Island to Charleston, SC, and it received its first permanent bridge to the mainland in 1899. The few former plantation owners still left on the island began to sell away

land parcels as agriculture declined rapidly. The boll weevil wiped out the Sea Island cotton crop on James Island by 1918, and the crop was presumed extinct. The Country Club of Charleston purchased four-hundred acres of land from the McLeod Plantation in 1919, and the club opened in 1925. The building of the country club was the event that accelerated development on the island. That same year, the Edisto Realty Company built the first subdivision on the island, Riverland Terrace. Albertha Jenkins's family had been tenant farmers on James Island for several generations after the end of the war. She described her family's shift from farming to day laborers. "[Daddy's] second job (first not as a farmer) was working with a construction company paving Folly Road during 1929 through the 1930s, until it was completed." [77] What land was left for the islands' Black residents was usually undesirable and non-arable. Gullah families were pushed into corners and crevasses of the island, one being the community known as Sol Legare, the still-standing Gullah community on the island.

The state built many bridges to other islands between 1920 and the 1960s. Edisto Island would get its first permanent bridge in the 1920s. In 1921, Edisto Island saw the building of its first oyster factory, employing residents of the island and allowing many to escape sharecropping contracts. [78] There were men and some women, called "creekmen," who knew and had names for every waterway on Edisto, which made up about two-thirds of the island. Creekmen also knew where one could find different types of seafood, big bass, shrimp, crabs, clams, and, importantly, oysters. [79] With the



growing seafood business, a bridge to Edisto and the subsequent development hurt what was left of agriculture on the island and depleted the Gullah of food resources.

The state built the bridge connecting St. Helena Island to the mainland and other islands in 1927. Once the bridge was built, there was a significant exodus of Gullah residents from the island, looking for employment or education opportunities and escaping Jim Crow in the aftermath of some of the most devastating decades on the island. [80] Gullah residents on St. Helena continuously resisted development, petitioning to protect their land, often with little success.

Hilton Head Island progressed slower, getting a ferry service to the island first in 1953 and a bridge three years later in 1956. Hilton Head would then see over fifty-thousand new, mainly white, residents to the island. The property price then rose to ten times the amount before the bridge within the first five years of having access to the mainland. Bridges negatively altered the lives of Gullah Geechee communities as interactions with other populations became more common. Gullah people have a strong connection to the land and nature. With development, much of their land was stripped away leaving communities without homes and their natural resources that Gullah people built their lives around.

## Since The Bridges

Development was never for the benefit or even the thought of the Gullah Geechee people. It altered and destroyed their language, customs, and family ties. [81] Marquette Goodwine describes the relationship that Gullah people have with the two words. "The words 'development' and 'developer' ring hollow within the Sea Islands of the United States of America and bring on images of family removal and the breakdown and dissolution of cultural ties." [82] Because of enslavement, exploitation, and the development of the Sea Islands, there is often an immense sense of distrust in Gullah communities towards outsiders, both Black and white, as expressed by Josephine Beoku-Betts during her research in Gullah communities in the 1980s and 1990s. [83]

The decline of cotton affected how the different islands handled development. Without cotton as the main cash crop, all islands turned to truck farming, growing crops such as sweet potatoes, okra, cabbage, corn, cucumbers, collard greens, and tomatoes. Eugene Frazier described his experience growing up on James Island, "I helped my mother and sisters harvest peanuts on the McLeod farm. After Mr. McLeod harvested his peanuts, he would turn the field over to the black people on the island." [84] For those who did not own land or did not have enough land to farm on, the islands' Black residents often entered into tenant farming contracts with white landowners to grow crops on their land. These contracts were often exploitative, and many tenants were left in a perpetual state of debt.

The accelerated development on James Island continued with many residents being hired day laborers to pave roads, lay concrete, work at the golf course, pump gas at the newly constructed gas station, or service cars. Many men were no longer full-time farmers. Former Plantation-owning families sold away large plots of land to developers, stripping away available farmland. Women also took on new roles, such as storekeepers and crop sorters.[85]

As World War I and World War II often coincided with this development, men were drafted or enlisted in the military. The development of Parris Island in Beaufort brought day jobs to men. These two things disrupted the gender ratio of Gullah communities and often exacerbated already tense race relations. [86] Gullah communities were hit by the loss of men that helped with the bit of crop production left and those men's ability to provide an income for their families. The loss of men in the home often led women to take on low-paying jobs, work in white families' homes, or pull their children out of school to help earn money.

The South Carolina Sea Islands became popular tourist destinations beginning with bridges and continuing throughout the twentieth century. At the southern end of James Island, one can cross Folly River onto Folly Island after the bridge connecting the two in 1930. Folly Beach became such a prominent tourist destination when Folly Pier opened in 1931. The pier was home to a pavilion, a dancing pier, restaurants, and an amusement park. Black men and women

worked on Folly Beach during the day but left as the sun began to dip below the horizon, as they were no longer welcome on the land during nightfall. Often these men and women lived miles away from where they worked, as living on Folly Beach was not allowed, and the surrounding areas were often too expensive. Many Gullah people had long commutes to work, limiting the time at home, especially in the evening, when dinner would be prepared.

Developing country clubs, housing, and beach resorts would alter life on the Sea Islands. Islands that were once almost solely Gullah Geechee people saw native Islander populations dwindle because of development and the end of isolation. That happened for several reasons, some of which may be less obvious than others.

With the large numbers of tourists and white people buying land on these islands, the cost of living began to rise, often forcing Gullah Geechee people to get jobs to afford to live in their homes. Wealthy northern families bought up old plantation properties in large numbers, used for outdoor recreation or hunting. Hundreds of thousands of acres across the Sea Islands were taken out of production and utilized for private entertainment.[87] Sometimes Gullah residents would be hired to provide entertainment for white families or clubs. Such entertainment perpetuated racist stereotypes and imagery, as had been done throughout slavery, and was often done for little compensation.[88] For Gullah residents who owned their land on the islands, property taxes often went up close to at least three hundred percent in a year because of large, million-dollar houses or resorts built next door.[89]

"Eminent domain" and "Heirs' property" are two phrases that cause anger and grief among the Gullah people. Eminent domain is the right of the government to seize private property for public use, with some payment as compensation. However, on the islands, the land they were seizing was familial, often in the family's hands for generations, and there was nothing these families could do to maintain their legacy. The land was also often valued so little by the government that the compensation was inadequate for buying new land and staying on the island.

Heirs' property is familial land jointly owned by the descendants of a deceased person without a will or when an estate did not clear probate following the person's death. "There are numerous Gullahs who used to live on Hilton Head but now reside in cities across the United States, who tell stories of how an elderly person in their family was approached with a briefcase full of single dollar bills and how this person was coaxed into selling the family land. In many cases, the elders did not realize that they were being told to give up the only place they had ever known." [90] All it took was for a developer to come onto the island, approach one person, and ask to buy that property. It then forced all other descendants to sell and give up their land. Those that remained on the island would foster resentment towards other Black residents for selling their land to white men for so cheap. [91]

The new white residents and the Better Homes Movement encouraged those who remained on the island to adopt more

white, European-influenced ways of living. The homes the Better Homes movement proposed to build on St. Helena Island between the 1920s and 1940s "embodied revised traditional roles for women," [92] which was to say, stop being Black and act more white. Women were not supposed to partake in large-scale agriculture, hunting, or fishing. They were supposed to stay home, cook over their new gas stove, clean, and have a meal on the table when their husbands got home. However, that version of a housewife was not obtainable to all Gullah women, nor was it conducive to the culture or lifestyle of these women.

Not only did it become more expensive or impossible to live on the islands, as people were forced off the islands, but the natural resources that often provided Gullah Geechee people with most of their food were diminished for those still there. Removal of wooded areas saw the dwindling game population. There then became less acreage for agriculture. For many families, putting a meal on the table was challenging, but food was still one of the most essential aspects of Gullah culture. Robert Gathers from James Island spent his childhood in the 1940s and 1950s at McLeod Plantation. His father rented field space to grow truck crops and worked day jobs as a carpenter. Robert described his family's provision of food: "We didn't have much, no toys or things to play with but the sticks from the ground. Mama and pop, they always made sure there was a hot meal for dinner. For snacks, we picked the pecans off the ground." [93]

In the 1940s, landowners began to rely on

the labor of migrant workers from the Caribbean, Mexico, and other Latin American countries, often stripping away land from Gullah residents of the islands. [94] Oystering then provided seasonal employment around the Sea Islands. Men often provided the oysters, selling them to local oyster factories. Most of the shuckers were women who walked several miles to and from work each day, as oyster factories were usually out of the way with no housing or stores around the area.[95]

Due to these environmental changes, traditional food preparation methods were not always available to Gullah families. The preparation of their meals were time-consuming, and with more people away from home, time to prepare meals became an issue. Women became versed in canning and preserving ingredients to keep, making a meal's preparation easier and quicker. A weekend might be dedicated to canning fruits, vegetables, and meats a few times a year in preparation for seasonal employment.[96]

With the diminishment of natural resources, many ingredients for traditional dishes were not available. Women still did not like to buy ingredients at the grocery store. Charlotte Jenkins' family was hesitant to shop at a store for ingredients. "If she could help it, my mother would never buy at the market. But a mile from the house was the Pinckney Store, where we'd get the basics, salt and the like. My father got rice in fifty-pound bags from town." [97] If specific ingredients were unavailable, canned ingredients might be substituted in place

of fresh ones. Some dishes might have fallen out of rotation if ingredients were not there or there was a lack of time to cook. Matthew Raiford, a sixth-generation Gullah farmer talks about what ingredients were focal points of meals and the notion of hunger in Gullah communities. "Vegetables were the stars of our tables, and still are. Meat wasn't always readily available, but because farming families in the Brookman Community shared their harvests and we traded among ourselves, everyone had plenty to eat. We never knew hunger because of that collective spirit." [98] It was a common practice in Gullah homes to cook as someone might walk through the door and help those in need, even if one's family did not have much.

New appliances and cookware went to the Sea Islands to replace wood stoves and ice boxes. Pressure cookers made their way into some homes to help with the cooking time for many dishes, especially those that are rice based. Some families will not deviate from the traditional way of cooking rice, though, such as Jenkins, who stated, "mama felt that when food cooks too fast, it loses something. She was right." [99] Some women began preparing food the night before or only prepared a traditional meal on the weekends when the time was there to make those dishes properly.[100]

Whereas food preparation tasks were more gendered in these communities, because of these new conditions, there is some blurring of gender lines to ensure there will be food on the table each day. Each male and female child needed to be immersed and active in food preparation.

Sallie Ann Robinson discussed the importance of children being involved in the kitchens: "Kids have to be a part of the process so as they get older, they would know what to do and how to feed they family." [101] Children were expected to help before and after school with jobs such as picking vegetables, milking cows, and fishing. [102] As women often took on other jobs, children were often taken out of school to help around the house, care for younger siblings, clean, garden, and cook meals. Even if males do not carry on being the primary cooker in their house or community, they have the skills to do so if needed.

Some boys grew up wanting to cook, be chefs, and feed their families, but were denied the opportunity as long as their skills and labor were needed elsewhere. Matthew Raiford described growing up wanting to cook when his father told him, "A lot of things you can do, boy, but cooking ain't one of them." [103] So, like many other men who were denied the opportunity to cook, Matthew enlisted in the military. The military at the time was not a common option for women, so men, specifically poor men, were often recruited into the service, once again leaving domestic chores, including cooking, to the girls and women. Boys were discouraged from cooking for two reasons. One, it was seen as a woman's job to cook for their family, and two, Black people had more difficulty finding work as restaurant chefs. If men were allowed to get work cooking, it was usually in restaurants around larger cities, such as Charleston and Savannah, or some might start catering services for white and wealthy families. [104] Women who

worked in restaurants were not often seen as authority figures, referred to as cooks rather than chefs, and were often limited in what food they were allowed to handle. [105] It was often more challenging for women to find steady employment, especially in restaurant kitchens.

If women had seasonal work, such as at the oyster factory, husbands and children often began preparing the meal. Otherwise, they would be waiting well into the evening for their supper. "Mama, you don't have to worry about rushing back home," Charlotte Jenkins' brother told their mother when she was away from home taking care of ill family members. [106] There soon became the notion that women would no longer always be around to do the domestic jobs that were seen as traditional. When women were not available as much as they used to be, other family members helped do chores around the house that mothers usually did.

Eventually, food was no longer about survival. Utilizing the same cooking techniques as their ancestors became about preserving the Gullah Geechee culture and traditions. "Women attend group meetings every two weeks or so vying with one another to produce tasty and attractive examples of their cooking skills." [107] Festivals now honor and showcase Gullah food throughout the Lowcountry. There, one might find local celebrity chefs, both men and women, who had dedicated their lives to preserving their food culture and finally bringing acknowledgment to the cuisine and those who created it before them.

# Synthesis

Foodways are an effective way of studying culture and for scholars to examine the past. Every person on Earth belongs to a culture, interacts with food, and interacts with food according to their culture. Food is the oldest aspect of culture, as food has always been necessary for survival. To examine a culture's interaction with food is to examine that group's history.

How one identifies affects their relationship with food, whether regionally, ethnically, racially, or by gender. Black communities in the United States have often emphasized their identity in the foods they eat. "Southern food" is drawn primarily from contributions from African descendent communities, enslavement, and post-emancipation conditions that are too often romanticized by the dominant white culture without proper recognition of its origin.

The Gullah Geechee are a distinct group of African-descendant people in the United States, known for their language, spirituality, and cuisine. Centered around the Lowcountry of coastal South Carolina and Georgia, their influence has reached communities across the United States. Once scattered and isolated across barrier Sea Islands, Gullah peoples are no longer isolated but just as scattered as they were often forced off their land and islands.

Gullah Geechee communities had foodways distinct from other communities in the United States, which

often happened along gendered lines. Because of extended periods of isolation during slavery and continued isolation following emancipation, Gullah Geechee people of the Sea Islands retained more Africanisms than other African descendant people in the United States. The relationship with land and nature, emphasis on no waste, one-pot dishes, cook time, and gender roles are all aspects of Gullah cuisine that may seem distinct from other communities.

The gendered food preparation in Gullah communities was affected by the end of isolation to the South Carolina Sea Islands in the twentieth century. Traditionally food in Gullah communities was prepared in a gendered way. Each step of food preparation becomes increasingly divided into strict gender roles prior to a dish reaching the table or people. However, as isolation on the islands ended, the land was stripped away, so farming was not always a viable source of income, and women often needed to take on other roles. The traditional gender divisions of labor and food preparation began to break down as development increased.

Their traditional gendered food preparation practices were altered as the isolation of the South Carolina Sea Islands ended with the development of bridges. The link between the development of the islands after the bridges and the shifting of food preparation practices is made evident through first understanding the culture and traditional foodways of the communities, the testimonies of Gullah people from the Sea Islands, and surveys of the islands' residents and resources after increased development.

After the bridge development, Gullah people were departing from the Sea Islands in enormous numbers and often by force. However, there has been a desire by many Gullah people to retain as much tradition and culture as possible. Emily Meggett of Edisto lived through much of the island's development and shared her thoughts on the Gullah people's resilience: "Though the islands changed, we as a people prevailed, and we continue to share our histories and our stories with people just like you." [108] Even if food preparation may look different than it used to, the heart and soul that goes into each dish often stays the same—food for nourishment, sustainability, and flavor. Gullah, gender, and *gru*

## Endnotes

[1] Katie White, "Food on the Move: Gendered Representation, Cultural Sustainability, and Culinary Practices of Gullah Women," (College Park: University of Maryland, 2015), xxx.

[2] One may use Gullah, Geechee, or Gullah Geechee when speaking of both language and culture. Emory Campbell is a Hilton Head Island native, one of the distinct Sea Islands known for Gullah Geechee communities. He described Gullah as "In a brief word Gullah is a culture comprising a system of beliefs, customs, artforms, foodways, and language practiced among descendants of West Africans who settled along the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, eorgia and Florida from slavery period to present. The culture is a carry-over from that which thrives in parts of West Africa." Among scholars, there is varying interest in the Gullah culture, whether that be preservation, traditions, the effect of development, or perhaps individual aspects of the culture such as religion, folklore, language, food, ...

...for art. While this project examines gender, food preparation, and the end of isolation, it is important to be familiar with all aspects of Gullah culture to examine its changes.

[3] Carole M. Counihan, "Food and Gender: Identity and Power," in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, ed. Carole M. Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan (New York: Routledge, 1998), 1.

[4] William Pollitzer, *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 29.

[5] Elizabeth Elliott Cooper, "Something to Sink Their Teeth Into: Teaching Culture Through Food," *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2012/Winter 2013): 92-105.

[6] Cooper 2012, 94.

[7] Cooper 2012, 97-101.

[8] Pollitzer 2005, 51-68.

[9] Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton & Company, 1975), 127-130.

[10] Language and dialect are often difficult to differentiate, as there is not always a clear line between the two. In general, a language is a system of communication, written or oral, that is used by people of a country or community. Dialects stem from parent languages, being often more specific and spoken by a defined group or region. West Africa is among the most diverse and dense regions of the world when it comes to language, and often with a lack of written sources, making it difficult for researchers to study.

[11] Murial Miller Branch, *The Water Brought Us: The Story of Gullah-Speaking People* (Orangeburg: Sandlapper Publishing, 1995), 62; William Pollitzer, *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

[12] Wood 1975, 179.

[13] Pollitzer 2005, 136.

[14] Emory S. Campbell, "Gullah Geechee Culture: Respected, Understood, and Striving: Sixty Years after Lorenzo Dow Turner's Masterpiece, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect," *The Black Scholar* 41, no.1 (2011):

[15] Traditional Gullah art forms include the making of sweetgrass baskets, but also quilt making using scrap fabrics and using bright dyes, painting when available, the making of dolls, drums, mortars and pestles, and wood carvings.

[16] "Separating the Wheat from the Chaff," *The Whole Grains Council*, September 24, 2014, <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/blog/2014/09/separating-wheat-chaff>.

[17] Mary Arnold Twining, *An Examination of African Retentions in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands* (1977), 156.

[18] "The Gullah Geechee People," *Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor*, accessed 10 November 2022,

<https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/thegullahgeechee/>; Murial Miller Branch, *The Water Brought Us: The Story of Gullah-Speaking People* (Orangeburg: Sandlapper Publishing, 1995); Elizabeth Brabec and Sharon Richardson, "A Clash of Cultures: The Landscape of the Sea Island Gullah," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (2007); Wilbur Cross, *Gullah Culture in America* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 2008).

[19] Twining 1977, 47.

[20] Elizabeth Brabec and Sharon Richardson, "A Clash of Cultures: The Landscape of the Sea Island Gullah," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (2007): 161; J.W. Joseph, "Meeting at Market: The Intersection of African American Culture, Craft, and Economy and the Landscape of Charleston, South Carolina," *Historical Archaeology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 101-105.

[21] Elizabeth Brabec and Sharon Richardson, "A Clash of Cultures: The Landscape of the Sea Island Gullah," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (2007): 99; Murial Miller Branch, *The Water Brought Us: The Story of Gullah-Speaking People* (Orangeburg: Sandlapper Publishing, 1995), 16.

[22] J.W. Joseph, "Meeting at Market: The Intersection of African American Culture, Craft, ...

...and Economy and the Landscape of Charleston, South Carolina," *Historical Archaeology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 101-105.

[23] Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (2009), 78-106.

[24] Nuclear family typically refers to a family group consisting of two parents and their children. In some instances, one or both sets of grandparents may be included in a nuclear family.

[25] Josephine Beoku-Betts, "We Got Our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food and Preservation of Cultural Identity Among the Gullah" in *Food in the USA* (2013), 551.

[26] Thomas Barnwell Jr., Carolyn Grant, and Emory Shaw Campbell, *Gullah Days: Hilton Head Islanders Before the Bridge 1861-1956* (Durham: Carolina Wren Press, 2020), 244.

[27] Jessica B. Harris, *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 28.

[28] Manish N. Raizadia and Emily C. Sousa, "Contributions of African Crops to American Culture and Beyond: The Slave Trade and Other Journeys of Resilient Peoples and Crops," *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 4 (2020), 1.

[29] Rayna Green, "Mother Corn and the Dixie Pig: Native Food in the Native South," *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 4 (2008), 114-126.

[30] Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African American Culinary History in the Old South* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 13-15.

[31] Judith Carney, "The African Origins of Carolina Rice Culture," in *Ecumene* 7, no. 2 (2000), 127.

[32] "African Rice," in *Lost Crops of Africa: Volume 1: Grains*, (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1996), 17-38.

[33] "African Rice," in *Lost Crops of Africa: Volume 1: Grains*, 26.

[34] Harris 2013, 71.



- [35] Cross 2008, 4.
- [36] Carney 2009, 138.
- [37] "Ooman' Wuck" is the Gullah Geechee words for Woman's work, referring to the gendered tasks for women, rather than men, specifically surrounding foodways. Judith Lynn Strathearn, "Ooman's Wuk: Gullah Womanism in the Creative Works of African American Women" (dissertation, 2017), 39.
- [38] Beoku-Betts 2013, 543.
- [39] Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African American Culinary History in the Old South* (New York: Amistad, 2018), xiii-xv.
- [40] Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt, *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender & Southern Food* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 126.
- [41] Engelhardt 2011, 8, 12-14.; Psyche A. Williams-Forsen, *Building House Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 14.
- [42] Williams-Forsen 2007, 436.
- [43] Counihan and Kaplan 1998, 116134.
- [44] Counihan and Kaplan 1998, 116101
- [45] Psyche A. Williams-Forsen, "Other Women Cooked for My Husband: Negotiating Gender, Food, and Identities in an African American/Ghanaian Household," in *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010), 437-9.
- [46] Williams-Forsen 2010, 436.
- [47] Engelhardt 2011, 61,72.
- [48] Beoku-Betts 2013, 537.
- [49] White 2015, 4.
- [50] *Historic Sites of James Island*, 4.
- [51] Nancy Rhyne, *Chronicles of the South Carolina Sea Islands* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1998), 102-103.
- [52] The idea that land was ever fairly purchased from indigenous populations in a myth rooted in the racism of this country. These purchases were designed to benefit European colonizers, exploit, enslave, and force out the indigenous peoples not only on the Sea Islands, but across the colonies.
- [53] Greg Estevez, *Edisto Island: The African American Experience* (Columbia: Greg Estevez, 2019), 5.
- [54] Rhyne 1998, 104.
- [55] "1860 Census Record, South Carolina" (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress).
- [56] Estevez 2019, 6.
- [57] Rhyne 1998, 131
- [58] Rhyne 1998, 161. \$1 in 1860 is worth \$35.76 in 2023 at the time of writing, \$12/lb in 1860 would be equivalent to \$429.10 at the time of writing. On average, a t-shirt requires around 8 ounces or half a pound of cotton.
- [59] Sam Gadsden, Grandson of Kwibo Tom (enslaved), in *Edisto Island: African American Perspective*, 10.
- [60] "Plantation Manual of James H. Hammond of Beach Island, South Carolina, about 1834" (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1934).
- [61] Estevez 2019, 18.
- [62] Sallie Ann Robinson, *High On The Hog* S1:E2.
- [63] Kendra Hamilton, "the Taste of the Sun: Okra Soup in the Geechee Tradition" in *Callaloo* 30, no. 1 (2007), 78-9.
- [64] Bill Green, *High on the Hog* S1:E2.
- [65] Ronald Daise, *Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage* (Orangeburg: Sandlapper Publishing, 1996), 89.; *Gullah Days: Hilton Head Islanders Before the Bridge 1865-1956*, 248.
- [66] Estevez 2019, 12.
- [67] Deborah G. White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?: Females Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 128-129.

- [68] Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- [69] Estevez 2019, 13.
- [70] Emily Meggett, *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking: Recipes from the Matriarch of Edisto Island*. (United States: ABRAMS, 2022), 25.
- [71] "Port Royal Experiment," VCU Libraries Social Welfare Project, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/civil-war-reconstruction/port-royal-experiment/>
- [72] Lawrence Sanders Roland and Stephen Wise, *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina, Bridging the Sea Islands' Past and Present: 1893-2006*, 179.
- [73] Eugene Frazier, *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners* (Charleston: The History Press, 2010), 16.
- [74] Sallie Ann Robinson, *High on the Hog* S1:E2.
- [75] Estevez 2019, 51.
- [76] Rowland and Wise 2015, 4.
- [77] Albertha Gilliard Jenkins, in *James Island: Stories from Slave Descendants* (Charleston: The History Press, 2006), 65.
- [78] Estevez 2019, 68.
- [79] Estevez 2019, 69.
- [80] Rowland and Wise 2015, 189.
- [81] Marquette Goodwine, *The Legacy of Ibo Landing: Gullah Roots of African American Culture* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1998), 167.
- [82] Marquette L. Goodwine, Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah Geechee, "Destuctionment: Treddin' een We Ancestas' Teahs" in *The Legacy of Ibo Landing: Gullah Roots of African American Culture*, 164.
- [83] Josephine Beoku-Betts, "When Black Is Not Enough: Doing Field Research Among Gullah Woman," in *NWSA Journal* 6, no.3 (1994).
- [84] Eugene Frazier, *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantations Owners*, 13.
- [85] Estevez 2019, 44.
- [86] Roland and Wise 2015, 361.
- [87] Rowland and Wise 2015, 284.
- [88] Rowland and Wise 2015, 113-147.
- [89] Goodwine 1998, 169.
- [90] Goodwine 1998, 168.
- [91] Daise 1996, 103.
- [92] Janet Hutchinson, "Better Homes and Gullah," in *Agricultural History* 67, no. 2 (1993), 103.
- [93] Bishop Robert Gathers, Personal Interview, (April 2022).
- [94] Estevez 2019, 106.
- [95] *Gullah Days: Hilton Head Islanders Before the Bridge 1865-1965*, 306.
- [96] Matthew Raiford, *Bress'n' Nyam: Gullah Geechee Recipes from a Sixth-Generation Farmer* (New York: The Countryman Press, 2021), 73.
- [97] Charlotte Jenkins and William Baldwin, *Gullah Cuisine: By Land and by Sea* (Charleston: Evening Post Books, 2020), 78.
- [98] Raiford 2021, 62.
- [99] Jenkins and Baldwin 2020, 135.
- [100] Beoku-Betts 2013, 548.
- [101] Sallie Ann Robinson, *High on the Hog*, S1:E2.
- [102] Paul Chisolm, in *Remembering the Way it Was: at Beaufort, Sheldon, and the Sea Islands*, (Charleston: The History Press, 2006), 118.
- [103] Raiford 2021, 16.
- [104] Jenkins and Baldwin 2020, 207.
- [105] Kimberly Nettles-Barcelon et al 2015, 34-49.
- [106] Jenkins and Baldwin 2020, 16.

[107] Twining 1977, 83-84.

[108] Meggett 2022, 27.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

"1860 Census Record, South Carolina." Washington, D.C., n.d. Accessed 2022.

Daise, Ronald. *Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage*. Orangeburg, SC: Sandlapper Pub., 1998.

Eifert, Kathryn G. Bishop Robert Gathers. Personal Interview, April 2022.

Estevez, Greg. *Edisto Island: The African American Perspective*. Columbia, SC: Greg Estevez, 2019.

Frazier, Eugene. *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *James Island: Stories from Slave Descendants*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2006.

Gonzales, Ambrose Elliott. *The Black Border: Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*. Gretna, VA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2016.

"High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America 'The Rice Kingdom.'" Episode. 1, no. 2, 2021.

Marscher, F. H. (2006). Heirs' Property in Sheldon: Paul Chisolm born 1936. In *Remembering the Way it Was: At Beaufort, Sheldon and the Sea Islands* (pp. 116-121). essay, Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2006.

Meggett, Emily. *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking: Recipes from the Matriarch of Edisto Island*. New York, NY: Abrams, 2022.

Raiford, Matthew, Amy Paige Condon, Egan Siobhán, and Bevin Valentine Jalbert. *Bress 'n' Nyam: Gullah Geechee Recipes from a Sixth-Generation Farmer*. New York, NY: The Countryman Press, 2021.

Robinson, Sallie Ann, Gregory Wrenn Smith, and Pat Conroy. *Gullah Home Cooking the Daufuskie Way: Smokin' Joe Butter Beans, Ol' 'Fuskie Fried Crab Rice, Sticky-Bush Blackberry Dumpling, and Other Sea Island Favorites*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Ts. *Plantation Manual of James H. Hammond*. Columbia, SC, 1934.

### Secondary Sources

"African Rice." Essay. In *Lost Crops of Africa*, 17-38. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996.

Barnwell, Thomas, Emory S. Campbell, Carolyn Grant, and Christena Bledsoe. *Gullah Days: Hilton Head Islanders Before the Bridge, 1861-1956*. Durham, NC: Blair is an imprint of Carolina Wren Press, 2020.

Beoku-Betts, Josephine. "When Black Is Not Enough: Doing Field Research among Gullah Women." *NWSA Journal* 6, no. 3 (1994): 413-33.

\_\_\_\_\_. "We Got Our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food, and Preservation of Cultural Identity among the Gullah." *Food in the USA*, 2013, 287-304.

Brabec, E., and S. Richardson. "A Clash of Cultures: The Landscape of the Sea Island Gullah." *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (2007): 151-67.

Branch, Muriel Miller. *The Water Brought Us: The Story of the Gullah-Speaking People*. Orangeburg, SC: Sandlapper Pub., 2000.

Campbell, Emory S. "Gullah Geechee Culture: Respected, Understood, and Striving: Sixty Years after Lorenzo Dow Turner's Masterpiece 'Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect.'" *The Black Scholar* 41, no. 1 (2011): 77-84.

Campbell, Emory S., and Ayoka Campbell. *Gullah Cultural Legacies: A Synopsis of Gullah Traditions, Customary Beliefs, Artforms and Speech on Hilton Head Island and Vicinal Sea Islands in South Carolina and Georgia*. Hilton Head, SC: Gullah Heritage Consulting Services, 2008.

Carney, Judith. "The African Origins of Carolina Rice Culture." *Ecumene* 7, no. 2 (2000): 125-49.

Carney, Judith. *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*. Germany: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Cooper, Elizabeth Elliott. "Something to Sink Their Teeth Into: Teaching Culture Through Food." *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 23, no. 2 (2013): 92-105.

Counihan, Carole M., and Steven L. Kaplan. *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*. Florence, SC: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

Cross, Wilbur. *Gullah Culture in America*. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 2008.

Engelhardt, Elizabeth. *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

Glymph, Thavolia. *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Goodwine, Marquetta L. *The Legacy of Ibo Landing: Gullah Roots of African American Culture*. Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 1998.

Green, Rayna. "Mother Corn and the Dixie Pig: Native Food in the Native South." *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 4 (2008): 114-26.

"The Gullah Geechee - Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor." *Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor - Where Gullah Geechee Culture Lives*, August 5, 2019. <https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/the-gullah-geechee/>.

Hamilton, Kendra. "The Taste of the Sun: Okra Soup in the Geechee Tradition." *Callaloo* 30, no. 1 (2007): 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cal.2007.0133>.

Harris, Jessica B. *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*. New York, NY: St Martins Press, 2013.

Historic Sites of James Island. *James Island, SC: The Town of James Island*, 2019.

Hutchinson, Janet. "Better Homes and Gullah." *Agricultural History* 67, no. 2 (1993): 102-18.

Jenkins, Charlotte, William P. Baldwin, Jonathan Green, and Mic Smith. *Gullah Cuisine: By Land and by Sea*. Charleston, SC: Evening Post Books, 2020.

Joseph, J. W. "Meeting at Market: The Intersection of African American Culture, Craft, and Economy and the Landscape of Charleston, South Carolina." *Historical Archaeology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 94-113.

Matory, J. Lorand. "The Illusion of Isolation: The Gullah/Geechees and the Political Economy of African Culture in the Americas." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 4 (2008): 949-80.

Moore, Lisa Lynelle. "Gullah/Geechee Cultural Survival: Negotiating Family, Land, and Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina." Ph.D. diss., California Institute of Integral Studies, 2008.

Nettles-Barcelón, Kimberly D., Gillian Clark, Courtney Thorsson, Jessica Kenyatta Walker, and Psyche Williams-Forsen. "Black Women's Food Work as Critical Space." *Gastronomica* 15, no. 4 (2015): 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2015.15.4.34>.

Pinckney, Rufus, and A W Campbell. "Port Royal Experiment." *Social Welfare History Project*, May 28, 2019. <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/civil-war-reconstruction/port-royal-experiment/>.

Pollitzer, William S. *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005.

Rhyne, Nancy. *Chronicles of the South Carolina Sea Islands*. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1998.

Rowland, Lawrence Sanders, Stephen R. Wise, and Alexander Moore. *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina, Bridging the Sea Islands' Past and Present: 1893-2006*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2015.

"Separating the Wheat from the Chaff: The Whole Grains Council." Separating the Wheat from the Chaff | The Whole Grains Council, September 24, 2014. Carney, Judith. "The African Origins of Carolina Rice Culture." *Ecumene* 7, no. 2 (2000): 125-49.

Sousa, Emily C., and Manish N. Raizada. "Contributions of African Crops to American Culture and beyond: The Slave Trade and Other Journeys of Resilient Peoples and Crops." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 4 (2020).

Strathearn, Judith Lynn. "Ooman's Wuk: Gullah Womanism in the Creative Works of African American Women," 2017.

Twining, Mary Arnold. "An Examination of African Retentions in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands," 1977.

Twitty, Michael. *The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African American Culinary History in the Old South*. New York, NY: Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2018.

White, Deborah G. *Ar'n'T I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1999.

White, Katie M. "Food on the Move: Gendered Representation, Cultural Sustainability, and Culinary Practices of Gullah Women," 2015.

Williams-Forsson, Psyche A. *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Other Women Cooked for My Husband: Negotiating Gender, Food, and Identities in an African American/Ghanaian Household." *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010): 435-61.

Wood, Peter H. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion*. New York, NY: Norton & Company, 1975.

**G. Eifert, Kathryn. "Gender, Grub, And Gullah: The Relationships Between Gender and Foodways Among Gullah Geechee Communities on the South Carolina Sea Islands." *The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture* 01, no. 01 (October 16, 2023): 48-76.**

## Mission

The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture (CMSMC) is dedicated to helping emerging master's scholars, who are at a crucial point in their academic career, by providing a platform to publish their work and contribute to the expanding field of material culture. Drawing from the fields of Art History, Archaeology, History and Museum Studies, CMSMC intends to foster interdisciplinary discussions centered around a diverse pool of topics. Furthermore, the Coalition is dedicated to disseminating information that is publicly accessible while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

## Diversity Statement

The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture recognizes the significant lack of diversity in academia and specifically in the field of Material Culture. As a Coalition that seeks to amplify the voices of emerging scholars, we dedicate our work to doing so in a manner that does not discriminate based on Race, Gender, or Sexual Orientation. We seek to create a space where diversity is welcomed and celebrated as a means of developing new and thought provoking ideas in the field of Material Culture.



The Coalition of Master's Scholars on  
Material Culture

# Material Matters

Submissions for our Fall 2024 issue will begin in late Spring 2024. Feature essays, exhibition reviews, book reviews and research notes are welcome.

## Material Matters

@cmsmc

admin@cmsmc.org

www.cmsmc.org