

WHO WAS TAKING CARE OF WHOM?: A SLAVERY INTERPRETATION PLAN  
FOR THE T.R.R. COBB HOUSE MUSEUM

by

CAROLINE ELIZABETH ALEX

(Under the Direction of Mark Reinberger)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the interpretation of antebellum slavery in the United States of America, and it provides a proposed slavery interpretation plan for the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum, which is located in Athens, Georgia and owned by the Watson-Brown Foundation. The analysis of this paper discusses the establishment of interpretation techniques; history of the Cobb family; evaluation of five antebellum historic site case studies; analysis of primary source material; assessment of various methods of interpretation; and a proposed slavery interpretation plan composed of a framework, strategies, and recommendations for the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

INDEX WORDS: Slavery, Slavery Interpretation, Interpretation, T.R.R. Cobb, Cobb Family, Athens History

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BSED, Clemson University, 2011

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2013

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Debbi and Nick, for their inspirational words, constant support, and unconditional love. They have been a source of encouragement throughout my six years of higher education at Clemson University and the University of Georgia. I would like to thank my mother for exposing me to history, cultural heritage, and historic museums at a very young age. It is because of her that I found my passion in life. I would like to thank my father for being an inspirational role model for me. It is because of him that I decided to pursue my passion through this graduate degree. None of this would have been possible without them.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mark Reinberger for his guidance, help, and humor throughout this writing process. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Dr. James K. Reap for his direction and assistance during this thesis process. Also, I would like to acknowledge Donna Gabriel for all of her help, patience, and support during my graduate academic career and thesis process. I would also like to acknowledge Sam Thomas, Shanon Stroer, and Dr. Christopher Lawton, for their guidance and counsel with this thesis and my graduate academic career. They have provided me with numerous resources and opportunities that have allowed me to grow as a historian, preservationist, and professional. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Randy Reid for providing me with information and access to his manuscript cards and his dissertation on Howell Cobb. His work and help allowed for me to really understand, know, and interpret the Cobb Family slaves. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the following people at their sites for their generous help and time. Fielding Freed at Hampton-Preston Mansion: Historic Columbia Foundation; Matthew Davis at Old Governor's Mansion: Georgia College and State University; Valerie Perry at Aiken-Rhett House: Historic Charleston Foundation; Brenda Dobson at Cannonball House: Friends of Cannonball House; Gwen Koehler at Bulloch Hall: Friends of Bulloch Hall, Inc. and the City of Roswell.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States of America and its people is intricate and perplexing. It is full of celebration, success, and joy, but it also contains failure, shame, and pain. Maya Angelou states, "history, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."<sup>1</sup> Angelou challenges society to openly acknowledge and recognize the painful parts of history while also learning from it to ensure a better future. Preservationists are especially charged with this idea that Angelou presents as they seek to preserve the nation's history.

The institution of slavery was a complex system and strongly impacted the nation. Slavery affected the development of the United States socially, economically, physically, and politically throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries as the institution itself evolved. Throughout its evolution over three centuries, the institution was impacted by varying factors and a variety of manifestations, which were dependent on the state a slave lived in and whether a slave was at a rural plantation or urban site. It was the means and driving force behind the successful economy and various lifestyles of the agrarian antebellum South. It was the source of strong social, religious, and political debates specific to the nineteenth century. Though slavery ended with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, its impact on the United States did not cease in the nineteenth century. It continued to shape the nation and its people in the twentieth and twenty-first

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<sup>1</sup> Celia C. Daniel, "Maya Angelou," *Library System*, Howard University, February 2005, <http://www.howard.edu/library/reference/guides/angelou/MayaSigEvents.htm>. (September 2013).

centuries. Slavery has proven to be one of America's most painful memories and has been a controversial and difficult topic for discussion, education, and interpretation over the last century.

### Thesis Intent

The question posed in this thesis is as follows: how should preservationists and historic museum professionals address, interpret, and present these painful parts of history, specifically antebellum slavery, in the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum based on the goals and standards of the field? The interpretation of slavery is extremely relevant and important today as it helps to explain the evolution of our nation's social dynamics, politics, finances, and religious practices. The stories and lives of the enslaved peoples of -America have been stories less told typically due to the controversy, politics, and emotions they evoke. A goal of historic preservation is to preserve the history, integrity, and significance of a site, cultural resource, or a story so the public may learn from the past and appreciate how society has evolved over time. Based on this goal, slavery interpretation is a necessary part of preservation so a more thorough understanding of the subject of slavery and its effects can exist and be known today.

This thesis will also address the question of how to interpret antebellum slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House, an antebellum house located in an urban area of Athens, Georgia. The T.R.R. Cobb House is a historic house museum providing interpretation and education to visitors about the life of T.R.R. Cobb, his family, and his contributions to the nation during his lifetime. The museum also interprets the nineteenth-century history of the region in addition to regional decorative art pieces from the mid-nineteenth century.

Despite the home's current interpretation of the history of T.R.R. Cobb, the Cobb family, and Athens, slavery is not included in the interpretation.

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum is currently in a transition state as it attempts to be remade with an open agenda and opportunity to address the issue of slavery. This thesis will address the lack of slavery interpretation at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum with a proposed slavery interpretation plan for the museum. The proposed interpretation framework and plan will allow the museum to discuss and interpret slavery in the context of the house, the urban location, T.R.R. Cobb and the Cobb family, and the entire region.

To create an applicable and site specific slavery interpretation plan, a piece by Freeman Tilden was heavily referenced. In his 1957 book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Freeman Tilden sets forth six principles to serve as the guidelines for accomplishing the goals of interpretation. Tilden's six principles of interpretation are the following:

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is to some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.<sup>2</sup>

These principles guided the creation of this thesis to ensure an appropriate interpretation of slavery and meaningful experience at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

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<sup>2</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 4 ed. (Chapel Hill: University of Chapel Hill Press, 2007), 34-35.

Tilden describes interpretation as, "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information."<sup>3</sup> This thesis will attempt to answer the question of how to interpret antebellum slavery with a framework for interpretation based on primary and secondary source research about slavery and Tilden's principles of interpretation.

### Methodology

In conducting research for this thesis, three main methods were used. The first method was literature research/review of historic and modern scholarly works about slavery, interpretation of slavery, and historic museums and sites of the South. The second method was archival research on the following topics: T.R.R. Cobb, Howell Cobb, the Cobb family, slavery in the South, urban slavery, slavery in Athens, and the Cobb family slaves. The third method was a case study of five different antebellum historic sites in Georgia and South Carolina.<sup>4</sup> All of these sites were chosen based on their similarity to T.R.R. Cobb House with regards to the types of people who lived at the sites, the sizes of the families that lived at the sites, and the existence of urban slavery at the site. Additionally, each of the sites address and interpret slavery through various media.

After these three steps were completed, the information and data results were then analyzed, evaluated, and contextualized for their contributions to the general interpretation of slavery. The results were also used and referenced in the construction of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>4</sup> The five selected sites were: The Hampton-Preston Mansion in Columbia, South Carolina; The Old Governor's Mansion in Milledgeville, Georgia; The Aiken-Rhett House in Charleston, South Carolina; The Cannonball House in Macon, Georgia; and Bulloch Hall in Roswell, Georgia.

the slavery interpretation plan for the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum. The focus of this thesis is the interpretation of urban slavery, therefore the experiences highlighted will be those experienced by slaves in an urban setting and not a rural plantation. It is also important to note that slavery was experienced differently from person to person and location to location, and this thesis addresses the urban experiences of those slaves at the T.R.R. Cobb House.



Figure 1.1: 1940 Photograph of T.R.R. Cobb House at 194 Prince Avenue Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, Reproduction number "HABS GA,30-ATH,10-1".

Experiences of slaves were defined by their locations and owners, so to present slavery interpretation for the T.R.R. Cobb House, it is important to understand the story of the house itself. The Plantation Plain or Four-over-Four house was built in 1834 and

was originally located at 194 Prince Avenue.<sup>5</sup> This house was adjacent to the house of Judge Joseph Henry Lumpkin. In 1842, Judge Lumpkin purchased the house, now referred to as the T.R.R. Cobb House.<sup>6</sup> He gave the house to his daughter, Marion McHenry Lumpkin, and his son-in-law, T.R.R. Cobb, in 1844 when they married.<sup>7</sup> A few years after T.R.R. and Marion moved into the house, they began to make changes and additions to the house to suit their needs as their wealth, status, and family grew. The altered guest room and dining room were added to the plantation plain house around 1847.<sup>8</sup> It is also probable when these additions were made the staircase was moved as well. In 1852, the Cobbs had a front porch added, with fluted Doric columns and two octagonal wings, creating a stately Greek Revival house.<sup>9</sup> At an unknown time, the house was painted rose and green on the exterior. These two colors, especially the rose, were some of the most expensive paint colors to be used in the antebellum period.<sup>10</sup>

The T.R.R. Cobb House stayed in the family until 1873 when it was sold to Robert L. Bloomfield.<sup>11</sup> The ownership of the house changed hands a few times after 1873 as it served as a house, fraternity house, boarding house, and auxiliary building for St. Joseph's Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, the T.R.R. Cobb House was altered to fit the needs of the owners. Under the ownership of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, the T.R.R. Cobb House was slated for demolition due to the church's desire for expansion. Fortunately, the T.R.R. Cobb House was saved from demolition

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<sup>5</sup> Watson-Brown Foundation, *T.R.R. Cobb House*, <http://www.trrcobbhouse.org/heritage/the-home.html> (accessed Sep. 2011).

<sup>6</sup> T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Staff, *T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Watson-Brown Foundation, *T.R.R. Cobb House*, <http://www.trrcobbhouse.org/heritage/the-home.html> (accessed Sep. 2011).

<sup>8</sup> T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Staff, *T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.



when the Stone Mountain Memorial Association purchased the home in 1984. The Stone Mountain Memorial Association moved the structure to Stone Mountain, Georgia, a year later with plans to serve as a bed-and-breakfast after being restored.<sup>13</sup> The restoration never took place and the house sat unoccupied and exposed to the elements until the Watson-Brown Foundation bought the house and moved it back to Athens in 2005.<sup>14</sup>

The Watson-Brown Foundation sought to recreate the house's original setting and feeling by placing it roughly 200 yards down and across the street from its original location at the present spot of 175 Hill Street. The Watson-Brown Foundation spent more than \$3 million to restore the structure back to its mid-nineteenth century floor plan and exterior facades.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the Watson-Brown Foundation's goals to purchase the Cobb house, move it back to Athens, and restore it, they also desired to use the structure as a historic house museum that would serve as a memorial to T.R.R. Cobb while also interpreting the other individuals of the house and their belongings.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1.; David Pendered, "Georgia Preservation Budgets Hit \$30 million," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, March 25, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Staff, *T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour*, 1.; Lori Johnston, "Slave House Causes Rift," *Albany Herald*, May 9, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Sam Thomas, e-mail message to author, October 16, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Curator Sam Thomas, June 2012.



Figure 1.2: T.R.R. Cobb House at 175 Hill Street  
Lambert, Kelly. *The T.R.R. Cobb House*. Digital Image. Athens Banner-Herald:  
Online Athens. [http://onlineathens.com/stories/062909/new\\_455840816.shtml](http://onlineathens.com/stories/062909/new_455840816.shtml).  
(January 2013).

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum allows visitors to tour the house and collections on their own if desired. Interpretation in the house focuses primarily on the life and accomplishments of T.R.R. Cobb; other interpretation discusses the Cobb family and the decorative art pieces in the house. Despite the multiple subjects of interpretation, the house lacks any interpretation of slavery. Patrons of the museum experience the different subjects of interpretation either on a guided tour or self-guided tour. If the patron chooses the self-guided tour, there is no visual or informational interpretation about the house, the furniture, the art, or the people who once lived at the house.. The museum does not have a printed pamphlet to assist visitors who choose to experience the house on their own. When the museum staff gives guided tours, they use a tour "script" that is called the

"T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour". The "T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour" was initially written as the content to be used in a self-guided pamphlet, but this plan never came to fruition. The "T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour" exemplifies a typical guided tour of the house, despite being titled as a "self-guided" tour.<sup>17</sup> The content, structure, and components of the "T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour" exemplify the format and content of a typical guided tour which allowed for an easy transition of the tour to be used as the content in guided tours the museum staff provides to patrons. The "T.R.R. General Self-Guided Tour" content is not followed directly or verbatim on each guided tour since the museum staff tailors the tour based on their patrons, but the same stories, facts, and themes are covered and delivered to each guided-tour group. The museum does not have set tour times, so all tours are walk-in tours unless a reservation is made. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff only interprets the first floor of the house. Since the creation of this tour, furnishings in the T.R.R. Cobb House have been altered or changed as furniture and special pieces have been moved around from room to room. As a result, some of the tour's script is no longer applicable to the exact layout of each room.<sup>18</sup>

According to the content stated in the "T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour," the following first floor rooms of the house are interpreted and open: Main Hall, Formal Parlor, Marion Cobb's Private Sitting Room, Library, T.R.R. Cobb's Private Sitting Room, Guest Room, Stairwell, and Dining Room. Currently these spaces are decorated with a number of family pieces, some local Athens period pieces, and a few period pieces from other places in the United States. The family pieces and collection in the house

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<sup>17</sup> T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Staff, *T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour*.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Curator Sam Thomas, June 2012.

come from numerous members that have donated them to the Cobb house or are on loan from other sources. Currently, the tour largely focuses on the decorative arts in museum with a brief commentary on the T.R.R. Cobb family members. The tour follows Tilden's interpretation principles regarding interpretation as an art and presenting interpretation to children through separate special program.

Although the museum is dedicated to T.R.R. Cobb, most of the family pieces in the house once belonged to Howell Cobb with only a small number from T.R.R. Thus, some confusion and difficulty has arisen about how to interpret the house with artifacts from two family members present. This difficulty and confusion also affect the future of the interpretation of slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House. The museum staff has been working to narrow its subjects of interpretation, for example, only interpreting T.R.R. Cobb and his family. The T.R.R. Cobb House should use this transition phase as an opportunity to incorporate slavery interpretation into the museum to tell the story of the urban slaves who once lived and worked at the T.R.R. Cobb House. This thesis resolves the lack of slavery interpretation at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum by serving as a guide to how best interpret T.R.R. Cobb, the structure itself, and the slaves that were a part of this urban system of slavery.

## CHAPTER 2

### COBB FAMILY HISTORY AND SLAVEHOLDING IN THE COBB FAMILY

#### I. Cobb Family History

The Cobb family, a well-known, elite family of the Antebellum Era, included wealthy planters, politicians, military men, and business investors.<sup>19</sup> T.R.R. Cobb, son of Colonel John Addison Cobb and Sarah Robinson Rootes and owner of the Cobb House in Athens, Georgia, came from this elite family and carried on the family tradition of having a high financial and social status quite well. T.R.R. Cobb, named after his maternal grandfather, Thomas Reade Rootes, became a prominent figure in Athens and the state of Georgia.

Despite making a mark on Georgia, the Cobb family and the Rootes family, closely tied together due to marriages and business, were both from Virginia. T.R.R. Cobb's father, Colonel John Addison Cobb, an ambitious man, courted and fell in love with Sarah Robinson Rootes, a pious woman. John A. Cobb and his wife, Sarah, moved to Jefferson County, Georgia, shortly after getting married in 1812 where they established Cherry Hill Plantation.<sup>20</sup> It was at Cherry Hill Plantation where T.R.R. was born along with his three older siblings, Howell, Mildred and Laura.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after T.R.R.'s birth, the Cobb family moved to Athens, Georgia, while still keeping Cherry Hill Plantation under an overseer's care. The move to Athens allowed for

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<sup>19</sup> William B. McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb: The Making of a Southern Nationalist* (Macon: Mercer UP, 2004), 46.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

John A. Cobb to pursue a business opportunity in land speculation and development and also to provide his family the benefits and enjoyments of the urban life in the town of Athens.<sup>22</sup> While in Athens, T.R.R.'s three younger siblings, John Boswell, Sarah Martha (Matty), and Mary Willis, were born.<sup>23</sup>

The move suited the family well as both John A. and Sarah R. Cobb became heavily involved in the social, political, and religious realms of the town. They enjoyed the pleasures, activities, and culture of urban life of Athens while sometimes escaping to Cherry Hill. Despite John A.'s serious investment in land speculation and development, he preferred being in the country managing his plantation.<sup>24</sup> John A. was also very involved in the complex politics and commerce of northeastern Georgia, specifically the Athens area. Many of the Cobb family letters indicate the Cobb family's belief in the importance of education and community involvement.<sup>25</sup>

John A. Cobb's spouse, Sarah Rootes, devoted her life to her family and her children, writing to them, spending time with them, and praying for them. Sarah Rootes preferred a pious life focused on the blessings and trials God had given her. Fond of the large church community in Athens, Sarah was suspicious of all the culture and entertainment found in the urban lifestyle. Sarah Rootes spent a great deal of time encouraging her children and other family members to commit themselves to God's will and lead their lives in service to Him, these beliefs apparent in her numerous letters.<sup>26</sup> Despite Sarah's pious life and her plea for her children to lead a pious life like hers, not

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 8

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 5

<sup>25</sup> Howell Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>26</sup> Sarah R. Cobb to Howell Cobb, February 8, 1847, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

all of her children followed her example. Howell Cobb, T.R.R.'s brother, and his mother did not agree on leading a life in service to God. Howell enjoyed everything his mother disliked: alcohol, the theater, and social gatherings.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, T.R.R. and his mother very much agreed on living a pious life.<sup>28</sup>

Even though Howell and T.R.R. Cobb lived different social lives, they agreed on following their entrepreneurial father's example and both became prominent attorneys, community leaders, government officials, military leaders, and real estate owners in the state of Georgia. The Cobb brothers relied on each other as they made their way through post-secondary education at Franklin College and through the politics of the town, state, and nation, yet they lived separate lives with many different experiences.

### Biography of Howell Cobb

Howell struggled through college and his law education due to his rowdy behavior and wild personality; letters written by Howell's parents and relatives demonstrate Howell's struggle.<sup>29</sup> With perseverance and determination, Howell endured the struggles and overcame those obstacles when he became an attorney in 1836 after graduating from law school and being admitted to the Georgia Bar.<sup>30</sup> After passing the Georgia Bar, Howell Cobb ambitiously started his life's work as an attorney while he and his family also owned and managed multiple plantations throughout Georgia. He also

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<sup>27</sup> Sarah R. Cobb to Howell Cobb, September 18, 1847, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb to Sarah R. Cobb, January 25, 1858, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>29</sup> E. B. Cobb to Howell Cobb, September 18, 1831, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; John C. Cobb to Howell Cobb, February 1, 1833, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, October 1836, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>30</sup> Randy L. Reid, "History and Archaeology: Howell Cobb," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, August 28, 2002, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-615>. (accessed August 2012).; Reid, Randy. "Howell Cobb of Georgia A Biography Volume I." Diss. Louisiana State University, 1995. Print.

embarked on a political career of distinction at this same time. Howell enjoyed being busy and needed by people, which meant he was either traveling or partaking in projects around town. He and his wife, Mary Ann Lamar Cobb, led a busy life together as they fought financial disaster, owned multiple plantations and properties, raised their children, owned hundreds of slaves, ensured the good health of their slaves, and attended all the prime social and political events in Athens.

Howell Cobb held many political offices while also being a fairly successful attorney in addition to serving as the solicitor general of Georgia's Western Judicial Circuit.<sup>31</sup> Though Howell would never admit to being an enthusiast of politics, his actions showed otherwise. He served as a Congressman for the state of Georgia from 1843 to 1851 and again from 1855 to 1857.<sup>32</sup> As a result of a successful legal career and being well received by fellow Congressmen, Howell ascended the political ranks quickly. Howell next served as the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives from 1849 until 1851, during which time he dealt with a tremendous political pressure from the great issues that arose during that period.<sup>33</sup> He was then elected as the Governor of Georgia and served from 1851-1853.<sup>34</sup> While Howell served as Governor in Milledgeville, his family and selected slaves moved to the Governor's Mansion to reside with Howell.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Frances Taliaferro Thomas, *A Portrait of Historic Athens & Clarke County* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 50.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 50.; Reid, Randy. "Howell Cobb of Georgia A Biography Volume I." Diss. Louisiana State University, 1995. Print.; The tremendous political pressure Howell dealt during the period from 1849 to 1850 regarded the country's attempt to resolve the issue of slavery in the newly gained western territories from the Mexican War with the Compromise of 1850. His political actions to push through the Compromise of 1850 caused issue with his political party ties.

<sup>34</sup> Randy L. Reid, "History and Archaeology: Howell Cobb," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, August 28, 2002, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-615>. (accessed August 2012).



After serving as Governor, he chose to take a break from political life to spend more time with his wife and family.<sup>35</sup> After a short hiatus, Howell then returned to the political scene by returning to congress in 1855 and then serving as the Secretary of the Treasury from 1857 to 1860.<sup>36</sup> Howell served as the President of the Provisional Confederate Congress and then went onto to serve as a Major General for the Confederate States of America Army.<sup>37</sup> Howell was well known throughout the state of Georgia and the nation due to his successful work and civil service.

#### Biography of T.R.R. Cobb

T.R.R. Cobb entered Franklin College at age 14, following in the footsteps of his older brother, Howell.<sup>38</sup> After his time at college, T.R.R. furthered his education by reading law under the supervision of William L. Mitchell.<sup>39</sup> He was admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1842 at the very young age of 18 and practiced law in the Western Circuit of Georgia.<sup>40</sup> T.R.R. Cobb found great success in his work as an attorney in the Athens region and was well received by the local community for his work. T.R.R.'s father-in-law, Judge Joseph Henry Lumpkin, was very involved in his career and success. Lumpkin served as a mentor to T.R.R. in matters concerning his legal career and other aspects of his life.

Although an attorney by profession, T.R.R. extended himself socially and financially as he entered into the realms of government, religion, and real estate. He took

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<sup>35</sup> Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, September 16, 1851, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>36</sup> Reid, Randy L. "History and Archaeology: Howell Cobb." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. Georgia Humanities Council and The University of Georgia Press, 28 Aug. 2002. Web. Aug. 2012. <<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-615>>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb*, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 11.

on many ventures in these realms throughout the 1840s and 1850s. T.R.R. Cobb accomplished much in his relatively short life. He served as a reporter for the state supreme court in 1849 and became a legal scholar after publishing notable pieces furthering the legislation and code of Georgia in the mid-nineteenth century. He wrote *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* in 1858.<sup>41</sup> T.R.R.'s strong value and support of education led him to participate in various educational undertakings and projects. He cofounded the Lumpkin Law School (today's University of Georgia Law School) in partnership with his father-in-law in 1859 and taught law classes for the school in his own home. He also founded the Lucy Cobb Institute in 1859. Finally, he fought for the Confederate States of America with his own Cobb's Legion while serving as a Brigadier General from August 1861 until his death in December 1862 during the Battle of Fredericksburg.<sup>42</sup>

Most likely influenced by his pious mother, T.R.R. lead a religious life and served diligently in the First Presbyterian Church of Athens.<sup>43</sup> T.R.R. enjoyed practicing religion and the deep sense of meaning it provided.<sup>44</sup> He participated in the governing structure of the church by holding leadership positions numerous times and representing the church at conferences. T.R.R. dedicated himself to the improvement of the church by revitalizing the Sunday school program with intentions to further faith in the community.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, vol. 1, (Philadelphia: C. Sherman & Sons, Printers, 1858). 51,53-64.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Bailey and Steven Nash, "History and Archaeology: Thomas R.R. Cobb," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, August 27, 2007, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2487>>. (accessed May 2012).

<sup>43</sup> McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb*, 72.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb to Mr. Mitchell, May 9, 1858, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; Thomas R.R. Cobb to Mr. Mitchell, May 20, 1858, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>45</sup> McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb*, 78.

T.R.R. married Marion McHenry Lumpkin in 1844, providing him with a powerful familial tie.<sup>46</sup> Marion was the daughter of Joseph Henry Lumpkin, who served as the first chief justice of the Georgia Supreme Court.<sup>47</sup> T.R.R.'s relationship with Lumpkin played a vital role in T.R.R.'s social, political and financial career.<sup>48</sup> Marion and T.R.R. had six children, two boys and four girls; both of the boys died as infants. The four daughters, Lucy, Callie, Sallie, and Birdie were all cherished and loved by T.R.R., but he especially loved his daughter, Lucy, who died of scarlet fever at age 13.<sup>49</sup>

The T.R.R. Cobb Family lived at 194 Prince Avenue in the Cobbham neighborhood, which was established in 1834 as Athens' first suburb by John Addison Cobb.<sup>50</sup> The neighborhood was located just west of downtown and allowed for its residents to enjoy close proximity to the urban elements of Athens. The Cobbham neighborhood had grown into a large and thriving neighborhood by the mid-nineteenth century and was home to some of Athens' most prominent individuals. T.R.R. Cobb's brother Howell and his father-in-law Judge Lumpkin lived close to T.R.R. in the Cobbham neighborhood. T.R.R. Cobb's home was the first house located along Prince Avenue. The house's Greek Revival design, large footprint, and aesthetic detail all served as a symbolic representation of the amount of wealth and property that T.R.R. Cobb owned and possessed, including the two dozen slaves who lived behind T.R.R.'s house.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Matthew Bailey and Steven Nash, "History and Archaeology: Thomas R.R. Cobb," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, August 27, 2007, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2487>>. (accessed May 2012).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb*, 16-17.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb, Tribute to Lucy Cobb, February 27, 1858. Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Staff, *T.R.R. Cobb General Self-Guided Tour*, 1.

<sup>50</sup> James K. Reap, *Athens: A Pictorial History*, 3 ed. (Virginia Beach: Donning, 2001), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Henry R.I. Long et al, Inventory & Appraisement of the Estate of General T.R.R. Cobb, Late of Clarke County Georgia (Athens: May 26, 1863), 3-4.

## II. Slaveholding in the Cobb Family

The Cobb families contributed substantially to the slave population in Athens and Georgia during the decades prior to the Civil War.<sup>52</sup> T.R.R. and Howell felt slavery was a necessary (evil) institution to assist these slaves in helping themselves while also allowing whites to prosper as a means of reward.<sup>53</sup> T.R.R. Cobb gave a brief description for the justification of slavery in the South in his book, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* (1858):

We learn that the mere physical development of the negro is improved by his transport and enslavement. As an animal, in stature, in muscular energy, in activity, and strength, the negro has arrived at his greatest development while in slavery...in mental and moral development, slavery, so far from retarding, has advanced the negro race. The intelligence of slaves in the South compares favorably...<sup>54</sup>

T.R.R. justified his support of the institution of slavery in the South based on these reasons in addition to the numerous others written in his book. T.R.R. and his brother truly viewed a slave as a piece of property and nothing more.

In addition to being robust pro-slavery advocates, both Howell and T.R.R. Cobb owned a large number of slaves to care for the extensive amount of land and structures they owned separately in Athens's Cobbham neighborhood along Prince Avenue. The brothers owned a combined total 26 slaves in Clarke County in 1850 and 32 slaves in

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<sup>52</sup> T.R.R Cobb was recorded owning 15 slaves in 1850 and 23 slaves in 1860 in Clarke County according to the U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules. Howell Cobb was recorded owning 11 slaves in 1850 and 9 slaves in 1860 in Clark County according to the U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules. Sarah R. Cobb was recorded owning 12 slaves in 1860 in Clarke County according to the 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule.

<sup>53</sup> Matthew Bailey and Steven Nash, "History and Archaeology: Thomas R.R. Cobb," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, August 27, 2007, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2487>>. (accessed May 2012).

<sup>54</sup> Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 49.

Clarke County in 1860.<sup>55</sup> While it is undetermined if T.R.R. Cobb owned slaves at his other properties along the Middle River and in Atlanta, it is known he kept a large force of slaves at his twenty-five acre home at 194 Prince Avenue, which can be seen in Table 2.1.<sup>56</sup> Based on research completed by the Georgia Virtual History Project, Inc., it has been concluded that T.R.R. kept this large number of slaves at his urban home to ensure he and his family lived comfortably and luxuriously.<sup>57</sup> Howell Cobb did not own as many slaves in Athens as his brother did, which can be seen in Table 2.2, but rather, he owned a large force of slaves at his other properties outside of Athens. Throughout his lifetime, Howell owned and managed numerous plantations in Georgia, like Hurricane Plantation in Baldwin County, Georgia.<sup>58</sup> At his plantation in Baldwin County, Howell recorded owning 130 slaves in 1860.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule.; 1860 U.S. Federal Slave Schedule.

<sup>56</sup>Henry R.I. Long et al, *Inventory & Appraisalment of the Estate of General T.R.R. Cobb, Late of Clarke County Georgia* (Athens: May 26, 1863), 3.; Detailed information regarding T.R.R. Cobb's property along the Middle River and in Atlanta is currently unknown and all that is known about those properties is what is listed in the Estate Inventory.

<sup>57</sup> The Georgia Virtual History Project, Inc. is a non-profit organization and was founded in 2012 by Christopher Lawton and Mark Evans in Athens, Georgia. Dr. Randy Reid is a board member. The research of the slavery letters of the Howell Cobb Family Papers Collection began at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum in May 2012 and ended in September 2012.; A total of 391 letters research, documented, and analyzed. This research, documentation, and analysis the papers is an on-going project.

<sup>58</sup>Marion R. Hemperly and Francis Lee Utley, ed., *Placenames of Georgia: Essays of John Hoff* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 464.

<sup>59</sup> 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule of Baldwin County, Georgia.

Table 2.1: T.R.R. Cobb Slave Schedule of Clarke County in 1860  
 From "1860 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules." <sup>60</sup>

| T.R.R. Cobb | 1860 |      |
|-------------|------|------|
| AGE         | SEX  | RACE |
| 85          | M    | B    |
| 83          | F    | B    |
| 45          | M    | B    |
| 39          | F    | B    |
| 30          | M    | B    |
| 28          | F    | B    |
| 27          | M    | B    |
| 26          | F    | B    |
| 26          | F    | B    |
| 20          | F    | B    |
| 18          | M    | B    |
| 17          | F    | B    |
| 16          | F    | B    |
| 14          | M    | B    |
| 8           | F    | B    |
| 6           | F    | B    |
| 4           | F    | B    |
| 5           | F    | M    |
| 3           | F    | M    |
| 3           | M    | B    |

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<sup>60</sup> According to the U.S. Federal Census, the use of the letter "B" meant Black and the use of the letter "M" meant Mulatto.

|                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| 1              | F | M |
| 1              | F | B |
| 35             | M | M |
| 8 Slave Cabins |   |   |

Table 2.2: Howell Cobb Slave Schedule of Clarke County in 1860  
 From "1860 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules." This is for the citation of Howell Cobb's Slave Schedule of 1860 in Clarke County. Howell Cobb is listed on this same page but after Lumpkin.

| <b>Howell Cobb</b> | <b>1860</b> |      |
|--------------------|-------------|------|
| AGE                | SEX         | RACE |
| 65                 | F           | B    |
| 37                 | M           | B    |
| 35                 | F           | M    |
| 25                 | F           | B    |
| 23                 | F           | B    |
| 18                 | M           | B    |
| 16                 | M           | B    |
| 9                  | F           | M    |
| 3                  | F           | M    |
| 3 Slave Cabins     |             |      |

The Georgia Virtual History Project, Inc. researched, documented, and analyzed roughly four hundred letters, of the near ninety thousand letters of the Howell Cobb Family Papers Collection. Only making up .44% of the entire collection, these four

hundred letters all dealt with the institution of slavery and the slaves of Howell Cobb. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff has analyzed roughly forty-five letters written by T.R.R. Cobb and his wife Marion regarding slavery. These letters were written from 1852 to 1862 and were found in the Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb family papers and the Joseph Henry Lumpkin family papers. The Cobb families' letters discuss numerous topics concerning their slaves and the institution of slavery with subjects including: slave labor, slave life, the physical environment of slavery, slave names, acquiring/selling slaves, relations with slaves, slave written letters, and the political and social defense of the institution of slavery.

In addition to analyzing the preserved letters of Howell Cobb and T.R.R. Cobb, the Georgia Virtual History Project, Inc. and the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff have researched, documented, and analyzed the various government documents and records, like U.S. Census Records, pertaining to Cobb family slavery.<sup>61</sup> After T.R.R. Cobb died at the Battle of Fredericksburg, an inventory and appraisal was done in Clarke County of his estate on May 26th, 1863. This inventory listed a total of twenty-five slaves, each enumerated by name and value.<sup>62</sup> The highest valued slave on this list was Joe, worth \$2,000, and the lowest valued slaves on the list were Phillis and Susan, who were both worth \$200.<sup>63</sup> This information can be seen in Table 2.3. It can be assumed a slave's job, skills, age, gender, and health significantly affected the value of a slave.

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<sup>61</sup>Howell Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.; Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>62</sup> Henry R.I. Long et al, Inventory & Appraisalment of the Estate of General T.R.R. Cobb, Late of Clarke County Georgia (Athens: May 26, 1863), 3-4.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



Table 2.3: List of T.R.R. Cobb's Slaves in 1863  
 From Mitchell, William L., Williams Rutherford, Henry R.I. Long, and Joseph L. Lumpkin. *Inventory & Appraisement of the Estate of General T.R.R. Cobb, Late of Clarke County, Georgia*. 26 May 1863. Inventory and Appraisal of all components of T.R.R. Cobb's Estate done following his death. Clarke County, Georgia, Athens.

| <b>Inventory &amp; Appraisement of<br/>the Estate of T.R.R. Cobb<br/>1863: Slaves</b> | <b>Worth</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Americus & Phebe his wife   | 2,000.00     |
| Zack  | 1,800.00     |
| Lucy  | 1,200.00     |
| Susan   | 200.00       |
| Vic   | 1,500.00     |
| Fanny and infant Rosa   | 800.00       |
| Marion & Lavinia  | 800.00       |
| Caroline and two children<br>Lizzie & Biny  | 2,200.00     |
| Tom & Callie  | 1,000.00     |
| Sal and Dora  | 1,800.00     |
| Phillis   | 200.00       |
| Robbin  | 800.00       |
| Howard  | 800.00       |
| Americus, Jr.   | 1,600.00     |
| Joe   | 2,000.00     |
| Jesse   | 1,800.00     |
| Sarah   | 1,200.00     |
| Katie   | 1,200.00     |

By placing a monetary value on a slave's life and legally recording them as a allowed for the perpetuation of viewing slaves as mere property in a person's estate. T.R.R. strongly supported and practiced this view, which is evident not only in his scholarly work, but also in letters which capture his unwavering intolerance of any protest or trouble from his slaves. An example of T.R.R Cobb's intolerance occurred when he wrote his wife telling her to feel free to sell any slaves who gave her trouble while he was away at war because she did not need to be stressed with them.<sup>64</sup> It can be understood through this letter T.R.R. Cobb's attitude towards slavery.

#### Slaveholding in the Cobb Family

Even though Howell and T.R.R. viewed slaves as property and a disposable commodity, they knew possessing slaves was a financial investment requiring continuous care and attention over time to fully reap the benefits of owning slaves.<sup>65</sup> Howell and T.R.R. Cobb, along with their wives, strongly believed they treated their slaves very well, especially compared to many other slave owners in the state. They allowed their slaves to have freedoms and flexibilities. According to letters and interviews, both Cobb brothers allowed their slaves designated time off and opportunities to participate in the Athens community.<sup>66</sup>

Howell and T.R.R. Cobb made specific efforts to ensure their slaves' health was in stable condition so the slaves could work at all times. Numerous letters in the Howell

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<sup>64</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb to Marion Cobb, September 28, 1861, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb: The Making of a Southern Nationalist*, 95.

<sup>65</sup> The Cobbs "cared" for their slaves by providing quality medical treatment, opportunities to sustain good emotional health, opportunities to socialize, quality clothing and shoes, and sufficient food.

<sup>66</sup>Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves*; Volume: *IV*; State: *Georgia*; Part: *I*; Page Number: 177. As found on ancestry.com.; Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, March 22, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

Cobb Family Papers Collection show Howell receiving a receipt for a doctor's medical treatment for a slave who was ill.<sup>67</sup> Personal memoirs of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves describe of a similar practice implemented at the T.R.R. Cobb House.<sup>68</sup> The receipts, bills, and personal anecdotes demonstrate the Cobbs's investment in the well-being of their slaves.<sup>69</sup> Quality clothing and shoes were given to T.R.R. Cobb's slaves.<sup>70</sup> Antebellum slave owners felt it was important to outfit their slaves with quality clothing and shoes since some of the slaves were seen around town doing "hired out" work or errands. Slaves' appearances reflected largely on their master's wealth and reputation.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to the slaves' physical needs, the Cobbs were also aware of their slaves' social and emotional needs. Most of T.R.R.'s and Howell's slaves were allowed to mingle and socialize during designated times and locations.<sup>72</sup> Susan Castle, a former slave of T.R.R. Cobb, mentioned in her Works Progress Administration (WPA) Slave Interview that T.R.R.'s house servant slaves were allowed Sunday afternoons off.<sup>73</sup> She also mentions that T.R.R. Cobb allowed his slaves to attend church and participate in Sunday school. Susan comments that some of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves took advantage of this approved social time and participated in the church community.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Dr. Lamar to Cobbs, May 1865, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>68</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>69</sup> McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb*, 93.

<sup>70</sup> John A. to Howell Cobb, October 6, 1862, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; Mary Ann Cobb to Dr. Linton, November 6, 1862, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>71</sup> Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (New York: Oxford UP, 1964), 127.

<sup>72</sup> Howell Cobb to Mary Ann Cobb, February 24, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; Mary Ann Cobb to Lamar C., March 17, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>73</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Through their involvement in the church, some of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves became literate by reading the Bible as a result of the church's mission. Castle states T.R.R. Cobb's slave, Aunt Vic, was literate and read the Bible at church.<sup>75</sup> While T.R.R. Cobb recognized the so-called risk of having literate slaves, he understood the practicality and convenience of having literate slaves. Howell Cobb also understood the practicality of literate slaves. Howell Cobb experienced the advantages of having literate slaves, the when he left their home and wrote to their slaves with instructions and updates and then received written updates in return.<sup>76</sup>

#### The Experiences of a T.R.R. Cobb Family Slave

Fanny Castle, who was owned by T.R.R. Cobb, spent the majority of her enslaved and freed life with the T.R.R. Cobb family. It is unknown how exactly Fanny came to be owned by T.R.R. Cobb, but it is known she began serving T.R.R. Cobb and Marion at the start of their marriage and stayed with the T.R.R. Cobb family even after being emancipated. Letters and a Works Progress Administration slave interview indicate Fanny possessed numerous skills.<sup>77</sup> Based on the information found in the primary source documentation like a census record and letters, Fanny was either a body servant to Marion or a nursemaid.

Fanny married in the mid-nineteenth century and had multiple children, one of them being Susan Castle.<sup>78</sup> Fanny and Susan both worked in the house and frequently interacted with T.R.R. and Marion per their assignments, according to Susan Castle's

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Ann Cobb to Lamar C., March 17, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>77</sup> 1870 U.S. Federal Census. Thomas Reade Rootes Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Works Progress Administration slave interview.<sup>79</sup> Fanny's daughter Susan described antebellum slavery from her perspective in a WPA slave interview. By the time of her interview, Susan Castle was free and conducted the interview in the comfort of her own home in Athens.

Through her interview, Susan Castle shed light on the experience of being owned by the T.R.R. Cobb family. It is important to note Susan Castle was only enslaved during her childhood and lived the majority of her life in freedom since she was born in March 1860.<sup>80</sup> Since Castle only experienced the institution of slavery as a child, her experiences were limited and recollection impacted to a degree as she did not have the perspective of living her entire life in bondage as many slaves were forced to do. It is important to consider the unique circumstances of Susan Castle's interview. Castle was interviewed in the early-twentieth century by a government employee who asked Susan to describe her life in bondage, who her masters were, and how her masters treated her. At the time of her interview, Susan Castle still lived in proximity of Cobb family. Her relations and rapport with the family were most likely at stake if she reflected too negatively on the Cobb family. Despite the circumstances of the interview, Susan Castle shared a wealth of information with the interviewer, providing a better understanding of slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House.

In the interview, Susan Castle described how her mother Fanny was close to Marion Cobb, which benefited the Castle family in various ways. Due to her mother's relationship with Marion, Susan slept at the foot of Marion's bed to serve her in the night

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<sup>79</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>80</sup> It is important to note that Susan Castle's interview was done in her eighties, thus her memories of her childhood experience of being a slave are somewhat distorted. It is also important to note the circumstances of the interview and the social pressures of how to answer and reaction to the interviewer and her questions.

while the majority of the other slaves slept in small, crowded, minimalistic cabins.<sup>81</sup>

Fanny continued to serve the family and stay with Marion even after the Civil War ended.

By way of gratitude, Marion gave Fanny a house located a few blocks from the Cobb House, according to Castle. After Marion's death, Fanny served T.R.R. and Marion's daughter, Callie, in Atlanta.<sup>82</sup>

Susan Castle expressed her own experiences of slavery with her master, whom she called "Marse Thomas". She described the slave community at the T.R.R. Cobb House as being a large community composed of house servant slaves and other slaves, all living on T.R.R.'s "10-acre lot."<sup>83</sup> She described the good food they received and states "Marse Thomas was a rich man and fed 'is Niggers well."<sup>84</sup> Susan provided a detailed description of the kitchen and kitchen utilities during her interview.<sup>85</sup> She also mentioned that T.R.R. Cobb allowed his slaves to fetch and retrieve it extra food on their own. For example, the possums and fish were caught locally, and the produce was planted and harvested in the shared garden.<sup>86</sup>

Susan Castle shared how relationships formed between certain slaves and T.R.R. Cobb family members as a result of their labor and assignments. She told how the former slave Jesse had a close relationship. Jesse was the carriage driver and had a close working relationship to T.R.R. According to letters, Jesse accompanied T.R.R. Cobb to war and

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<sup>81</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Some of the good food the slaves ate were possums, rabbits, cakes, breads, biscuits, vegetables, meat, and fish.

<sup>85</sup> Susan Castle stated the kitchen was equipped with big pots, griddle iron, a trivet, and oven(s).

<sup>86</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

also served as his cook, horse attendant, and servant while at camp.<sup>87</sup> Susan Castle said T.R.R. Cobb was good to his slaves because of the following things: allowing them to attend church, allowing them to become literate, calling for a doctor, giving them time off during the week and for holidays, allowing them to participate in corn-shuckings, providing them with plenty of good food, giving them holiday celebration events, and providing them with good clothes. She made a point to describe the good summer and winter clothing and shoes the slaves received indicating the possibility of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves receiving new sets twice a year.<sup>88</sup> Susan also told of how whenever any slave was ill, T.R.R. always called for his own family doctor, Dr. Crawford Long.<sup>89</sup> She also mentioned that Marion was not as good to the slaves as T.R.R. and was "allus findin' fault wid some of us."<sup>90</sup> Susan makes a point that T.R.R. and Marion did not tolerate any problems caused by slaves and would either whip them or eventually sell them. Susan's interview provides a great deal of information and perspective regarding the experiences of living a life in bondage in antebellum Athens under T.R.R. Cobb. Additionally, the interview shows how T.R.R. Cobb understood the undertakings of owning slaves as he viewed and used his slaves as an economic tool that produced goods, profit, and estate value.

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<sup>87</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb to Marion Cobb, September 11, 1861, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>88</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

### CASE STUDIES

Visiting and researching sites similar to the T.R.R. Cobb House in Athens, Georgia, made a functional slavery interpretation plan for this property possible. The five following sites were selected for research due to a history of slavery, their location in an urban area, and their location in the South. The sites include the Hampton-Preston Mansion, the Aiken-Rhett House, the Old Governor's Mansion of Georgia, the Cannonball House, and the Bulloch Hall. Researching and visiting these southern urban sites provided the background needed for a functional slavery interpretation plan for the T.R.R. Cobb House itself.

T.R.R. Cobb and his extended family owned a variety of properties throughout Georgia, including urban properties in the Athens, Georgia, area. The T.R.R. Cobb House and the urban properties selected for study, all demonstrate clearly the crucial role urban slavery played in the success of the South and the wealthy elites in the antebellum Period. When visited, each site was evaluated on its history of slavery, the physical environment of the slaves, and the lifestyles of the slaves.

All being in the Deep South, sites in Georgia and South Carolina were similar to the Cobbs's properties in Athens, Georgia. Like T.R.R. Cobb and Howell Cobb, who were elites in the antebellum South, owners of the chosen properties lived lives of financial prosperity and each held high social status. Each of the property owners owned slaves, lived in urban areas, and used slaves for types of labor seen in many urban homes



during this time. Also, like T.R.R. Cobb and his brother Howell Cobb, all owners of the properties held public office or military rank which added to the status of each owner.

Hampton-Preston Mansion- Columbia, South Carolina



Figure 3.1: Hampton-Preston Mansion  
Alex, Caroline. Hampton-Preston Mansion. 2012.

The first site visited, Hampton-Preston Mansion, located in the urban area of downtown Columbia, South Carolina, originally served as home for Ainsley Hall, a local merchant. The home, built in 1818, was then sold to General Wade Hampton, I. After the death of General Hampton, the mansion was passed down to his daughter, Caroline Hampton Preston and her husband, John Smith Preston and then continued to be passed down in the Hampton and Preston families. Originally sitting on multiple acres in the capital city of South Carolina, this mansion later served as the headquarters for a number of higher education institutions. In 1972, the Historic Columbia Foundation took control

of the Greek Revival Mansion with its “Old English Gardens,” restored the property, and opened it as a museum which has served the public for the last 41 years.<sup>91</sup>

The interpretation of the house and gardens occurs with a tour-guide, while the interpretation of the institution of slavery and enslaved African-Americans at the site occurs as a self-guided tour in one room of the basement. The interpretation of slavery at the mansion is limited and generally not site-specific. Since the Hampton-Preston Mansion was an urban site, slavery at the mansion operated on a smaller and more specialized scale. In the house today, two display panels show historic documents from the antebellum period including the number, names, and ages of slaves at Hampton-Preston Mansion. A copy of the 1860 Slave Schedule shows there were seventy-four enslaved people—thirty-two of them under the age of 10—with six slave cabins on a total of eight acres.<sup>92</sup> Another display panel features an individual slave and his job description and a few other short statements about individual slaves from the family and site.<sup>93</sup> No other information relating to the Hampton-Preston Mansion slaves exists today, other than the two panels, since historic information about them is sparse. Despite the lack of specific information on slavery pertaining to the mansion itself, interpretation about urban slavery, particularly in Columbia, is present. Display panels describe what life was like and common experiences most urban slaves would have gone through during the antebellum period, specifically in Columbia, South Carolina.

Since the interpretation at the Hampton-Preston Mansion occurs with a self-guided tour in the basement of the home, a patron’s experience is what he or she makes

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Curator Fielding Freed, September 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Historic Columbia Foundation, “*Home to Many People: The Hampton-Preston Mansion*,” Hampton-Preston Mansion, Columbia.

<sup>93</sup> Historic Columbia Foundation, “*Home to Many People: Life and Labor at the Estate*,” Hampton-Preston Mansion, Columbia.

of it. This type of approach and technique does not fully capitalize on the opportunity to educate and engage the patron, but it does allow the patron to explore at their own leisure and interest, making it personal to them. While the Hampton-Preston Mansion slavery interpretation is rather limited, small, and non-site specific, it addresses the major key components and issues of antebellum slavery in the South like urban versus rural slavery, and urban slavery in Columbia, and a specific focus on the mansion's urban slavery. The accuracy of the material addressed and discussed is good and comes across strong to patrons. Even though the Historic Columbia Foundation staff chose to use display and text panels to interpret slavery at the house, it is effective due to the content, wording, and pictures selected for the panels. By having robust language, area-specific stories and information, and primary source documents all featured on the panels, patrons are intrigued to read and become engaged with the material.<sup>94</sup>

The exhibit does a good job at spelling out the differences between urban and rural slavery and describing in detail what urban slavery was and some of the experiences of slavery. It captures the overall picture of urban slavery well with charts, primary sources, anecdotes, and pictures as it describes key points of urban slavery at the mansion, like the job duties urban slaves had compared to their rural counterparts. The interpretation does not capitalize on the information available about slavery at the Hampton-Preston Mansion. Also, by having the exhibit in the basement of the house, patrons do not automatically go through the exhibit and learn about slavery; they only visit the exhibit if their tour guide specifically encourages them.

The Hampton-Preston Mansion relates to the T.R.R. Cobb House in many ways. The owners of both homes were heavily involved in the politics and military of their state

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

and received recognition for their involvement. Also, both men were financially stable and well-to-do, giving them the opportunity to possess a sizable amount property in the state and a large number of slaves to care for their estates and family. The Hampton-Preston Mansion's geographic location, lot size, and activities that occurred on the property were similar to the T.R.R. Cobb House. Both homes were located close to the heart of the downtowns and sat on multiple acres used in ways to serve the needs of the owners. The urban slaves that lived and worked at the Hampton-Preston Mansion most likely had similar experiences to the urban slaves of the T.R.R. Cobb House regarding their assigned duties and living conditions. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should reference the Hampton-Preston Mansions' interpretation techniques and panels regarding urban versus rural slavery, urban slavery, and the experiences of urban slavery when creating their own urban slavery interpretation for the museum.

Old Governor's Mansion- Milledgeville, Georgia



Figure 3.2: Old Governor's Mansion

*Old Governor's Mansion Picture Book*. Digital Image.

[http://gallery.gcsu.edu/gallery/main.php/v/contEd/OGMansion/091118/\\_DSC0065.jpg.html](http://gallery.gcsu.edu/gallery/main.php/v/contEd/OGMansion/091118/_DSC0065.jpg.html). (January 2013).

Home to some of Georgia's most influential politicians, the Old Governor's Mansion is located in Milledgeville, Georgia. The high style Greek Revival mansion was finished in 1838, and it sat in the heart of the capitol of Georgia on South Clark Street.<sup>95</sup> The stately mansion was the main residence for the governors of Georgia from 1839 until 1868 when the capital of Georgia was moved to Atlanta.<sup>96</sup> The mansion, with over 20,000 square feet of living space, was also accompanied by an outdoor kitchen, slave quarters, and a carriage house according to the Curator. The only original extant building

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<sup>95</sup> Mary Jo Thompson, "Old Governor's Mansion: National Historic Landmark Nomination Form," National Park Service (May 7, 1971), 2.

<sup>96</sup> The Associated Press, "Restored Governor's Mansion Reopens After Three Years' Work," *Albany Herald*, February 27, 2005, Local & State Section.

is the main house.<sup>97</sup> The carriage house has been reconstructed and the slave quarters have been lost to history. After the capital was moved to Atlanta, the mansion was no longer needed to house the governors, and it sat empty until 1890 when Georgia College, then known as Georgia Normal and Industrial College, was given the mansion for its institutional headquarters.<sup>98</sup> The mansion is currently owned and operated by Georgia College and State University.

Though several governors resided in this mansion throughout history, its interpretation focuses on a certain few, one being Howell Cobb. Howell Cobb, brother to T.R.R. Cobb, lived at the mansion with his family and selected slaves from 1851-1853. Slavery is addressed throughout the rooms of the mansion as specific anecdotes and detailed job descriptions are given about individual enslaved African-Americans that worked at the mansion. Not only is slavery a part of the regular guided tours of the mansion, but the staff at the mansion goes a step further by having an appointment-only guided Slave Tour of the mansion.<sup>99</sup>

The Old Governor's Mansion was set in a prime location for its occupants while Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia during the antebellum years. The mansion sits in an urban setting with a small lot. The mansion functioned as an urban slavery site, in the sense that a smaller number of slaves on site had specialized skills and more detailed jobs. According to the Curator, Matthew Davis, the number of slaves fluctuated from seventeen slaves at the Old Governor's Mansion at one point to a minimum of four slaves, depending on the Governor residing at the mansion.<sup>100</sup> The Old Governor's

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Curator Matthew Davis, September 24, 2012.

<sup>98</sup> Thompson, "*Old Governor's Mansion*", 2.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Curator Matthew Davis, September 24, 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Mansion does have documentation providing names and ages of some of the slaves who worked at the mansion. Also documented are the number and which slaves some governors brought to the mansion during their term. During the tour, this detailed information is provided to visitors and interpreted in associated spaces. There is also information and interpretation about the jobs performed by the slaves and the monetary values of the both permanent and visiting slaves at the Old Governor's Mansion.

The slavery interpretation at the Old Governor's Mansion is very interactive and engaging as patrons learn and participate in the interpretation along their guided-tours. The museum staff provides patrons with a wealth of information and knowledge about antebellum slavery in the Georgia, but even more so about slavery at the site itself. The Old Governor's Mansion addresses slavery by approaching it with personal anecdotes, primary source information and quotes, and artifacts that relate the material being presented on the tour. Patrons learn about urban slavery at the mansion and particular slaves in almost every room on the tour. The Old Governor's Mansion technique is appropriate for the site since a large number of rooms and spaces associated with slavery are still in existence, in addition to the primary source material and anecdotes. The detailed guided-tour allows for patrons to experience and understand slavery at the mansion better while making a memorable and personal connection with the site and material. The museum staff discusses the role of a slave's labor played in his or her own life; the guided-tour also describes how a slave's duties determined his or her hierarchical rank amongst the rest of the slaves on site during the tour of the bottom level. The museum's technique is effective since many patrons are provided opportunities to relate

with the material and make connections to the personal anecdotes shared while they also see and experience the spaces slaves once occupied .

Despite the wealth of primary source information known and presented along the tour in the original spaces, there is a lack of primary source visuals. While each room in the house is filled with artifacts, period furniture and art pieces, and historically appropriate décor, patrons are not presented with copies of the primary source letters or census records, or pictures that complement the information discussed along the tour. There is also a lack of discussion about the slave quarters that once stood behind the house and the role the quarters played in the lives that once lived at the Old Governor's Mansion. The patron's experience would be enhanced if there were copies of primary source material presented when discussing specific slaves and stories of slaves in the mansion. Also, by discussing the slave quarters, patrons would understand how slaves' lives were so closely connected to their duties and the main house.

The Old Governor's Mansion relates to the T.R.R. Cobb House based on the individuals, free and enslaved, that once lived at both sites and the work these various individuals did. It is especially connected to the T.R.R. Cobb House since Howell Cobb, his family, and their slaves resided at the mansion for a period of time. The slaves at the mansion had similar duties to those of the T.R.R. Cobb House since both sites were in urban locations near the downtown and assigned their slaves similar duties and living conditions. Many of the slaves worked primarily in the main house or near it. The Old Governor's Mansion employed the practice of allowing specific slaves whose duties were regarded as important to sleep in the main house, as did the T.R.R. Cobb House. The



T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff should reference some of the primary source information used in the guided tour when they begin creating content for their own tour.

Aiken-Rhett House- Charleston, South Carolina



Figure 3.3: Aiken-Rhett House  
Alex, Caroline. Aiken-Rhett House. 2012.

Since its completion in 1820, the Aiken-Rhett House has been home to some of South Carolina's wealthiest families. The Aiken-Rhett House sits only a few blocks from the Cooper River in the heart of Charleston, South Carolina. A Charleston merchant, John Robinson, built the house to serve as a residence for him and his wife, but Robinson was forced to sell the place in the mid-1820s to settle financial turmoil.<sup>101</sup> William Aiken, Sr.,

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<sup>101</sup> Historic Charleston Foundation, *Historic Charleston Foundation: Aiken-Rhett House Museum*, <https://www.historiccharleston.org/Visit/Museums/Aiken-Rhett-House-Museum.aspx> (accessed June 2012).

took over the property in 1827.<sup>102</sup> The property stayed in the family until it was acquired by the Historic Charleston Foundation in the mid-twentieth century.<sup>103</sup> After the home was acquired by the Historic Charleston Foundation, it opened up as a historic house museum and is currently still owned and operated by the foundation today.<sup>104</sup>

The South Carolina Governor, William Aiken, Jr., and his immediate family occupied the house for roughly fifty years, during the house's heyday in the nineteenth century.<sup>105</sup> The house received a major renovation in the 1830s to make it into the elaborate, ornate, and large building that still exists today.<sup>106</sup> The Aiken-Rhett House was built on a corner lot and was built with accompanying two large back buildings that served as a "stable/carriage building" and the "kitchen/laundry house."<sup>107</sup> The Aiken-Rhett House was home to many white elite families, but it was also home to many African-American families who were both enslaved.

Interpretation of the enslaved African-Americans of the Aiken-Rhett House occurs with an audio-tape tour, which was created by the Historic Charleston Foundation staff.<sup>108</sup> The interpretation occurs in the basement kitchen of the main house and also behind the main house in the courtyard and two extant buildings. An audio-tape tour addresses urban slave labor in the kitchen. In the stable/carriage building, one can also listen to an audio interpretation of a slave's work done in this building. Slaves cared for

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<sup>102</sup> Kappy McNulty, "Governor William Aiken House: National Register Nomination Form," National Park Service (May 15, 1977), 3.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>108</sup> *Aiken Rhett House Audio Tour*. Historic Charleston Foundation. 2011. According to the Curator, while the staff was in the process of creating the audio-tape tour, they made a specific effort to ensure the audio-tape tour spend equal amounts of time devoted to spaces associated with slaves and their owners, and so equal amounts of time are spent in the back yard and in the main house.

the horses when the horses were not being used to pull carriages. The audio-tape tour also interprets how the backyard area is associated with slavery. According to the tour, slaves took care of the carriage and the livestock in the backyard area. The tour goes on to describe the duties many urban slaves had in similar areas.

The Aiken-Rhett House is located in one of the most important historic port towns of the United States of America.<sup>109</sup> Its urban setting in Charleston, South Carolina, meant that slavery at the house operated on a relatively small scale. Also, since the Aiken-Rhett House is in a populated city, the size of its lot and space to expand was very limited. Space at the house needed to be used wisely to meet the needs of the wealthy owners and their slaves. The slave quarters, located on the second floor of the two outbuildings, were built to house a small number of slaves that the Aiken's felt were needed to ensure that their luxurious lifestyle could be maintained.

According to the Aiken-Rhett House audio tour, the number of slaves owned and living at the house ranged from ten to twenty.<sup>110</sup> The tour states, in 1846, there were six slave children and seven slave adults.<sup>111</sup> The tour also mentions a few individual slaves by name and describes the jobs of these slaves. The interpretation and presentation of this information occurs throughout the tour of the basement level, property grounds, and structures behind the main house. The Historic Charleston Foundation's approach to interpret slavery through an audio tour that describes personal experiences of the slaves in the spaces is very provocative and effective. The material they present is accurately

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<sup>109</sup> Charleston, South Carolina has been an important city and port since before the Revolutionary War. The port city was the center for trade of lucrative goods, like rice, indigo, and even slaves. Charleston's harbor was visited by many maritime ships of international and domestic entities. It has served as a capital, the center hub of all trade in the South, a cultural hearth, and a place of established government and church. It continues to serve as a major port city to this day.

<sup>110</sup> *Aiken Rhett House Audio Tour*. Historic Charleston Foundation. 2011.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

stated and also references the source giving a sense of seriousness and scholarship to the interpretation. The technique of interpreting slavery in the associated preserved spaces enhances patrons' experiences. Since the Historic Charleston Foundation has taken the approach to preserve the structures of the Aiken-Rhett estate as is, rather than completely restoring and rehabbing the property truly gives patrons a realistic sense of how Aiken-Rhett slaves lived and worked at the site. The primitive structures, utilities, and overall conditions of the associated slaves spaces interpreted on the audio tour captivate and engage patrons.

The audio tour addresses the key aspects and components of antebellum slavery, urban slavery, and urban slavery in Charleston; aspects of urban slavery like religion, being hired out, and where slaves lived are addressed. The discussion and presentation of these aspects is accompanied by a personal anecdote or story of an Aiken-Rhett slave, thus making the tour more robust. The audio tour also addresses how urban slavery specifically functioned in Charleston and the impact it had on the city. By presenting all of this primary source information and specific material in an audio tour, patrons are able to process the interpretation in preferred fashion. The audio tour technique allows patrons to take their time and explore the site more thoroughly, which results in a more complete and wholesome understanding and interpretation of urban slavery.

Despite all of the primary source material presented audibly, there are not many visual primary documents used in the interpretation, for example, a copy of the U.S. Federal Census Record that is mentioned during the tour. The audio tour does not interpret slavery in the main house as it is strictly kept to the yard and outbuildings. The lack of interpretation of slavery in the main house leaves gaps of understanding and

representation of urban slavery. Slavery occurred in the main house just as much as it occurred in the backyard and outbuildings; by not interpreting the main house, patrons are not given a true representation of how slavery functioned in antebellum times. The tour should be extended into the main house and interpret how slavery functioned in the mansion in addition to presenting personal anecdotes or information about specific slaves of the mansion.

The Aiken-Rhett House is related to the T.R.R. Cobb House in numerous ways. Both houses were home to wealthy prominent politicians and businessmen. The men who owned these homes possessed hearty estates that were composed of a large number of slaves and high-valued property. Both the Aiken-Rhett House and the T.R.R. Cobb House practiced urban slavery at the site and forced the slaves to participate and complete domestic duties at the house or other sites that they were hired out to. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff should reference the slavery interpretation at the Aiken-Rhett House regarding urban slave experiences and housing when they create their own interpretation. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should also reference the technique and approaches used at the Aiken-Rhett House for the interpretation of personal anecdotes and stories since similar anecdotes exist at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

The Cannonball House- Macon, Georgia



Figure 3.4: Cannonball House  
Alex, Caroline. The Cannonball House Main House. 2013.

Built in 1853, The Cannonball House is located in present-day downtown Macon. It was the first house built in the suburbs of Macon. The house was constructed for Judge Asa Holt and his family. The Greek Revival House was built to be a "Greek Revival Half House" and is one-side symmetrical; the reason for this plan and design due to its high-density suburban location. The house is located near the top of the hill on Mulberry Street and overlooks the edges of the city and the Ocmulgee River with Fort Hawkins in the distance. Originally, the house sat on a half block of property with servants'

quarters/kitchen, Judge Holt's law office, and five slave cabins. Today, only the house and the kitchen, which also served as the servants' quarters, and the law office remain.<sup>112</sup>

The Cannonball House remained in the Holt and Canning families, passing down through estates until 1971, when it was bought by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The house was then bought by the Friends of the Cannonball House in 1991, and it is still owned and operated by the Friends of the Cannonball House today. Over time, the house has experienced expansion and rearrangement. The house originally had a sleeping porch in the back; it was later converted into a bedroom. In late twentieth century, the United Daughters of the Confederacy made this space a formal dining room. Judge Holt's office, originally located on the north side of the house, was moved to the south side of the house and now serves at the museum gift shop.<sup>113</sup>

Judge Holt owned a large plantation in Louisville, Georgia, in addition to other properties throughout Georgia. His vision for the Cannonball House was as a "two bedroom townhouse" to serve primarily as a place of retirement.<sup>114</sup> Despite the house's simple purpose, it still served as a main residence for his family and to numerous slaves, slave families, and their descendants over the years. The known information and stories about these individuals and their experiences are shared on the guided-tour while patrons explore the back yard area and the inside of the servants' quarters/kitchen.

In the antebellum years, the Cannonball House was home to roughly 21 slaves, many of whom were children; the museum staff believes the high number of slave

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Education Coordinator Brenda Dobson, August 2013. The Cannonball House was roughly five blocks from the court house in downtown Macon.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.; The Cannonball House, *The Cannonball House*, <http://www.cannonballhouse.org/history/> (accessed June 2013).

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Education Coordinator Brenda Dobson, August 2013.

children was for the purpose of hiring them out in town.<sup>115</sup> These slaves lived in the five slave cabins, constructed in behind the main house and around the same time as the main house. These slave cabins are no longer standing, and the museum staff believes the cabins were demolished in the late twentieth century.<sup>116</sup> Fortunately, a historic photograph of each cabin still exists and is presented on the tour. A majority of their duties were focused on the care of the main house, the yard, animals and their master. Interpretation and presentation about particular named slaves that served at the Cannonball House occurs in the backyard and servants' quarters/ kitchen. The guided tour also shares the personal experiences of these slaves. The guided tour discussed one particular slave, Cora, who was the cook and prepared all meals for the week, in addition to sharpening the knives; it is also shared that Cora was paid 25 cents weekly for all of her work.<sup>117</sup> The guided tour allows patrons to see and experience the kitchen Cora worked in while also allowing patrons to touch and feel the bricks and indentions where Cora often sharpened her knives.

The Cannonball House does not have much information about the enslaved African-Americans who once lived at the site; much information has been lost over time or never existed. However, the Cannonball House capitalizes on the information they do have in the remaining associated spaces. The guided tour of the house includes period pieces helping to stage the various interpreted spaces. For example, the servants' quarters are filled with period beds, clothing, and chairs while the kitchen is set up as a cooking kitchen with pots, utensils, and cooking tools. A dining space is complete with a bench table and assorted cookware, as well. Despite the period pieces and artifacts, the tour

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with Education Coordinator Brenda Dobson, August 2013.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.



does not include many visual primary documents. The staged servant quarters, kitchen, and dining space areas are complemented by various text panels describing the different artifacts in the room, function of the room, and individuals who worked and lived in the space. Although the interpretation of slavery at the Cannonball House is limited due to the lack information, the approach and technique used is appropriate and effective. The spaces associated with slavery at the site are interpreted on the guided tour. By having the tour guide describe how the space and artifacts were used and functioned in the antebellum period while also sharing a personal anecdote from a slave, patrons experience the space in a personal and engaging manner. The Cannonball House museum staff does a good job only presenting known information about the site, instead of generalizing experiences of slaves at the site. It makes the interpretation more effective since the material presented is accurate and site-specific. The interpretation of the living quarters is well done due to the large number of artifacts used to stage the room and the exhibit describing the lives of the few known slaves of the Cannonball House that lived in the room. Pictures, text, and artifacts create a complete interpretation of the material discussed in the quarters and allow patrons to be engaged with the interpretation.

The Cannonball House is missing the general interpretation of slavery at the site. It is also missing the interpretation of slavery in the main house as well; there is not a transition from the main house to the servants' quarters/kitchen that introduces slavery to the patrons. Despite not having a large amount of primary source material to use, the Cannonball House takes advantage of what is known and extant and provides their patrons with memorable slavery interpretation.

The Cannonball House and the T.R.R. Cobb House are related in many ways. The two men who owned these properties were politically connected and had additional business ventures aside from their urban homes. The location of the two homes is very similar, since the Cannonball House was located in the first suburb of Macon and the T.R.R. Cobb House was located in the first established neighborhood of Athens. Both houses sat on similar sized lots that were big enough for multiple animals to live and different types of produce to grow at the property, in addition to a large number of slaves. The two sites are also similar since both sites do not possess or even have access to a lot of primary source information and material. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should reference the overall interpretation technique and approach used to present slavery at the Cannonball House since the Cannonball House has been able to capitalize on what little information they do have. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum can create their own slavery interpretation in a similar manner by focusing on what information and facts they do know and not attempting to interpret assumptions or generalizations.

## Bulloch Hall- Roswell, Georgia



Figure 3.5: Bulloch Hall  
Alex, Caroline. Bulloch Hall Main House. 2013.

Bulloch Hall was completed in the fall of 1839 in the Greek Revival Style.<sup>118</sup> The house is located a quarter of a mile from Roswell's original downtown square. The town of Roswell was settled in 1836, only three years before the completion of Bulloch Hall.<sup>119</sup> Major James Stephen Bulloch, one of Roswell's first settlers, selected the highest point in Roswell to build his home for his wife, Martha Bulloch, and their six children. Originally Bulloch Hall sat on ten acres of rolling hills and forests, and today it sits on sixteen and a half acres.<sup>120</sup> Despite Roswell having been only founded a few years prior to the completion of Bulloch Hall, the area was urban due to the mill in town and all that

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Docent Ina Hall, August 2013.

<sup>119</sup> City of Roswell, GA and its representatives. *Welcome to the City of Roswell*. <http://www.roswellgov.com/> (accessed June 2013).; The City of Roswell was founded in 1854.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Education Coordinator Gwen Koehler, August 2013.; Gwen Koehler, e-mail message to author, October 14, 2013.

accompanied the mill in the downtown area. The Roswell Presbyterian Church, of which Bulloch was an active participant, was only a mile away. Bulloch Hall's structures were constructed by trained slave carpenters who were trained and supervised by British master carpenter, according to the museum's staff.<sup>121</sup> Evidence of the skilled and trained carpenter slaves exists throughout the house; for example, it is evident with the stairwell carvings of the house. In addition to the main house, Bulloch Hall was built with three dogtrot slave cabins, a carriage house, summer house, slave garden, privy, well, and basement kitchen.<sup>122</sup>

Major Bulloch had one purpose in mind for the Greek Revival house—to serve as a Gentleman's town residence and place of entertainment. Thus, the house possessed all the necessary elements for entertaining: Greek Revival Style, simple four-over-four floor plan, twenty-foot by twenty-foot rooms, two stairwells, and the plantation-like setting of the house on its ten acres. The house served its purpose well as the Bulloch's entertained numerous wealthy and prominent people over the years. One of Bulloch Hall's most prestigious visitors was the United States' 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. and his wife Mittie Bulloch; Mittie Bulloch's parents owned Bulloch Hall.<sup>123</sup> President Roosevelt and the First Lady visited the home in October 1905, fulfilling Major Bulloch's ultimate dream of entertaining prominent individuals.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with Docent Ina Hall, August 2013.; Interview with Education Coordinator Gwen Koehler, August 2013.; These trained slave carpenters spent two years training under the supervision of the master carpenters from England. The trained slaves built the structures of Bulloch Hall while also adding elaborate architectural and aesthetic details in the interior of the main house at the site.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Education Coordinator Gwen Koehler, September 2013.; Gwen Koehler, e-mail message to author, October 14, 2013.; A dogtrot slave cabin is a cabin composed of two pen rooms adjoined by a roof over the open passage between the two pens.

<sup>123</sup> Hope Morris. *The Topic of Slavery is a Difficult One*. Roswell: The Friends of Bulloch Hall, Inc., 2010.

<sup>124</sup> Historic Roswell, *Bulloch Hall*, <http://www.bullochhall.org/>, (accessed June 2013).

For most of its occupation, the house stayed in the ownership of the family until 1971 when Richard S. Myrick purchased the home. Myrick restored Bulloch Hall and opened it up as a museum in 1972 under his ownership. The City of Roswell purchased Bulloch Hall from Mr. Myrick in 1977 and opened it as a museum in 1978.<sup>125</sup> Since 1978, the house has stayed in the ownership of the City of Roswell. Currently, it is owned and operated by the City of Roswell's Recreation, Parks, Historic and Cultural Affairs; it is managed by the Friends of Bulloch, Inc.<sup>126</sup> Today, the main house remains along with two reconstructed slave cabins, a reconstructed carriage house, a privy, a well, a basement kitchen, and a summer house; the slave garden is currently being reconstructed and the third slave cabin site has just been discovered through archeological excavation.<sup>127</sup>

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Bulloch Hall was home to many enslaved and free African-Americans. The topic of slavery and the stories of these African-Americans are both interpreted throughout the entire site; both subjects of interpretation are interpreted in the main house, the grounds, service yard, and in the slave cabins. Patrons of Bulloch Hall are provided with two separate tours. The Main House tour is a guided-tour, and a self-guided cell phone tour is available of the grounds and slave yard. Both tours discuss how the different spaces of the site are associated with slavery. The tours also discuss the number of slaves that were recorded at Bulloch Hall with a specific mention of the 1840 census listing 43 slaves at the site.<sup>128</sup> Additionally,

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<sup>125</sup> The Friends of Bulloch Hall, Inc., "*Order of Ownership: Bulloch Hall*," Bulloch Hall, Roswell.

<sup>126</sup> Morris. *The Topic of Slavery is a Difficult One.*; Interview with Ina Hall, August 2013.

<sup>127</sup> Gwen Koehler, e-mail message to author, October 14, 2013.; Interview with Education Coordinator Gwen Koehler, August and September 2013.

<sup>128</sup> Morris. *The Topic of Slavery is a Difficult One.*

the text panels in the slave cabin list the known names of the 33 slaves who lived and worked at Bulloch Hall in the nineteenth century.<sup>129</sup>

The various tours present slavery with personal and specific anecdotes and information in each different space. On the guided tour of the house, patrons learn about the slave Maum Charlotte and her duties of washing dishes, clearing the dining room table, and putting away china while in the butler's pantry. The interpretation includes first-hand accounts, artifacts, staged spaces, and activities for patrons to experience the situation. For example, an activity in the foyer illustrates how the slave child Henry mopped and cleaned all of the wood floors in the house. Together the two tours paint a picture of urban slave life in the Georgia Piedmont and demonstrate how it was similar to urban slave life in other southern cities.<sup>130</sup>

The interpretation of slavery at Bulloch Hall is presented in a manner that allows for any patron to be engaged if they choose. By having a guided-tour and a self-guided cell phone tour, patrons can choose the format that best fits their needs and wants, thus ensuring patrons have a pleasant and memorable experience. Both the guided-tour and the self-guided tour use display panels, text panels, pictures, artifacts, primary source documents, and personal anecdotes to interpret the experiences of slavery at Bulloch Hall. This is possible due to the enormous collection of primary source material the museum staff has access to. Both tours also feature engaging activities for patrons to participate in that create a sense of what slaves experienced. Patrons of all ages can relate the material interpreted at Bulloch Hall since the tour interprets slave children and their

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<sup>129</sup> The Friends of Bulloch Hall, Inc., "*The Slave Quarters*," Bulloch Hall, Roswell.

<sup>130</sup> The tour explains how the experiences of urban slavery in Roswell and the Georgia Piedmont region was similar to how urban slavery was experienced in other urban regions of the antebellum South. For example, Athens area slaves' experiences are quoted and discussed based on the similarity between the urban slavery systems in both areas.

duties and adult slaves and their duties. This approach of using a dual interpretation technique that relates to all ages is very effective and appropriate. Patrons not only learn a wealth of new information and experience some of the duties of urban slave labor,, but they also leave the site with a very thorough and complete understanding of slavery at Bulloch Hall since they made personal connections with the site and the stories of the slaves. Bulloch Hall is a historic house museum that truly interprets slavery with an approach that utilizes a majority of Tilden's six principles.

The accuracy of the material interpreted and presented is good except for a few discrepancies regarding the years a certain number of slaves were at Bulloch Hall and the amount of slaves at Bulloch Hall during a certain year. These discrepancies occur between the pamphlet patrons receive and a display panel located in the slave cabin. The interpretation is lacking information and clarity about urban slavery in Roswell. For example it lacks information about if and how many of Major Bulloch's slaves participated in the urban slavery system employed in Roswell and it also lacks the numbers of slaves at Bulloch Hall that specifically lived at Bulloch Hall versus Major Bulloch's other nearby plantation and farm properties.

Bulloch Hall and the T.R.R. Cobb House are related in several ways. Both houses were in urban locations, but had large amounts of land and a large number of slaves. The owners both used their land in a similar fashion. Common domestic tasks were assigned to these urban slaves in addition to assignments and duties that kept them out of the main house. Both owners were wealthy and designed their homes to feature lavish and expensive detail. The slaves at Bulloch Hall had similar experiences of urban slave labor and life to those of the T.R.R. Cobb House. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff

should reference the techniques of Bulloch Hall when creating interpretation for all ages. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should also reference Bulloch Hall's technique of incorporating primary source material in almost every aspect of interpretation and presentation. Bulloch Hall serves a prime and exemplary site for the interpretation of southern antebellum slavery.



## CHAPTER 4

### A SLAVERY INTERPRETATION PLAN FOR THE T.R.R. COBB HOUSE MUSEUM



Figure 4.1: T.R.R. Cobb House at 175 Hill Street  
Lambert, Kelly. *The T.R.R. Cobb House*. Digital Image. Athens Banner-Herald:  
Online Athens. [http://onlineathens.com/stories/062909/new\\_455840816.shtml](http://onlineathens.com/stories/062909/new_455840816.shtml).  
(January 2013).

After purchasing and moving the T.R.R. Cobb House back to Athens, the Watson-Brown Foundation restored the home to preserve the history of T.R.R. Cobb and his legacy on Athens, the state of Georgia, the South, and the nineteenth century. Since 2007, the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum has been educating and serving the public as a historic house museum with its mission:

Through careful restoration, judicious recreation and responsible interpretation, the TRR Cobb House seeks ways to preserve, explore and present the life

and legacy of its owner as a legal scholar, a civil leader, a statesman, a slave owner, and a military officer in an effort to cultivate a greater understanding and appreciation of nineteenth century southern life.<sup>131</sup>

With the historic floor plan, paint colors, decorations, and furniture pieces, the restoration of the T.R.R. Cobb House reflects the 1852-1862 period.<sup>132</sup> Based on its mission, T.R.R. Cobb House Museum provides interpretation and information about the life and career of T.R.R. Cobb to the public, researchers, and school groups. In addition to the interpretation of T.R.R. Cobb and his immediate family, other important Cobb family members, such as Howell Cobb, are discussed at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum. Patrons of the museum learn about these subjects through either a guided-tour, self-guided tour, information on the museum's website, or special event programming. School groups learn about these subjects through the museum's educational programming and interpretation.

The museum staff makes a substantial effort to fulfill its mission by interpreting T.R.R. Cobb's life, career accomplishments, and military distinction, but an important piece of interpretation is currently missing—T.R.R. Cobb as a slave owner. While a brief discussion of T.R.R. Cobb and the institution of slavery does exist in the current interpretation, the discussion only presents and interprets Cobb's staunchly pro-slavery views and his recognized scholarly piece, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*.<sup>133</sup> Thus, currently, the museum fails to address or interpret T.R.R. Cobb as a slave owner and the experiences of the two dozen slaves who lived in bondage at the T.R.R. Cobb House during the antebellum period.

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<sup>131</sup> Watson-Brown Foundation, *T.R.R. Cobb House*, <http://www.trrcobhouse.org/heritage/the-home.html> (accessed Sep. 2011).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 51,53-64.; This refers to T.R.R. Cobb's views on slavery and reason for his support of the institution.

Fulfilling the mission of the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum requires the interpretation of slavery. The slavery interpretation should contextualize and explain the following: T.R.R. Cobb as a slave owner, how he practiced slave-holding based on the institution, information concerning the slaves he owned, how he treated his slaves, and the living and working conditions of his slaves. The information necessary for the presentation should be extracted from primary source documents, like U.S. Federal Census Records, Slave Schedules, family collection letters, inventories and appraisals, and WPA Slave Interviews. Unfortunately, much of the primary documentation of T.R.R. Cobb as a slave owner and information about his slaves is lost. Although this is the case, some information and primary source documentation is available.<sup>134</sup> Since, the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum can only interpret based on the information they currently have at their disposal, the museum staff can reference the existing documentation to begin the interpretation of slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

In an effort to assist and provide slavery interpretation at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum, a slavery interpretation plan (SIP) has been created. The SIP's interpretation primarily focuses on interpreting T.R.R. Cobb's slaves and utilizes and presents all available information on these slaves. It also utilizes any information and documentation about T.R.R. Cobb's relatives' slaves is used only after exhausting all of the slavery resources and documentation involving slaves owned by T.R.R. Cobb himself. This SIP provides the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum with a working plan. This proposed slavery

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<sup>134</sup> The primary source information available on T.R.R. Cobb as a slave owner and his slaves can be found in the following documents: 1850 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules, 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules, 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Susan Castle WPA Slave Interview, Inventory and Appraisal of the Estate of T.R.R. Cobb, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers Collection, and Joseph Henry Lumpkin Family Papers Collection.

interpretation plan attempts to interpret the slaves who once lived at this house, their stories, and the experience of being a slave to the T.R.R. and Howell Cobb families.

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Slavery Interpretation Plan is based on four of Freeman Tilden's six principles of interpretation.<sup>135</sup> The first principle states, "Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile."<sup>136</sup> This principle is applied to the interpretation in various ways creating opportunities for patrons to make personal connections and have meaningful experiences. Anecdotes, quotes, and stories about the lives of the T.R.R. Cobb family slaves are interpreted and presented throughout the proposed slavery interpretation plan. By sharing a particular slave's life experience, patrons can better grasp what it meant to live a life of bondage in antebellum Athens. Whether through the interpretation of the slave's labor, the physical environment of the slave, or even the slave's family and social dynamics, details of individual slave's experiences have the possibility to be relevant to any visitor coming to the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

The second Tilden principle used in the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum SIP states: "Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable."<sup>137</sup> This principle charges interpreters to avoid giving visitors a mundane list of facts about the subject and or topic being addressed, but to interpret the material as if it were a story being told. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum SIP was created and written to describe a

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<sup>135</sup> Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 34-35.; Freeman Tilden's piece, Interpreting Our Heritage, is widely accepted in the museum industry. The National Park Service follows Tilden's principles and promotes this work as a guiding source for successful interpretation.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

story about how the institution of slavery unfolded at the Cobb family properties in Athens. With the proposed tour and the proposed "Slavery Room" of the SIP, the story of slavery is told from a slave's perspective with selected anecdotes of Cobb family slaves.

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum SIP is also based off a third principle which states, "The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."<sup>138</sup> This principle ties together all of the other principles applied to the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum SIP. It encourages interpreters to provide visitors with education on the topic, and more importantly, to create more interest on the material being interpreted from the visitors. The SIP also provides an opportunity for visitors to expand their overall knowledge and understanding of the truths and facts of the specific subject and its larger context. The SIP utilizes provocative primary sources, like Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview while also interpreting the provocative sources through various stimulating media. For example, a display on slave clothing would not only include narrative pieces interpreting the primary sources mentioning clothing, but it would also have a three-dimensional display of reproduction clothing pieces visitors could see and feel. This type display leads to a better understanding of the truths and conditions of slavery and creates a meaningful connection between the material and the visitor.

The final principle applied to the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Slavery Interpretation Plan states, "interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase."<sup>139</sup> The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Slavery Interpretation Plan was designed to address all audiences and persons with varied interests. The material interpreted for the SIP covers a range of topics

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 35.

making up the institution of slavery, such as the labor tasks of slaves and their religion. Thus, a visitor could gain knowledge about the Cobb family slaves, specifically, and about the lives of all urban slaves in the region in general. All genders, ages, and races can relate to this type of Slavery Interpretation Plan.

### Interpretation Techniques

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Slavery Interpretation Plan uses a variety of techniques and media for interpreting. The proposed techniques and media were chosen for a particular reason. The first technique and media used in the plan is a proposed tour. The tour should include the interpretation of urban slavery and highlight a few Cobb family slaves in the spaces of the tour. Whenever possible and when relevant, copies of primary source material should be presented. The tour would be led by a guide or be self-guided with a printed pamphlet. This technique to interpret slavery can be implemented easily since the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum has an already established tour and technique of interpretation in the house. This technique was utilized based on Tilden's principle regarding interpretation as an art.<sup>140</sup>

Because there was not enough surviving information and documentation on the Cobb family and slavery to create a separate slavery tour at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum, the staff should continue research about the Cobb family slaves, specifically T.R.R. Cobb's, to yield more valuable information. A separate slavery tour could potentially be created and implemented if this occurs. Until further research is discovered and analyzed, the existing tour would be augmented to include slavery in the rooms already interpreted, in addition to a new space solely dedicated to slavery interpretation.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 35.

The second technique and media is a proposed space solely dedicated to the presentation of the Cobb family slaves in Athens and the region. In this proposed slave space, the material and information would be presented with display panels, text panels, three-dimensional displays and exhibits, and booklets. The material for this space will be interpreted based on Tilden's principles and the guidelines and methodology used for this thesis and others like it. These options were chosen so the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum could further interpret slavery after the tour ended in a provocative manner. This technique was utilized based on two of Tilden's principle. The first principle utilized for this technique refers to interpretation relating to visitors and the second principle utilized refers to provocative interpretation.<sup>141</sup> This interpretation is also more cost efficient than other options since the museum already has some of the equipment, tools, and objects needed for this option.

The option for a movie or technological interpretive device was not chosen due to its cost but also because of the possible limitations and failures that could result. Tilden comments that interpretation executed by a person is better than interpretation executed by technology.<sup>142</sup> He also states the limitations and failures of technology can have negative impacts on a visitors experience if a technological interpretive device is broken.<sup>143</sup> There is a great deal of unknown risk added when movies and technology become part of interpretation.

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 134.

## I. The First Technique: The Proposed Tour to the Existing Spaces of the “T.R.R. Cobb House General Self-Guided Tour”

This proposed outline approaches slavery from a subject-specific perspective by interpreting and presenting all the information known about T.R.R. Cobb's slaves in the few spaces associated known spaces.<sup>144</sup> It is important to note only two to three T.R.R. Cobb slaves will be discussed throughout the tour, and the interpretation of these slaves would only occur in three or four spaces instead of the whole house. If the museum staff is confident and has credible information concerning what was typical work for a slave, other spaces might be added. After all information and documentation of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves has been interpreted, it is possible to present the information and documentation about T.R.R.'s relatives' slaves, like Howell Cobb's slaves, afterwards.

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<sup>144</sup> The proposed outline attempts to best satisfy the need for slavery interpretation in the museum's existing tour until these two issues are resolved. In the outline, not every space in the house is interpreted; this is simply due to the lack of information and/or detail concerning slave work or a certain slave that would have worked in this space. I felt that I should not interpret areas that I did not have primary source information on due to the risk of misrepresenting and misinterpreting history.



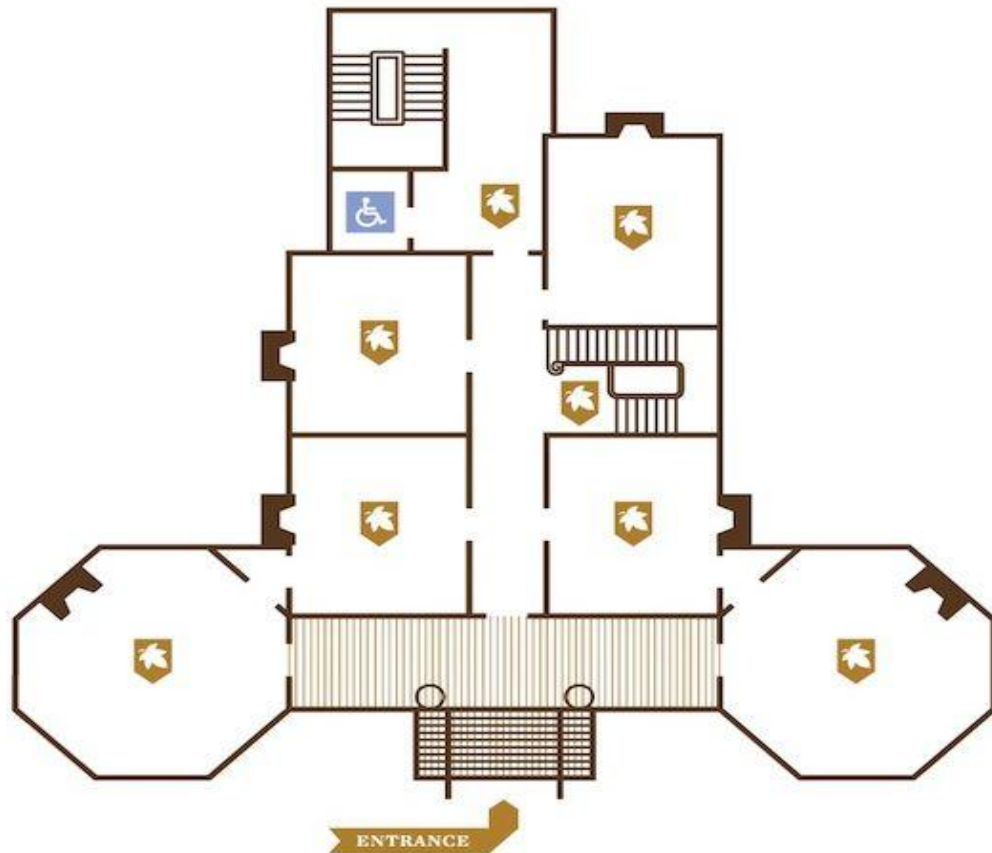


Figure 4.2: T.R.R. Cobb House Main Floor Plan  
 Watson-Brown Foundation. *Cobb House Floor Plan*. Digital Image. Watson-Brown Foundation. <http://www.trrcobhouse.org/visit-the-home/house-floor-plan.html>. (September 2011).

The following is the proposed outlined tour for the Slavery Interpretation Plan according to the different rooms of the house. The outline delineates how to interpret the rooms based on the following three different aspects: people, tasks performed by slaves, and anecdotes/information.

### The Main Hall

**a. People:** Not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves. Currently, no information exists on any T.R.R. Cobb slaves who worked in this area.

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Currently not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves due to lack of information. Typical tasks that were completed by slaves in this area are the following: opening the door, attending to guests, cleaning, decorating for holidays.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** Currently not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves based on what has been researched and discovered.

#### Formal Parlor

**a. People:** Not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves. Applicable to Howell Cobb's slaves, Rachel and Alfred.

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves. Applicable to Howell Cobb slaves with following information: Serve and attended to Cobb family members: Mary Ann and their children: serve and attend to any guests who were being host for business or entertainment; clean the room; tend to fire; straighten up furniture and decorations to be always presentable; clean and fix furniture; prepare room for use.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** This room is the first stop along the Existing Tour. In this room, the T.R.R. Cobb family is introduced per the family portrait above the mantle. The following section is what would be said and interpreted on the tour if utilizing the Howell Cobb family slave information was implemented. These slaves would serve and attend to the Cobb's and their guests for their every need. When the room was not being used for entertaining, business, or gatherings, slaves spent their time in the room cleaning furniture, decorations, window treatment, and the floors. If furniture, like the settee, was in need of being fixed, slaves would tend to that as well. This space is fairly large and

would require a fair amount of time and labor to keep up. Specific information and anecdotes about Cobb family slaves concerning tasks in this space exist about Rachel and Alfred, as they were both well-known and trusted for their excellent work as housekeepers, cleaners, and servants. Mary Ann writes a letter about Rachel's upholstery work on various furniture pieces in the house and how impressive her work is.<sup>145</sup> She also writes a letter about how Alfred is the ideal slave and servant based on his good work and good attitude.<sup>146</sup>

### Marion Cobb's Private Sitting Room<sup>147</sup>

**a. People:** Susan Castle

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Serving and attending to the mistress and guests, serving and attending to both Cobb family children, tending to fire, cleaning, educating children.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** The following section is what would be said and interpreted in the tour. The slaves in this room would serve and attend to Marion and any other family members or guests that happened to be in the room. A clock, painted with a scene of Franklin College, sits on top of the mantel in this room. Since T.R.R. Cobb was involved in the establishment and vitality of the educational institutions of Athens, the painted clock on the mantle provides an opportunity to discuss the family members' and

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<sup>145</sup> Mary Ann Cobb to Lamar C., March 17, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.; Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, June 17, 1857, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.

<sup>146</sup> Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, December 10, 1855, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.; Mary Ann Cobb to Lamar C., March 17, 1856, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.

<sup>147</sup> There is not a great deal of information pertaining to the slaves and the duties of this room other than knowing what the Cobb women did in this room. The interpretation of this room will focus on known information but there is an opportunity to talk about how the slaves cared for the Cobb children, who used this room also. Since Franklin College is discussed in this room, the topic of education allows for an interpretation about literate and educated slaves who also educated elite's children.

slaves' relationships regarding education. While it is unknown if any of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves taught any of the Cobb children at a young age, it is known that Howell Cobb's slave, Aggy Mills, taught a few of Howell Cobb's sons the ABC's.<sup>148</sup>

Susan Castle, a slave of T.R.R. Cobb, could also be discussed here. In her WPA Slave Interview, Susan discusses how she slept at the foot of Marion Cobb's bed in upstairs bedchambers, and she tended to Marion in the night when needed. Her interview also discusses her experience as a slave child. This account of her childhood could be used to compare a white elite child's experience and a slave child's experience of growing up in antebellum times.<sup>149</sup>

### Library

**a. People:** Jesse and literate slave Aunt Vic

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Attend to T.R.R. Cobb, attend to any of T.R.R. Cobb's guests and/or clients, clean room and furniture, assist T.R.R. Cobb with business tasks if needed, tend to fire.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** T.R.R. Cobb was more than just a participant in the institution of slavery, but he was also one of the strongest and most vocal defenders of the institution. Cobb wrote a voluminous piece, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, defending the institution of slavery based on history, law, science, religion, economics, and values. T.R.R. Cobb not only felt that the institution was at the best interest for the elite, but also for the slaves.<sup>150</sup> T.R.R. Cobb felt that slaves were an investment into not only the life of an individual owned, but also to

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<sup>148</sup> Sarah R. Cobb to Mary Ann Cobb, January 8, 1845, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>149</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>150</sup> Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 51,53-64.

the race and culture of the enslaved population. He argued these concepts throughout his work and lifetime. T.R.R. Cobb's legacy reflects his vocal and written support of the institution.

Since this room was used not only by T.R.R. Cobb for work but also an entertaining space for clients and guests, there were tasks to be done in this room. Slaves in this room would serve and attend to the needs of T.R.R. Cobb, his guests, and his clients. The slaves would have tidied the room in addition to serving the Cobbs and their guests. Additional information about T.R.R. Cobb and his slaves can be added and discussed in this room. Because the work in this room was serious and intense, the slaves who worked in the room would typically have a close relationship with T.R.R. Cobb. Slaves who had this close relationship with their masters were typically “body-servants” or domestic servants. In this room, a portrait of T.R.R. Cobb in his military uniform hangs above the fireplace mantle. T.R.R. Cobb served in the Civil War and brought a few selected slaves with him to camp, according to the museum staff. This portrait allows for the opportunity to discuss a favorite T.R.R. Cobb slave, Jesse. Jesse was a cook and body-servant for T.R.R. during the Civil War.<sup>151</sup> It is believed that Jesse was the closest slave to T.R.R. Cobb, based on the fact he was chosen to go to war, but also because Tom wrote to Marion about Jesse numerous times while at war. Jesse is mentioned as being the carriage driver when he worked at the house in Athens, Georgia, according to Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview.<sup>152</sup>

Also since the room served as an office and library, it is appropriate to interpret and discuss slave literacy in this room. T.R.R. Cobb had literate slaves based on recent

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<sup>151</sup> According to the museum staff's research conducted on the Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers from 1861-1862.

<sup>152</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

research of Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview. As a result of this research, it is known that at least Aunt Vic was literate. Slaves typically learned to read at church, as part of the church mission. T.R.R. Cobb's slaves attended church and some of his slaves learned to read through their involvement in the church. Susan Castle mentions how Aunt Vic would read the Bible at their church.<sup>153</sup>

#### T.R.R. Cobb's Private Sitting Room

**a. People:** Not applicable to T.R.R. Cobb family slaves. Currently, no information exists on any T.R.R. Cobb slaves who worked in this area.

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Typically slaves served and attended to their masters, guests, and family members who were in this room. Also, they would tend to the fire, clean the room and furniture. Currently, no specific information has been discovered about tasks or work T.R.R. Cobb's family slaves would have done in this room.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** Since there is no information about T.R.R. Cobb family slaves or tasks T.R.R. Cobb family slaves completed in this space, the proposed interpretation of this space would discuss a different topic and person, such as Fanny Castle. A portrait above the mantle is discussed during this stop along the existing tour. This portrait is of Lucy Cobb, T.R.R. Cobb's favorite daughter.<sup>154</sup> The existing tour discusses Lucy's life and personality as a young girl and her death in 1857.

Additional information about T.R.R. Cobb and his slaves can be added and discussed in this room. Lucy's nurse was Fanny Castle, according to Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview. Susan Castle also mentions Fanny used to sing to Lucy at

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> This portrait was probably made after her death as a memorial.

bedtime.<sup>155</sup> It is apparent Fanny treated Lucy as if she were her own child. Fanny served as Lucy's nurse until her death and then proceeded to hold other positions. Fanny stayed with the T.R.R. Cobb Family for as long as she lived, even after emancipation. She served as a domestic servant post-Civil War to both Marion Cobb and also Callie Hull, T.R.R.'s and Marion's daughter.

#### Guest Room/Exhibit Room

**a. People:** No specific information exists on T.R.R. Cobb family slaves who worked in this room. Applicable to Howell Cobb slave, Gilbert

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** There is not any specific documentation of the work that was done in this space by Cobb slaves. Typically, slaves serve and attend to visitors, tend to the fire, clean the room and furniture in spaces like this.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** This room served as a guest room for T.R.R. Cobb's visitors.

Additional information about Cobb family slaves can be added and discussed in this room. It was common for visitors to bring their own slave(s) with them when staying at a place for an extended time. Visitors' slaves were there to serve their master and participate in any other duties necessary. As a result of not having any specific information on Cobb slaves and work pertaining to this space, the interpretation would revolve around how the room is currently interpreted on the existing tour. The space is currently used as an exhibit space to display unique furniture pieces, clothing items, flags, books, and much more. The interpretation of the various artifacts in this room presents numerous opportunities to discuss specific slaves who are relevant to these artifacts. For example, in this room, the existing tour discusses a cradle and child's desk. These pieces

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<sup>155</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

could extend discussion and interpretation about the plantation-made furniture pieces existing in the room and throughout the house. Another topic to discuss in this room is the practice of slaves being hired out for their work and skills, a common experience for urban slaves. This is applicable to Howell Cobb's slave, Gilbert, with following information: Gilbert was a carpenter who was valued and desired by not only the family but also many other individuals in Athens and the state. He was hired out for his work to other individuals from time to time.<sup>156</sup>

### Stairwell

**a. People:** Fanny Castle

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Non-traditional space, typically was not utilized in any specific or unique way. If this were the only staircase in the house, then slaves would have used it to complete their assignments located on the second level. The T.R.R. Cobb Museum has displayed furniture pieces in this space due to the lack of space in the already interpreted rooms.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** No specific information exists about Cobb family slaves' work in this space.

Though this space is not specifically interpreted for its use, there is an opportunity to discuss slavery in this space due to the armoire, dry sink, bed frame, and other furniture pieces displayed in this area. The existing tour points out and discusses T.R.R. Cobb's unique armoire. It is known Fanny packed T.R.R. Cobb's traveling trunk when he would leave town. Cobb referenced Fanny packing his clothes in his traveling trunk

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<sup>156</sup> Mary Ann Cobb to Howell Cobb, December 9, 1850, Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.



before he left for the Civil War.<sup>157</sup> It is apparent Fanny served the family in many different ways throughout her life after Lucy's death.

### Dining Room

**a. People:** Fanny Castle

**b. Tasks Performed by Slaves:** Cook and Prepare the food; Prepare the room for meals; Serve food to the Cobb's and guests; Clean up room after meals.

**c. Anecdotes/Information:** This room is currently the last stop on the existing tour. In this space, it is discussed that the dining room was not only used for special meals, but also daily meals. Currently, no specific information has been discovered about Cobb family slaves who served in the dining room and attended to the meals and guests. Typically, slaves who served in the dining room would have prepared the room for meals, delivered the prepared food, served the food and drinks, attended to the family members and any guests who were using the room until the meal was over. They would then clear the table and clean the room.

Additional information about T.R.R. Cobb and his slaves can be added and discussed in this room. The following paragraphs/section proposes some topics to be discussed on the tour in the Dining Room and highlights that should be explained to visitors touring the home. The food served in this room would have been cooked in the outdoor kitchen by the family's cook(s). Servants would have then walked the prepared food from the kitchen to the back of the house and into the dining room to be served.

Fanny was a cook for the family according to the 1870 census.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Thomas R.R. Cobb to Marion Cobb, October 22, 1861, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>158</sup> 1870 U.S. Federal Census.

## II. The Second Technique: New Space Added: The Slavery Room: “Who was Taking Care of Whom?”

This proposed space should be dedicated to telling the story of slavery and the lives of those who experienced slavery every day. This space would give light and credit to those individuals that were used to make the luxurious lifestyle possible for the T.R.R. Cobb family.-While the exact space for this interpretation has yet to be determined, possible spaces are a room on the basement level, the exhibit room on the second level, or the guest/exhibit room on the first level. I recommend this proposed room be in the guest/exhibit room on the first level so the proposed tour naturally flows into this space and logically ends in this space. The proposed Slavery Room could have various exhibits and displays on the different aspects and experiences of slavery in the antebellum period. The proposed space could interpret these aspects and experiences of slavery with display panels, booklets, and three-dimensional display of reproduction items.

A unique interpretive piece could be created and featured in the proposed Slavery Room. The piece would be a booklet about the slaves owned by T.R.R. and Howell Cobb. The booklet would feature primary source documents such as census records, slave schedules, inventories, wills, and letters, providing information about the Cobb family slaves. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum possesses information on a few of T.R.R. Cobb’s slaves and a few of Howell Cobb’s slaves and should create a booklet interpreting of the lives of the slaves owned by them. The booklet would also interpret any unique experiences these slaves had amongst each other, with the Cobb's and/or at their work or living environment. The booklet could highlight T.R.R. Cobb's slaves, Fanny and Susan Castle, and Howell Cobb's slaves, Rachel, Aggy, Polly, Sylvia, and Eliza.

### General Informational Displays

The proposed informational display panels and objects would interpret the following topics: what slavery in Athens looked like, what urban slavery was like compared to rural plantation slavery, and specific experiences and information of Cobb family slavery. These topics are all important aspects of slavery and necessary to ensure a more wholesome interpretation of slavery at the museum. The specific information to present on these display panels should come from various sources such as this thesis, academic papers, census records, slave schedules, historic maps, WPA interviews, the Howell Cobb Family Papers Collection, and the T.R.R. Cobb Family Papers Collection.

The displays would feature primary documents where possible. Photographs of Athens, the T.R.R. Cobb House, other T.R.R. Cobb properties in Athens that slaves worked at, and Cobb family members could be used for the display panels. In addition, also the use of maps and drawings of the T.R.R Cobb House, other T.R.R. Cobb properties, and any extant slave-associated sites and/or structures would be advantageous. The proposed primary source visuals would complement the display panels' written pieces. The Slavery Interpretation Plan (SIP) would be enhanced by the primary source visuals and create an opportunity for visitors to experience provocative learning. .

A display panel, "Slavery in Athens," should describe what slavery was typically like in Athens in the mid-nineteenth century. Information about the work slaves performed in town as assigned by their master or work they were hired out to perform could be featured also. Common assignments for urban slaves were carriage driver, factory worker, gardener, cook, domestic servant, blacksmith, servant, nurse, and carpenter. Many of T.R.R. Cobb's slaves had these titles based on their assigned duties.

The 1850 and 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules should be displayed along with primary legal records and documents, like tax records recording the number of slaves in the town. It would be advantageous to include some information and primary sources showing how slaves in Athens and Clarke County were acquired. In the Joseph Henry Lumpkin Family Papers and Howell Cobb Family Papers Collection, there are numerous documents and letters recording Cobb family members acquiring slaves through wills, mortgage deals, and purchases.<sup>159</sup> These primary documents can be used for this display. This display would interpret how slaves experienced urban slave labor and slave life in town. It would also interpret how slaves experienced working in close proximity of each other, freemen, and whites, which was not as common of an experience for rural plantation slaves.

#### Urban Slavery versus Rural Plantation Slavery in Georgia Display Panels

To complement the “Slavery in Athens” panel, there should be a display panel titled "Urban Slavery versus Rural Plantation Slavery" addressing what urban slavery was like in Athens, with a specific focus on the T.R.R. Cobb House. It would also and t compare urban slavery to rural plantation slavery found all over Georgia, with a specific focus on Howell Cobb's plantations. The display panel could present how the different aspects of urban slavery existed at the T.R.R. Cobb House compared to the rural plantation slavery at Howell Cobb's plantations. For example, urban slaves were often hired out for their work while rural plantation slaves rarely left the plantation. The interpretation of these experiences would assist visitors in understanding how urban

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<sup>159</sup>Howell Cobb Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.; Joseph Henry Lumpkin Family Papers, University of Georgia Libraries.

slavery offered a sense of (false) freedom to the slaves as they worked in town.<sup>160</sup> This would enhance the understanding and appreciation for the lives that the Cobb family owned.

Taking inspiration from the Hampton-Preston Mansion displays and the Aiken-Rhett Audio Tour, urban slavery can be discussed and interpreted at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum in ways that make a clear distinction between the experiences and structure of urban and rural slavery. The Hampton-Preston Mansion's exhibit features a panel solely dedicated to interpreting and describing what urban slavery was in the South and the unique characteristics of urban slavery in Columbia, South Carolina. The display panel compares urban and rural slavery in a chart broken down into categories such as the number of slaves at the site and jobs held by them. It also portrays specific experiences urban slaves in Columbia had with pictures and drawings to enhance the interpretation.

The Aiken-Rhett House Audio Tour presents urban slavery throughout the entirety of the slavery portion of the tour but addresses it specifically at a few stops along the tour. The tour describes urban slavery generally but also gives specific details about urban slavery in Charleston. It also interprets and describes what urban slavery looked like and meant at the Aiken-Rhett Plantation. Both of these sites describe specific jobs, positions, duties, and dynamics that were a part of urban slavery in their respective towns and throughout the South. They both also describe how urban slaves had tight-knit communities resulting from the close living quarters with each other and to and the white master, the common influence of religion in their lives, and the urban assignments the slaves did in town.

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<sup>160</sup> Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 110.

A second display should be a panel solely devoted to the interpretation of urban slavery in Athens in a similar manner to the interpretation at the Hampton-Preston Mansion and Aiken-Rhett House. The panel could present general information about urban slavery in the region and could be followed up with descriptions and portrayals of how slaves in Athens experienced urban slavery citing Cobb family slaves. This panel would give visitors a more thorough understanding of slavery in an urban setting, like Athens, in addition to at the T.R.R. Cobb House.

#### Cobb Family Slavery Display Panels

The “Cobb Family Slavery” proposed display panel(s) should educate visitors about the institution of slavery T.R.R. Cobb and his family members imposed on so many lives throughout the nineteenth century. The information for this topic should be broken down into multiple display panels categorized by theme or concept for a more concentrated interpretation and presentation of the material. Information for this topic can be found through sources such as this thesis, Cobb Family Papers, census records from 1850, 1860, 1870, legal records, tax records, Dr. Randy Reid’s dissertation, and WPA Slave Interviews.

A display panel could be created to present statistical and biographical information about T.R.R.'s slaves and Cobb slave families. In 1860, the Cobb and Lumpkin family members in Clarke County owned a combined total of 76 slaves.<sup>161</sup> Many of these slaves and their stories have been lost to history, but some still survive. With recent research and results completed by the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum staff and Georgia Virtual History Project, Inc. staff, whole slave families have been discovered.

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<sup>161</sup> 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule. The Cobb family members were T.R.R. Cobb, John B., Howell Cobb, Sarah R. Cobb, Joseph H. Lumpkin.

For example, the Castle family, owned by T.R.R Cobb, and the Mills family, owned by Howell Cobb, could be featured. These discoveries create an opportunity to tell a more complete story and interpretation of the slaves who lived behind the elaborate houses along Prince Avenue and streets of the Cobbham neighborhood.

Since the Cobb House has access to information about the slaves owned by T.R.R. and Howell, a second display panel could be created highlighting the Castle family and the Mills family.<sup>162</sup> The panel would interpret how these families evolved from their start in the antebellum years all the way until the twentieth century. It would also describe how some of these families stayed together and continued working for the Cobb families even after emancipation. This interpretation would be focused on explaining this aspect of slave life and the relationships that formed between the Cobb's and the two families over time. The panel would feature primary documents like letters, WPA interviews, census records and slave schedules that reference these families. Family trees of the Castle and Mills should be created and displayed on this panel as well.

A third display panel should be created under the "Cobb Family Slavery" section and address the specific urban labor and tasks completed by T.R.R. Cobb's slaves. This panel would state what jobs and positions were held at the houses and in town, such as, a cook or domestic servant or carriage driver. The display panel would list who served these in assignments, for instance, Fanny Castle was a cook and a domestic servant and Jesse was a carriage driver.<sup>163</sup> It would also list the monetary value associated with T.R.R. Cobb's slaves. T.R.R. Cobb's Inventory and Appraisal of 1863 provides a list

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<sup>162</sup> Information on these families has been traced from the early nineteenth-century into the early twentieth-century.

<sup>163</sup> 1870 U.S. Federal Census.; Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

of slaves and their monetary value.<sup>164</sup> This theme and topic interpret how labor was the controlling factor in a slave's life and how a slave's job determined much of the rest of his or her life.

#### The Life of a T.R.R. Cobb Slave: By Susan Castle Display Panel

"The Life of a T.R.R. Cobb Slave: By Susan Castle" proposed display panel could be a unique piece for the interpretation of slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum. This display panel would highlight the life of Susan Castle, a former slave of T.R.R. Cobb, and it would feature Castle's WPA Slave Interview that was conducted in the 1930s.<sup>165</sup> Castle's interview is one of the most valuable pieces of information about slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House and urban slavery in Athens. This rare piece gives insight into the life of a slave at 194 Prince Avenue from a slave's point of view. The interview describes the dynamics and relationships between the slaves and the Cobb's, and it also describes the relationships amongst the slaves. It provides accounts of what the slaves thought of their masters and how they interacted together. Susan Castle's interview brings new information about the once standing kitchen and slave housing that were important places to lives that worked in the house and in town, in addition to what slaves ate, drank, and wore at the T.R.R. Cobb House.<sup>166</sup>

One of the most important aspects of this interview is its description of what happened between the Cobb's and their slaves after the end of the Civil War and the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment. Castle's interview pieces back together the story and history of the lives she mentioned. This display panel would feature each page of her

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<sup>164</sup>. Henry R.I. Long et al, Inventory & Appraisalment of the Estate of General T.R.R. Cobb, Late of Clarke County Georgia (Athens: May 26, 1863), 3-4.

<sup>165</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.



interview and bring in other primary documents to reference the things, events, and people of the T.R.R. Cobb house Castle tells about. A primary source to incorporate would be the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Federal Census Records since the records list all of the brothers and sisters she mentions in her interview.<sup>167</sup> The panel should also creatively highlight unique pieces of information she describes. For instance, Castle mentions she, her family, and other slaves at the T.R.R. Cobb House went to church at Landon's Chapel, a slave church in downtown Athens.<sup>168</sup> The highlighted unique pieces could be complemented with historic and current photographs and historic and current maps of Athens and their location.

A large portion of the T.R.R. Cobb slavery documentation comes from the perspective of T.R.R. Cobb's or Marion's, but Castle's interview provides first-person experience and information about the three themes of slavery—slave labor, the physical environment of slavery, and slave life. The interview is an important piece of information since it allows slavery under T.R.R. Cobb to be understood on a deeper level than in the few letters that exists. It is also important for the creation of complete provocative and artful interpretation.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, it is important because it has created leads for further research to be conducted on slavery under T.R.R. Cobb and slavery in Athens.

#### The Physical Environment of Slavery at 194 Prince Avenue Display Panel Exhibit

This exhibit, which would be in the proposed Slavery Room of the T.R.R. Cobb House, is where slavery would be brought to life through the use of geography, physical descriptions, maps, photographs, and drawings on various display panels. The T.R.R. Cobb House is fortunately located in a city where many maps, drawings, and photographs

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<sup>167</sup> 1870 U.S. Federal Census; 1880 U.S. Federal Census.

<sup>168</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>169</sup> Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 34-35.

were produced for documentation over the many years. These historic drawings, maps, and photographs were preserved over the last century, and a majority of these documents can be accessed at the University of Georgia's Hargrett Special Collections Rare Book and Manuscripts Library and/or online on the Digital Library of Georgia database. Athens' citizens, streets, businesses, and homes were photographed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The historic photographs of Athens' homes, business district, and streets should be used for this display. In 1852, prominent men and professors began recording maps of Athens. After 1852, updates to the maps were made in 1868, 1874, 1893, and 1930.<sup>170</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were created for Athens starting in 1885 and updated in 1888, 1893, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1913, and 1918.<sup>171</sup> The HABS/HAER program came to Athens in the early 1930s and documented the town and homes. Pictures and drawings were created of the sites the program documented. The T.R.R. Cobb House was documented by HABS/HAER.<sup>172</sup> In addition to the historic maps, photographs, and drawings of Athens and the Cobb's properties, the T.R.R. Cobb House and Howell Cobb's Athens house were physically described in letters.<sup>173</sup>

The first display in this section could feature the primary documents as a way to interpret the physical living and working environment of T.R.R. Cobb's urban slaves in Athens. The panel would present information regarding the growth and expansion of the city which affected how urban slavery in Athens functioned. All of these maps would point out the T.R.R Cobb House, other T.R.R. Cobb properties in Athens, and any slave-

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<sup>170</sup> University of Georgia, *Athens-Clarke County Guide*, <http://www.libs.uga.edu/athens/maps.html> (accessed May 2012).

<sup>171</sup> Digital Library of Georgia, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: For Georgia Towns and Cities 1884-1922*, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/CityCounty/Athens.html?Welcome> (accessed May 2012).

<sup>172</sup> Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, Reproduction number "HABS GA,30-ATH,10-1".

<sup>173</sup> Howell Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.; Joseph Henry Lumpkin Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.

related spaces, such as a cemetery or church.<sup>174</sup> There should also be a historic map and current map of Athens, both showing where the T.R.R. Cobb family slaves lived during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To correspond with the locations on the maps, present-day photographs of each highlighted place could be displayed. This panel would interpret the urban physical environment of Athens.

A second display panel in the section could feature information concerning the physical environment of slavery at 194 Prince Avenue. This panel would focus on the urban physical environment of slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House and both of Howell Cobb's houses in Athens. Even though there were no official maps created of the Cobb's properties, letters with drawings and descriptions provide insight and information about where slaves worked and lived.<sup>175</sup> Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview provides a first-person account of the T.R.R. Cobb House and slave spaces of the T.R.R. Cobb House, as viewed by a slave.<sup>176</sup> The panel would feature the 1908 Sanborn map, seen in Figure 4.3, showing the Prince Avenue area and a close-up of the house. This zoomed in version allows the viewer to see where the outbuildings were, what they were called in 1908, what their functions were, and the physical structural details of the buildings. The 1908 map shows where the kitchen, slave cabins, and carriage house were all located in the original twenty-five acre property. Also on this display panel, the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum floor plans would be featured.

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<sup>174</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>175</sup> Howell Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.; Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Family Papers. University of Georgia Libraries.

<sup>176</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

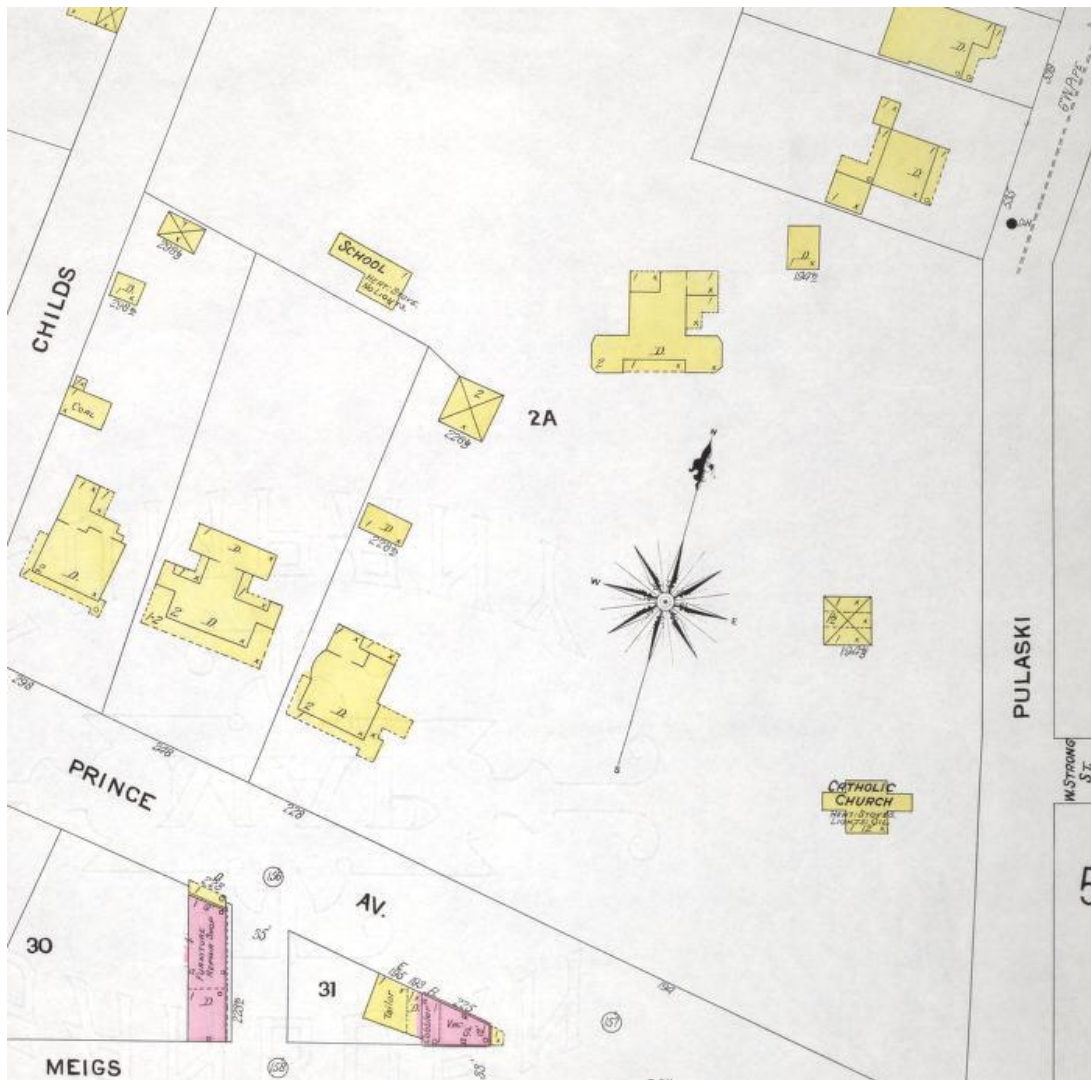


Figure 4.3: T.R.R. Cobb House Sanborn Map of 1908  
*Athens, Ga. 1908, Sheet 4: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.* Digital Image. GALILEO Initiative. <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/CityCounty/Athens1908/Sheet4.html>. ( June 12, 2012).

### The Kitchen Exhibit

Since the T.R.R. Cobb House has been moved from its original location, there are no outbuildings located at the current site to interpret. The original kitchen was destroyed at an unknown date. In order to interpret appropriately the institution of slavery at the house, an exhibit on the outdoor kitchen is necessary. The kitchen was a major

component of antebellum life, particularly slave life. Many aspects of a slave's life revolved around and were dependent upon the use of the kitchen.



Figure 4.4: Kitchen Example.  
Alex, Caroline. The Cannonball House Kitchen. 2013.

The kitchen exhibit should feature some “typical” detached kitchens common in the region. The Cannonball House, Bulloch Hall, and the Aiken-Rhett House all retain their kitchens and interpret the space for its integral role in antebellum slavery. Photographs can capture what these kitchens looked like and how they were designed. The photographs would come from site visits conducted as part of this thesis and from the surveys and documentation done by the HABS/HAER staff in the mid-twentieth century.

The following aspects of slavery occurring in the kitchen would be interpreted and presented: what an outdoor kitchen was like, tasks performed in the kitchen, how the kitchen was a major component of urban slave labor assignments, particular individuals known to have worked in the kitchen at the Cobb House, types of food prepared in the kitchen, how the food was prepared, and how the slaves had to walk from the kitchen into the back house for the food to be served due to separation of the main house from the kitchen. This exhibit would also reference the Sanborn maps of various examples to demonstrate the layout and location of the kitchen on property similar to Cobb's in Athens. This display would also be another example and indication of what urban slave life was like for the slaves during this period. A reference to Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview would be included in this display. In her interview, she describes the T.R.R. Cobb House kitchen with some detail, and she also gives an account of what was cooked in the kitchen, how the food was cooked, and what equipment/utensils were used in the cooking process.<sup>177</sup>

#### Home Sweet Home Exhibit

Slave quarters served as a place to live private lives. However, these spaces were not actually private. It was very common to have more than one person in a room in urban slave housing. Typically, many slaves lived in one-room of the multi-room slave quarters.<sup>178</sup> Sharing quarters is an arrangement also common in slave cabins on rural plantations. Slave cabins were normally small and had another room attached, thus

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 56.

providing for two families per cabin.<sup>179</sup> These close living and working conditions led to the creation of strong communities amongst the slaves in a given area.

The first display panel of this exhibit should discuss the typical living conditions and role of slave quarters most likely found at the T.R.R. Cobb House. It would discuss the design, layout, and structures of slave housing commonly found at urban locations in the region-like the surviving slave housing at Bulloch Hall and the Aiken-Rhett House. Both Bulloch Hall and the Aiken Rhett House interpret the extant structures to describe how slaves experienced their close living quarters with each other and how the slave community formed.

Taking inspiration from Bulloch Hall and the Aiken-Rhett House, the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should interpret similar topics based on the primary source information already studied and utilize secondary sources to supplement until further research can be conducted since there are no outbuildings present at the T.R.R. Cobb House.<sup>180</sup> The display could feature photographs, maps, drawings, primary source documents to capture typical urban slave housing that most likely existed at the T.R.R. Cobb House.

In addition to the lack of physical evidence about any outbuildings, little information was written about these structures. Thus, only a small amount of information on the slave cabins of the T.R.R. Cobb House exists today. What is known about the slave housing at the T.R.R. Cobb House comes from the Sanborn Maps, 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules, some letters, and Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview. To supplement

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<sup>179</sup> John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1993), 22.

<sup>180</sup> The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum does not have any existing outbuildings since the house has been moved from its original location (which has been built on and changed numerous times) and these buildings were lost to development over time.

the primary source documentation on this display panel, historic photographs from the HABS/HAER collection could be used. Another source could be visits to the sites researched for this thesis.<sup>181</sup> The existing primary source photographs, drawings, maps, and letters that reference T.R.R. Cobb House slave housing could be used to interpret what the physical conditions of urban slave life were like in these small spaces. They could also be used to depict what facilities these urban slaves had access to at the T.R.R. Cobb House and in town.

Based on the existing primary source documentation, it is known there were eight slave cabins at the T.R.R. Cobb House in 1860.<sup>182</sup> According to Susan Castle's interview, the majority of T.R.R. Cobb slaves lived in the slave quarters, which were located in the back of the lot.<sup>183</sup> Castle's interview also describes some of the furnishings, such as beds and chairs, inside the slave quarters at the T.R.R. Cobb House property.<sup>184</sup> It is unknown whether slave housing at the T.R.R. Cobb House was similar to the typical urban multi-leveled slave dwelling design or was similar to the typical plantation slave cabin design. The different primary sources that recorded information about slave housing at the T.R.R. Cobb House use different names for the structures and do not provide any detailed accounts about the architecture of the building, for example, whether the slave housing was one or two levels. For the purpose of this work, both slave quarters and cabins were researched. It was essential to research both types of dwellings because of the lack of primary source information regarding the T.R.R. Cobb House's slave quarters in Athens. This thesis recommend the interpretation of both types of dwellings for slave housing

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<sup>181</sup>Library of Congress, *Library of Congress: American Memory*, [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs\\_haer/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/) .

<sup>182</sup> 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule.

<sup>183</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.



interpretation at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum, and with further research, this could be appropriately determined, interpreted, and presented in the future.



Figure 4.5: Slave Cabin Example  
Alex, Caroline. Bulloch Hall Slave Cabin. 2013.

Through the mediums already used in this exhibit, a second display panel for this exhibit could interpret the following aspects of slaves' living conditions to visitors: what a typical home for a slave was like, who and how many lived in this home, activities conducted at the home, and a description of the usually austere conditions of the structure. This display panel would reference primary source information that states how many slaves lived in these one to two room structures by citing the 1850 and 1860 T.R.R.

Cobb Slave Schedules.<sup>185</sup> The museum staff believes these twenty-three slaves were grouped in cabins by family unit or by three to four people.<sup>186</sup> References to the Sanborn maps and other primary documents would help visitors better visualize what is known about the property's layout.

A third display panel for this exhibit could present how social structure and hierarchy of urban slavery affected where and what slaves called home. Susan Castle's interview presents an opportunity to interpret this topic. Castle discusses how she slept in the main house at the foot of Marion Cobb's bed. The museum staff believes that Susan slept there due to her mother's status. Fanny, Susan's mother, had a close working relationship with the T.R.R. Cobb family and possessed numerous skills that were required for her assignments as a cook, nurse, and domestic servant. The museum staff also believes that due to Fanny's skills and assignments she was valued at a higher amount. The combination of Fanny's high value and her close working relationship with the Cobbs is believed to be the reason for the high status that Fanny and her family received.<sup>187</sup>

### Clothing Reproduction Exhibit

The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum has primary source information discussing what T.R.R. Cobb's urban slaves wore throughout the year, per Susan Castle's WPA Slave Interview. Reproductions of the described clothing and shoes should be made and displayed in three-dimension as an example of the type of clothing and shoes T.R.R. Cobb's slaves would have worn. These reproduction objects should be accompanied by

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<sup>185</sup> The 1850 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule records T.R.R. for owning fifteen slaves, and the 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule records T.R.R. for owning twenty-three slaves.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Curator Sam Thomas, June 2012.

<sup>187</sup> Library of Congress, *Slave Narratives*, 177. As found on ancestry.com.

display panels that would feature copies of the WPA interview and highlights quotes that referenced these particular items would learn about this aspect of slavery through the tangible interpretation of the display. This interpretation would also create an opportunity for visitors to broaden their knowledge of the subject while also having a chance to make a memorable connection to the material displayed.

### III. Programming and General Recommendations

Since much of the primary documentation written by T.R.R. Cobb and his wife Marion are no longer extant or available, it is difficult to interpret full slavery at the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum. Any additional analysis and knowledge discovered would allow for the interpretation about the Cobb's lives and the slaves they owned to move forward and reach its full potential. The choice of slavery interpretation does not have to be an irrevocable, one-time decision as it can change over time depending on how the museum staff wants to approach it. This thesis recommends the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum implement the proposed SIP while further research is conducted.

With regards to the museum's existing programming, I recommend the T.R.R. Cobb House continue its holiday programming featuring vignettes from slaves' perspective. The vignettes should include Cobb family slaves' names, stories, and accounts. Susan Castle's interview has information that describes how T.R.R. Cobb slaves experienced the holidays.<sup>188</sup> The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum should also expand its already established educational programming to include slavery and slave life on a regular basis. The T.R.R. Cobb House Museum can look to other sites that have already established slavery interpretation into their educational programming. Bulloch Hall and the Old Governor's Mansion have established educational programming that interpret

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

slavery and slave life. The museum could also add slavery programming and interpretation to their website, similar to how the Aiken-Rhett House interprets slavery on their website.<sup>189</sup> These two sites serve as a good starting point from which the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum could further develop their educational programming and online interpretation.

The museum should expand its existing tour, formatting, and script with the proposed tour, which includes the interpretation of slavery in the appropriate spaces. The interpretation of slavery would tell the experience a particular slave had in the selected associated spaces. It would interpretation the experience from the particular slave's point of view. Opportunities should be recognized and sought out for the staff to include the use of primary documents on the tour interpretation to allow the visitors to also see these documents and to enhance their experience by knowing this information directly from those who originally told the story in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The proposed tour should then end in the Slavery Room; this will allow the museum staff to offer a guided tour of the room to patrons or allow visitors the opportunity to experience the room self-guided. All of the proposed options and recommendations create provocative interpretation at the museum.

### Future Research

This thesis was based on the primary source research that has been done concerning the Cobb family slaves, and the various aspects of their lives as urban slaves. The research analyzed numerous sources such as letters of the various Cobb family papers and collections, census records, slave schedules, WPA Slave Interviews, and other

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<sup>189</sup> Historic Charleston Foundation, *Historic Charleston Foundation: Aiken-Rhett House Museum*, <https://www.historiccharleston.org/Visit/Museums/Aiken-Rhett-House-Museum.aspx> (accessed June 2012).

legal documents. Even though these sources were researched and analyzed for this thesis, the research results only scratched the surface of the depth and content that could be found in these sources. This thesis has pointed out where research and primary source material is missing at this present time. This work recommends that research and analysis be continued in the following areas: biographical and genealogical information about the Cobb family slaves, the experiences of being a Cobb family slave, the physical living and working environment of Cobb family slaves, and how the Cobb family slaves contributed to their urban setting of Athens. The recognition and full understanding of the Cobb family slaves have only just begun with this thesis, and further research and acknowledgement of their contributions to our country can only aid in society learning from the past to ensure a better future for the coming generations.

#### IV. List of Proposals from the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum Slavery Interpretation Plan

- Use proposed augmented tour in the house
- Use primary source documents as visuals in the proposed tour to support the verbal interpretation
- Create the proposed "Slavery Room" on the first level
- Add the proposed "Slavery Room" to tour and rooms interpreted in the house
- Use display panels, booklets, and three-dimension object displays as mediums of interpretation in the proposed "Slavery Room"
- Incorporate primary source documents as visual pieces in the displays and exhibits of the proposed "Slavery Room"
- Use secondary sources to fill in gaps of information for displays in the proposed "Slavery Room"

- Continue holiday programming
- Add educational and online programming/interpretation

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